



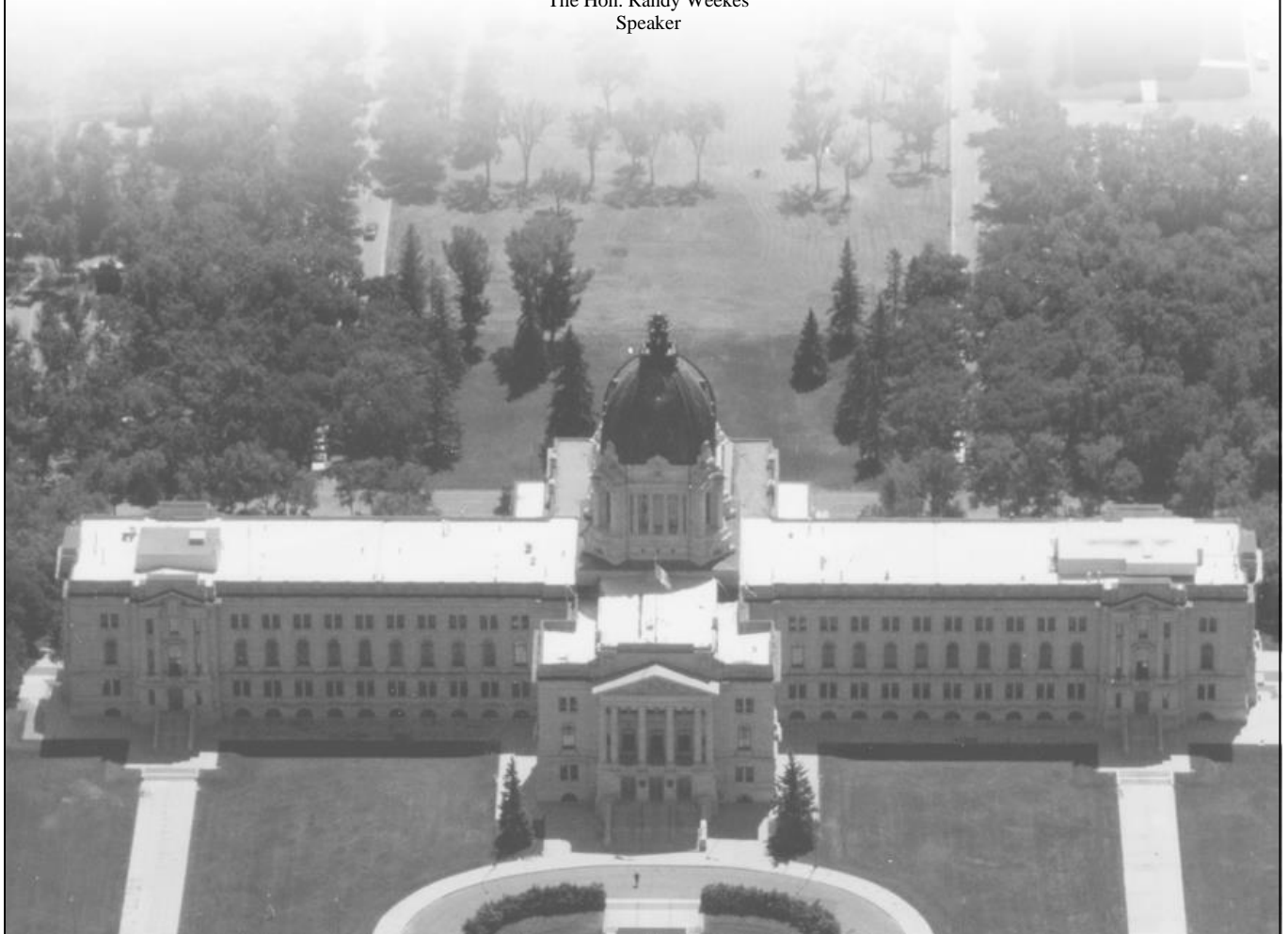
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

| | |
|---|---|
| Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP) | Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP) |
| Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP) | Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP) |
| Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP) | Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP) |
| Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP) | Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP) |
| Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP) | McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP) |
| Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP) | McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP) |
| Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP) | McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP) |
| Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP) | Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP) |
| Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP) | Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP) |
| Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP) | Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP) |
| Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP) | Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP) |
| Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP) | Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP) |
| Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (Ind.) | Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP) |
| Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP) | Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP) |
| Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP) | Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP) |
| Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP) | Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP) |
| Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP) | Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP) |
| Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP) | Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP) |
| Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP) | Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP) |
| Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP) | Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP) |
| Hargrave, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP) | Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP) |
| Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP) | Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP) |
| Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP) | Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP) |
| Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP) | Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP) |
| Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP) | Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP) |
| Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP) | Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.) |
| Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP) | Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP) |
| Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP) | Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP) |
| Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP) | Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP) |
| Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP) | Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP) |
| Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (Ind.) | |

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 44; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Independent — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang
Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.
Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — I would like to table the annual report from the Advocate for Children and Youth in accordance with section 39 of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*. The advocate has submitted the annual report for the year 2023.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much. It's my honour today to represent representatives from two provincial industry associations, who I know a number of members had the opportunity to meet with this morning, from the Saskatchewan Construction Association and from Merit Contractors who are here today on their annual lobby day.

So I want to introduce the members who were here as a part of that delegation. Not sure if everybody's able to be in the gallery here today, but I do want to enumerate the members who were here. Dan Yungwirth, owner and GM [general manager], Miller Contracting, Prince Albert; Chad Waldner, co-CEO [chief executive officer], Alliance Energy, Regina; Justin Hoyes, owner, C & S Builders, Moose Jaw; Ken Swann, president, Interwest Mechanical, Saskatoon; Jeff Hagerty, civil manager, PCL Construction, Regina; Kevin Dureau, co-CEO, construction association, Regina; Boyd Kampen, president and CEO, Impact Energy Services, Rosetown; Chad Fenrick, branch manager, Ardel Steel, Regina; Shannon Friesen, co-CEO, construction association of Saskatoon; Keith Bird, operations manager, RNF Ventures, Prince Albert; Colin Olfert, CEO and GM, Westridge Construction; Denise Gamble, president, Merit Saskatchewan; and Brad Kornum, district manager, Graham Construction.

I want to thank you business leaders for all you do every single day in growing and literally building the economy of this province. And welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister opposite, on behalf of the official opposition, and add our welcome to the Saskatchewan construction agency and Merit Contractors. Welcome to your legislature. It was wonderful to meet with you earlier. And on behalf of the official opposition, I just want to thank you for all that you do, not just in building jobs and opportunity but in building that infrastructure on which our province is so reliant on.

I also want to applaud, obviously, your openness to discussing concerns and also opportunities for the industry and for the sector, which of course lead to not just better outcomes for your projects but better outcomes for the province and for our labour

market overall. So on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to add my appreciation and thanks and ask all members to join me in welcoming these fine folks to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce two very special friends in your gallery in the second row, Steven and Connie Wiebe from the Herbert area. I'll have more to say about Connie in a member's statement. But I just want to also add that Steve was an employee on our dairy farm from 1989 to 2021 when they took up farming at Herbert. So welcome to this, your legislature. We'll talk more later.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the Sask Party government voted against duty-to-consult legislation; Saskatchewan needs to ensure provincial duty-to-consult is fulfilled and is carried out with the honour of the Crown; and the Sask Party government has never addressed cumulative impacts, yet duty-to-consult must consider cumulative effects on the ability to practise inherent and treaty rights before approving projects in Saskatchewan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to enshrine duty-to-consult into law by enacting the meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; that the federal Liberal-NDP government was politically motivated in issuing a carve-out for home heating oil; and that the Government of Saskatchewan's decision to not collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to a drop in inflation; further, that despite the decision to not charge the carbon tax on home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay that tax out of pocket at the pumps, grocery stores, and more.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately suspend the carbon tax across the

nation of Canada and acknowledge its significant impact on affordability and inflation in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Spiritwood, Dalmeny, and rural Saskatoon.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet presenting our petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan calling on the government to address the affordability crisis.

The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention that inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades; that according to Angus Reid 84 per cent of Saskatchewan residents are feeling stressed about money, the highest rates of financial insecurity in Canada; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; and that the Sask Party government's power, PST [provincial sales tax], and tax hikes have been making life more and more expensive. While other provinces have acted, the Sask Party continues to ignore our calls to suspend the gas tax.

Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

The undersigned reside in Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to improve labour laws in Saskatchewan.

Those who've signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that even after the October 1st increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage remains the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour. Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation and, as we all know, paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment. And so much more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment and violence free.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to improve conditions for Saskatchewan workers by passing legislation to increase the minimum wage, guarantee paid sick leave, limit nondisclosure agreements which could silence survivors of

workplace harassment, and require employers to track and report incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, all those provisions can be found in our private member's bill, Bill 613. We do hope the government takes a look at that legislation and passes it.

Those who've signed this petition come from Kamsack and Foam Lake. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet to present a petition calling for more affordable homes and tenant protections. The cost of housing in Saskatchewan has skyrocketed, making it increasingly difficult for many to secure stable and affordable housing. Over the past decade, homelessness has surged, pushing more and more people onto the streets.

Meanwhile the government has made drastic cuts to public housing and other housing programs. The Government of Saskatchewan has wasted over 600 million on vacant public housing units. Some of these remain uninhabitable because of cuts to the maintenance and renovation budget under this Sask Party government over this last decade. Monthly rent prices in Saskatchewan have significantly increased while the wages of Saskatchewan families have remained stagnant. As a result, people have been forced to cut back on groceries and use food banks.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer, call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately implement a comprehensive, affordable housing strategy aimed at helping individuals and families in securing stable and affordable housing. The strategy must restore the cuts made to the housing portfolio and invest in the development of affordable and low-income housing units.

We also urge the government to enforce rental protections for tenants and allocate resources towards development of second-stage housing and crisis shelters. I'll note we have almost no protection for renters in Saskatchewan.

The residents of this petition reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Treatment Centre Incorporates Indigenous Ceremonies to Help with Healing

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to recognize Poundmaker's Lodge, the only accredited treatment centre in Canada that incorporates Indigenous ceremonies as part of their services. I am pleased they expanded to Saskatchewan.

What makes Poundmaker's Lodge unique and effective in helping Indigenous people attain recovery is that they recognize Indigenous recovery must come from a place of spirituality and a connection to culture and identity.

Mr. Speaker, for 50 years Poundmaker's Lodge has been offering ceremonies that were once outlawed by colonial governments. Clients attend the following ceremonies, in-house and in communities, for sun dance and rain dance lodges, bear lodge, chicken dance ceremony, night ceremonies, naming ceremonies, and sweat lodge ceremonies. Over the years they've inspired many other Indigenous-led wellness initiatives such as wellbriety movement.

I have seen the transformative power of Poundmaker's Lodge in the lives of those it serves. Poundmaker's Lodge is a place of support, a place of healing, a place where pain and trauma are faced and overcome. May we continue to uplift their vital work, ensuring all who seek healing find the support and compassion they need to thrive. Thank you, Poundmaker's Lodge, for all that you do for our people. Gichi-miigwech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Highway 10 Passing Lanes Project Will Improve Traffic Safety

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week residents of the Last Mountain-Touchwood and Melville-Saltcoats constituencies got some more good news. The Highway 10 passing lanes project is moving forward, with construction expected to begin next spring, building passing lanes from Fort Qu'Appelle to Melville.

Mr. Speaker, passing lanes have been a critical part of the government's plan to improve driving safety on our provincial highway network. I've had personal experiences of over 10 years of positive effects that the first passing lanes have made travelling safely between Fort Qu'Appelle and Balgonie.

Lanes are typically constructed in pairs with each a minimum of 2 kilometres long, providing additional opportunities for drivers to pass safely versus twinning a highway. Fort Qu'Appelle Mayor Gus Lagace said, "Infrastructure projects like these will improve the flow of commuter, business, industry, and tourism traffic on Highway 10 and benefit the communities and neighbours along this important transportation corridor."

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of the work we've done on our roads, but we know there's more to do. The 2024-25 budget invests just over 617 million to operating, maintaining, and building the province's roads. Mr. Speaker, 417 million of this budget is going directly in improving those highways. Since 2008 this government has invested more than 13 billion into transportation and infrastructure, improving more than 20 700 kilometres.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Remembering Shahryar Amir

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Sunday, April 14th the Muslim community in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan got heartbreaking news. Shahryar Amir was a student of Evan Hardy Collegiate, Saskatoon and was in grade 10 when he passed away in a car crash.

Last Friday I participated in the funeral of Shahryar and met with his father and friends. It was the most painful day of his parent's life, losing their only son. I saw lots of his classmates at the funeral and cemetery with tears in their eyes. They said that we lost a one-of-a-kind, down-to-earth, socially active, and very humble friend.

[13:45]

As a driver educator from the last 15 years, we always focus on teaching our young students to be lifelong safe, responsible, and defensive drivers. Life is not replaceable, not repairable, and it is the biggest loss there is.

Today I humbly request all young drivers to be responsible behind the wheel, no matter what. The loss of a young life completely collapses the entire family and creates a big hole which is impossible to heal. May Allah keep the soul of Shahryar. Rest in peace and may Allah give sabray jamil to his parents, family, and friends. Amen.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Catering Business Owner Wins Best Wedding Caterer Award

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Connie Wiebe, along with her husband, Steve, and son Ryan farm just north of Herbert. Steve and Ryan grain farm, have a cow-calf operation and winter season feedlot. Connie has worked in the food service industry all her life. She started her career at the Pilgrim restaurant in Caronport, then a cook at the Herbert nursing home, and now runs her own business, Country Hills Catering.

Eight years ago they obtained an empty building that was moved on to their farmyard. They set it up as a commercial kitchen, and Country Hills Catering was born. She runs a very busy catering business, travelling all over southwest Saskatchewan, providing food for various sizes of events.

She has also developed a frozen line of home-cooked meals, and these provide many seniors the opportunity to remain in their homes longer and keeps busy families fed as they are on the go with their kids. Farmers also take advantage of these meals during seeding and harvest seasons. As farms have grown in size, the need for meals for large crews has become a new arm of her business.

On April 14th, Country Hills Catering attended the 2024 Saskatchewan Wedding Industry Awards. And congratulations to Connie, who won the Best Wedding Caterer. She proudly represents the South doing what she loves to do — providing good home-cooked food to anyone who calls. And I can attest to that as the many occasions she's catered for us. Connie and her family are proud to be Saskatchewan small-business owners.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Entrepreneur and Community Leader Makes Our Province Better

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, German is the largest ethnic group in Saskatchewan today, and more than 200,000 Germans immigrated to this province from 1951 to 1957 alone.

Leslie Angele is a constituent of mine who immigrated from Germany and spent her adult life volunteering alongside her husband, Josef. She was born in 1931 and grew up on a small farm west of Munich, a farm that has been in the family for generations. Leslie got engaged to Josef Angele in 1953 before he immigrated to Canada to work on a farm near MacNutt, Saskatchewan. Leslie followed a year later and they were married in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, Joe and Leslie purchased a bakery in Kerrobert in late 1954, and all five of their daughters were born there. While raising babies and running the bakery, they supported their local community by volunteering with several service clubs. Life took them to Kindersley in 1970 to run a bakery they purchased there. In 1980 they moved to Saskatoon and settled into a home that Leslie resides in to this day.

They joined the German Canadian Club Concordia in Saskatoon and began a lasting association with the German community. Leslie signed on as the first principal of Saskatoon's German Language School in 1983. She feels strongly that the preservation of culture and language is important. Joe died in 2019.

Mr. Speaker, Leslie Angele was a remarkable entrepreneur and community leader before her time. She has helped make our province a better place. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Celebration of Passover

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, sunset marked the beginning of the Passover holiday for many families belonging to Saskatchewan's Jewish community. This holiday stretches back to the Biblical days when Jewish people living under increasingly harsh taskmasters began their exodus out of Egypt and the bondage under Pharaoh's rule.

Mr. Speaker, the name Passover has great significance to the Jewish people as it was the culmination of many powerful acts by God in delivering them out of slavery and back into freedom. The Jewish slaves were told to kill their sons at birth, but one child's parents unwilling to follow the decree, once they could no longer hide the child put him in a basket of reeds and floated him in the Nile River. He was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter who showed him mercy.

Moses grew up in Pharaoh's household and, becoming a man, was given a message by God to Pharaoh and that was to "let my people go." That message wasn't well received, and the pressure

of plagues was applied until Pharaoh finally gave in.

God gave specific instruction to Moses concerning the final plague that would result in the death of the first-born sons of man and animals unless the blood of a lamb was applied to the doorposts and lintels of the family's home. Pharaoh lost his son that evening and sent the Jews away to embark on their exodus to their homeland of Israel.

The Jewish community outside of Israel will celebrate this holiday for eight days until nightfall on April the 30th. Mr. Speaker, from one faith community to another, Happy Passover. And however you choose to celebrate, we wish you a peaceful time spent with your families and loved ones. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Saskatchewan Strategies Attract New Investment and Build the Workforce

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Trade and Export Development joined Cameco to announce the province's fourth quarter international outcomes. These outcomes marked another successful year of international engagement.

Showcasing our sustainable Saskatchewan story is essential to growing our economy. In Q4 [fourth quarter] our international trade offices facilitated over 20 trade and investment activities, including missions, events, and so much more. These engagements represented over 30 local exporters and resulted in 190 trade deals. In 2023 Saskatchewan exported nearly \$50 billion worth of products to 163 countries, including another record year of agri-food exports totalling over \$20 billion.

Q4 also saw the launch of two new strategies for attracting new investment and building our future workforce. The Saskatchewan investment attraction strategy is our road map to increasing investment in the province, and the Saskatchewan labour market strategy is our blueprint for building the skilled workforce needed for the jobs our growing economy is creating.

Saskatchewan exports are growing, our population is growing, and so is the need to tell our story on the world stage. We will continue to promote our food, fuel, and fertilizer to the world. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Cost of Living and Federal Carbon Tax

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are struggling with the cost of living. While the cost of everything keeps going up — groceries, tuition, rent, mortgage payments, fuel — and 57 per cent of Saskatchewan people are struggling to pay the grocery bill, this Premier has offered zero relief.

Mr. Speaker, how much worse does it have to get before the Premier cuts the gas tax and gives Saskatchewan families a break?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said on the floor of this Assembly many times, there's over \$2 billion each and every year — in each and every budget, including this most recent budget — that are deemed affordability measures for Saskatchewan families, resulting in Saskatchewan being one of the most affordable places to live in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

To the Leader of the Opposition's question about, you know, what is going to challenge us on the affordability measures into the future, Mr. Speaker, primary among that is the federally imposed carbon tax. It's increasing year after year after year. Which makes me wonder why that leader and members of that caucus answered the call to arms to attend the Trudeau campaign school to keep that individual in place that is going to continue, continue to increase the affordability challenges that Saskatchewan and Canadian families are facing today, far into the future.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Contract for Tire Recycling

Ms. Beck: — Increasingly desperate to deflect, Mr. Speaker. Now we've talked a lot in the last two weeks about the private surgery company that donated to the Sask Party, that received a \$6 million contract, and that had former Finance minister Kevin Doherty as their lobbyist. But this surgery deal, Mr. Speaker, isn't the only deal that raises questions under this tired and out-of-touch government, nor is it the only one with Kevin Doherty as the lobbyist.

CRM [Crumb Rubber Manufacturers] tire processing of Newport Beach, California got the contract for tire recycling in Saskatchewan, and the Saskatoon business that had been doing that work lost it. And guess who was their lobbyist, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Doherty. Did the Premier meet with Mr. Doherty on this tire recycling deal?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — No.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Beck: — Appreciate the short answer, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, handing this contract to an American company when a Saskatchewan company was already doing the work, well it raises a lot of eyebrows, even more so when we look at the lobbyists registry and see again Kevin Doherty registered to lobby for this American company that got this lucrative contract.

Now yesterday, the Premier said that he never met with Kevin Doherty on the surgical backlog. He's already answered that he did not meet with Kevin Doherty on this particular contract or this deal, Mr. Speaker. But does he have any concerns with the deal as we've outlined?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, my understanding is the

contract, both of them were RFP'd [request for proposal] by the organization that puts those contracts out. I'm not sure if, at the Trudeau campaign school, the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting that we should be sole-sourcing those contracts, Mr. Speaker.

Because that's simply not the case. In this particular case, Mr. Speaker, there was an RFP, and it's my understanding that the company she's referring to didn't bid on it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier is dismissive of the concerns, but you'll remember that Saskatchewan's business community was highly critical of this deal with an American company that had a former Finance minister as their lobbyist. The Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Speaker, said at the time, and I quote:

Our concern is the apparent unwarranted regulation of a once-free market that is now siphoning jobs and market opportunities away from our cities and reassigning them to business interests outside of our borders.

Mr. Speaker, did CRM tire get the contract because they had the best pitch or because they had the best lobbyist?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I think they got the contract because they were the only bidder in an RFP, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Minister of Education and Support for the Education Sector

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier clearly has a leadership problem, whether it's this tired and out-of-touch government signing deals with companies who just happen to have a former Finance minister as their lobbyist or this Premier's failure to keep that Education minister in his post.

Now, Mr. Speaker, yesterday when he was asked by reporters, the Premier wouldn't say, he wouldn't say who he believes. Is it the grieving mother who said there was no apology in that private meeting, or the Education minister who said that there was? Mr. Speaker, the fact that that minister is still in his post says volumes about that Premier's leadership. My question: why won't he fire that Education minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, this Education minister, due to the effort and the work and the listening ear that he is bringing to this file whether it be to all of the partners — school divisions, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the school community councils, parents, teachers in the classrooms that he's visited — is reason that he has confidence of not only myself but the entirety of cabinet and caucus.

With respect, Mr. Speaker, with respect, what I would say — and maybe the Leader of the Opposition has, you know, found these

new-found questions at the Trudeau campaign school that she attended just this past week — what I would say, Mr. Speaker, that when people, when people come down, we'll listen here. When people come down to this Assembly with fair questions of their government, it's government members on this side and ministers that meet with those individuals, which is a far sight more than can be said about the NDP when they were in government because they didn't meet with anybody with fair questions that came down here.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the question was about a grieving mother who came here three days to raise the alarm about that minister's failures. What a shameful answer from that Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education, this one, is by far the worst Education minister that we've seen yet from this Sask Party government. He has a history of saying things that are demonstrably inconsistent with the facts, and he's sown chaos in the education sector since day one in that post. We need to move forward from the damage that that minister has done to our classrooms.

Why won't that minister realize that he is the problem and resign today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I can tell you very quickly that any resignation wouldn't be accepted, Mr. Speaker, because of the work and the effort that this Education minister is bringing on behalf of parents across this province. Not only with the effort and engagement, Mr. Speaker, but the listening ear to enact policies that are being asked for by Saskatchewan parents, like the policy for parental rights to ensure, to ensure that parents can be involved in their child's, their child's education, their child's classroom, and open up that communication with what is happening in our schools, in our children's schools across the province.

[14:00]

With respect to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, it isn't that long ago when people came to this Assembly with fair questions of their government and the ministers, and it was the NDP government that would not even take five minutes to meet with them. Thankfully in 2007, Mr. Speaker, a number of things changed: one is the investment in our education sector; two, is there's a government here that will listen to Saskatchewan people and will meet with them when they travel to their capital city.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, let's go over this minister's greatest hits, or maybe they're his biggest blunders. In his first day on the job, he told reporters that every member of the government caucus had heard concerns about pronouns in school. But five minutes later, the Minister of Health proved that brand new Education minister to be dead wrong.

Later on the minister waged a billboard campaign against Saskatchewan teachers. And for the last four months he has presided over the longest teacher job action in Saskatchewan history.

That minister is bad at his job. He should resign. Why won't he do that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, when the NDP resort to personal attacks, it's because they don't want to talk about their 16 years in government, Mr. Speaker. They don't want to talk about the 176 schools closed. They don't want to talk about the 400 teachers closed.

And the most shameful part is that they told Saskatchewan students the best hope for their future was in Calgary, Mr. Speaker. Not under this government. We have grown this economy. The best hope for Saskatchewan students is right here at home. We're building schools. We're hiring EAs [educational assistant]. We're hiring teachers. And we have legislation that preserves parents' ability to be involved in their children's life, Mr. Speaker. That's this government's record on education, and one that we're proud of.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Health Care Staffing and Provision of Care in Rural Communities

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, this government is failing on education and they're failing when it comes to delivering health care to Saskatchewan people that they can count on. This is especially true for rural Saskatchewan.

So they want to talk about their record? Let's talk about their record. We know that between August of 2019 and July of 2023 that there were over 950 closures to rural emergency rooms, hospital labs, obstetrical care, and other life-saving services — 950 closures that impacted 53 different hospitals in rural Saskatchewan under this government's watch. They seem uncomfortable to be talking about their own record, Mr. Speaker. I don't understand.

Will the minister today tell us, tell this Assembly, how many communities have health care closures today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member for the question. I will correct the record. He's talking about closures. What he's actually referring to are temporary service disruptions. These are service disruptions that can last as little as two or three hours due to illness, due to vacation, or due to an unplanned absence of a health care worker, Mr. Speaker.

If he wants to talk about closures, if he wants to talk about closures, Mr. Speaker, he need only consult with his caucus because the NDP actually closed 52 hospitals. They actually

closed 19 long-term care facilities. Those closures resulted in the permanent closure of facilities in our rural communities. Our facilities are continuing to operate. Yes, they have service disruptions. We are addressing those with our health human resources action plan, which is the most ambitious plan in the country, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new rural health care report was just released a couple of weeks ago. And the report raises these unprecedented closures in rural Saskatchewan, leaving thousands of Saskatchewan people without health care when and where they need it.

It also raises concerns over the lack of publicly available information on health care closures. Now the minister would remember that this information used to be posted on the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] website and was publicly available. But now under this tired and out-of-touch government, patients have to travel to the hospital to find out that their emergency room is closed. Thirty-five per cent of all health care closures were in rural emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker. Again how many communities are currently experiencing a health care closure today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Again, Mr. Speaker, our government doesn't close hospitals. We build hospitals. We may have temporary service disruptions. We are addressing those with the most ambitious health human resources action plan in the nation. That plan is yielding results. The plan was implemented in September of 2022. And since that time, since that time, 97 positions have been added to North Battleford, 69 positions to Prince Albert, 47 positions to Moose Jaw, 30 positions to Yorkton, 29 positions to Swift Current, 28 positions to Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. I can go on and on and on for the member opposite.

We have rural successes too in Wolseley, Broadview, Kipling, Indian Head, Fort Qu'Appelle, Melville. If the member would like the details, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to talk more about it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, the report doesn't just touch on the hundreds of health care closures under this tired and out-of-touch government. It also points to this government's failed health human resource plan. Fewer health care staff in rural Saskatchewan, fact. Decreasing retention rates, fact. Chronic vacancy rates, fact. Decreased access to physicians and specialists, fact. I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Across the board, it is clear that this tired and out-of-touch government is taking rural Saskatchewan for granted. Why won't the minister take one of our ideas for a change, like a grow-your-own plan to hire Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, let's talk about their ideas for rural health. When he was the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Regina Rosemont demanded that the government implement the expert recommendations of the Fyke report on health care, Mr. Speaker. This is what the NDP idea for rural health care is.

The Fyke report called on the government to close another 50 hospitals on top of the 52 that they had already closed. That's what the NDP mean when they say, take one of our ideas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Clarke: — Mr. Speaker, he still doesn't want to talk about his own government's record because it's so bad. Community after community have raised concerns over their struggles to recruit and retain staff. Take this headline from the mayor of Macoun, where they can't keep doctors, and I quote: "Dying for doctors."

Or this one from Raymond Gauthier from the RM [rural municipality] of Duck Lake, that currently has eight long-term beds closed due to doctor shortages. Again, quote: "Duck Lake has more empty beds than the whole Northeast combined."

This morning on Evan Bray, we heard from leaders from Wilkie and Biggar. Here's one: "Wilkie's ER has been closed since March of 2020." That sounds really temporary, Mr. Speaker.

What does the minister have to say to the countless communities with Sask Party MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] that are without the health care people deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite wants to talk about quotes, let me put another one on the record. Here's a quote, Mr. Speaker:

Now in the budget I do see some focus being put on hard-to-recruit training seats, and this is a good thing. Absolutely yes, we should be training Saskatchewan people for these jobs. And I think specifically of rural people or Indigenous people who are going to stay in their communities once they . . . [are] trained, and where they live [there]. This is a good strategy.

Who said that, Mr. Speaker? It was the member opposite, the member from Regina Walsh Acres. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Retainer Paid to Private Law Firm

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government will use every tool in their tool box to avoid transparency and accountability. Last week my colleague and I both asked the Minister of Justice how much public money the Sask Party is spending on private lawyers defending its pronoun

policy in the courts. She refused to answer.

Mr. Speaker, this is completely unacceptable. Saskatchewan people deserve to know how much of their money — the public's money, not the Sask Party's money — is being spent fighting this court case. Will the minister give us that number today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, I outlined very clearly last week why retainers are part of solicitor-client privilege. Waiving that, there is a risk that a court could construe it as a full waiver of privilege. Mr. Speaker, all payments to private law firms are posted in Public Accounts.

But I would challenge the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. The member for Regina Elphinstone last week called parental inclusion in a child's life a "questionable priority." CTV News. Those are the true colours, Mr. Speaker, the true beating heart of that opposition, that hard-left opposition.

She should ask her colleagues: do they agree that parental inclusion is a questionable priority? Regina Coronation Park, Regina Rosemont, would they repeal Bill 137, Mr. Speaker?

The real motive of the member for Regina Elphinstone is that she wants us to lose that case. She wants parents to lose.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, we voted against that bill, and we look forward to repealing it when we form government.

News flash, Mr. Speaker, to that minister. Solicitor-client privilege exists to protect the interests of the client. The client is the Government of Saskatchewan. Who can waive that privilege? The Sask Party, Mr. Speaker.

Now if she doesn't believe me that that's the case, she could ask the two former Justice ministers. They had no problem being open and transparent when it came to the costs of the carbon tax. But now we hear crickets. Interesting how the policy has changed, Mr. Speaker.

Again I ask, how much public money is being used on private lawyers to fight the pronoun case?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The client is the Ministry of Education, and the case is one in which we are involved in active litigation as the defendant. We did not launch, as it was in that case, Mr. Speaker, a reference.

Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear. This is a member, the member for Regina Elphinstone, who went down this road last week, who claims to be the champion of the rule of law, who claims to be a champion of human rights. Yet she has embraced an antisemitic phrase that is deemed so offensive that entire Western democracies have condemned it. She has been personally

censured by B'nai B'rith, Mr. Speaker. Yet she told committee that she experienced it differently.

Clearly she feels the same way, Mr. Speaker, about parental rights.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Well, Mr. Speaker, now another news flash to that minister. There are plenty of examples where governments have had no problem releasing the cost of private lawyers, even when they're acting as the defendant. Even as recently as a few days ago, the federal government — those Trudeau Liberals, Mr. Speaker — had no problem releasing the cost of private lawyers for defending the use of the *Emergencies Act*. The cost, \$2.2 million.

But the cost of the pronoun case, well that minister doesn't want the public to know. Mr. Speaker, how much public money has the Sask Party spent fighting this pronoun case in the courts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, every year, these amounts to private firms are posted on Public Accounts. It is a common practice. It was the practice under that former government, Mr. Speaker, and that should not be a violated practice when it comes to tactical and strategic considerations during the course of active litigation, which we find ourselves in.

We have used private firms in cases where we require additional capacity, where we require additional specialization, Mr. Speaker: \$7.7 million with MLT; 800,000 with Toronto-based Benson Percival Brown; 553,000 with Toronto-based Laxton Glass; 258,000 with the world's largest law firm, Dentons. In total the government spent more than 13.4 million on private law firms, available on Public Accounts at the time. When was that, Mr. Speaker? The last full year of the NDP government.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

[14:15]

Ms. Sarauer: — So the number can be made publicly available, as the minister is saying. There is no reason why she can't disclose what amount she is paying that law firm to defend her and her government in the pronoun litigation.

It's wild, Mr. Speaker, to see this minister be so unwilling to provide information about public dollars to the public. What did the federal Conservatives have to do to get that *Emergencies Act* number? Ask the question. Why won't this minister be transparent? Why is she willing to be less transparent than the federal Liberals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the member got well-refined arguments from her few intensive days at the Trudeau

campaign school on all variety of nuances.

The fact of the matter remains. We are in active litigation, Mr. Speaker, not of our making. This is a situation where we must protect privilege. A retainer goes to the heart of privilege and that is a very important premise of what the privilege relationship entails. And in this case, Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear that this will be of course publicly available, as it always is every year on Public Accounts, as it was under them, and that will be the case going forward in this case.

Mr. Speaker, clearly the motive here is mischievous because the motive really is to reveal tactics and strategic consideration along the road, which we will not do.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, 113 lives were lost to overdose in the first three months of this year. That's more than one person lost to this crisis every single day. We've raised this issue in the Assembly every day this spring sitting, and every day that minister gives us the same lines about their new policy, the same policy that has resulted in a drastic increase in overdose deaths in neighbouring Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, treatment is important. However you can't check into a treatment centre if you've died of overdose. This crisis is disproportionately impacting Indigenous people. When will this minister provide the evidence-based supports that will keep people alive like the supports Poundmaker's Lodge has been offering for decades?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just point out that Poundmaker's Lodge is one of the locations where we have recently acquired spaces to provide addictions treatment to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, no illicit drugs are safe, and the members opposite want to draw this comparison to other provinces. Well let's do that. There's a stark contrast to what the NDP governments in Manitoba and British Columbia are doing compared to Saskatchewan. In Manitoba the NDP just released their budget, and in that budget, they invested \$2.5 million to create a drug consumption site but only \$1.5 million to address treatment. That shows you the priorities of the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

In Saskatchewan our priority is on treatment and recovery, Mr. Speaker. Our approach is going to save lives, it's going to heal families, and it's going to strengthen communities. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 158

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 158 — *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2024*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to enter into the debate on Bill No. 158, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act*. Now my understanding of this legislation is that it will add an additional year to apply for this tax credit, from seven up to eight.

Mr. Speaker, this is a positive tax credit. We were happy to see this. I know there are some questions about the qualifications to be able to apply for this tax credit and whether or not it's as accessible as it could be. I know I have several colleagues who are very interested to enter into the debate on this legislation. I'm prepared at this time to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 158.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 160

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 160 — *The Immigration Services Act*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and enter into the debate on Bill No. 160, *The Immigration Services Act*. Now I understand this bill does several things, Mr. Speaker. It does provide some more parameters and rules around recruiting foreign workers and those who work to do so, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very positive step, I believe, in ensuring that foreign workers and new Canadians are treated fairly and safely, Mr. Speaker. I know there are a lot of questions about the legislation, in particular what was the genesis of this legislation? Why was it drafted in the way that it was? Why was the oversight of this legislation moved from Labour to Immigration, for example, Mr. Speaker?

I'm curious to know if the ministry has numbers on whether or not there have been instances of abuse by recruiters or by employers, Mr. Speaker. And I know the critic is going to be looking at that as well as reaching out to stakeholders and asking them their feedback and their questions and concerns. In order to facilitate the work of my colleague, the critic, I'm prepared at this time to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 160.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it

the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:22.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Donna Harpauer
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Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Health

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Tim McLeod
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the
Provincial Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety
Minister Responsible for the Firearms Secretariat

Hon. Jim Reiter
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Hon. Laura Ross
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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for
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