



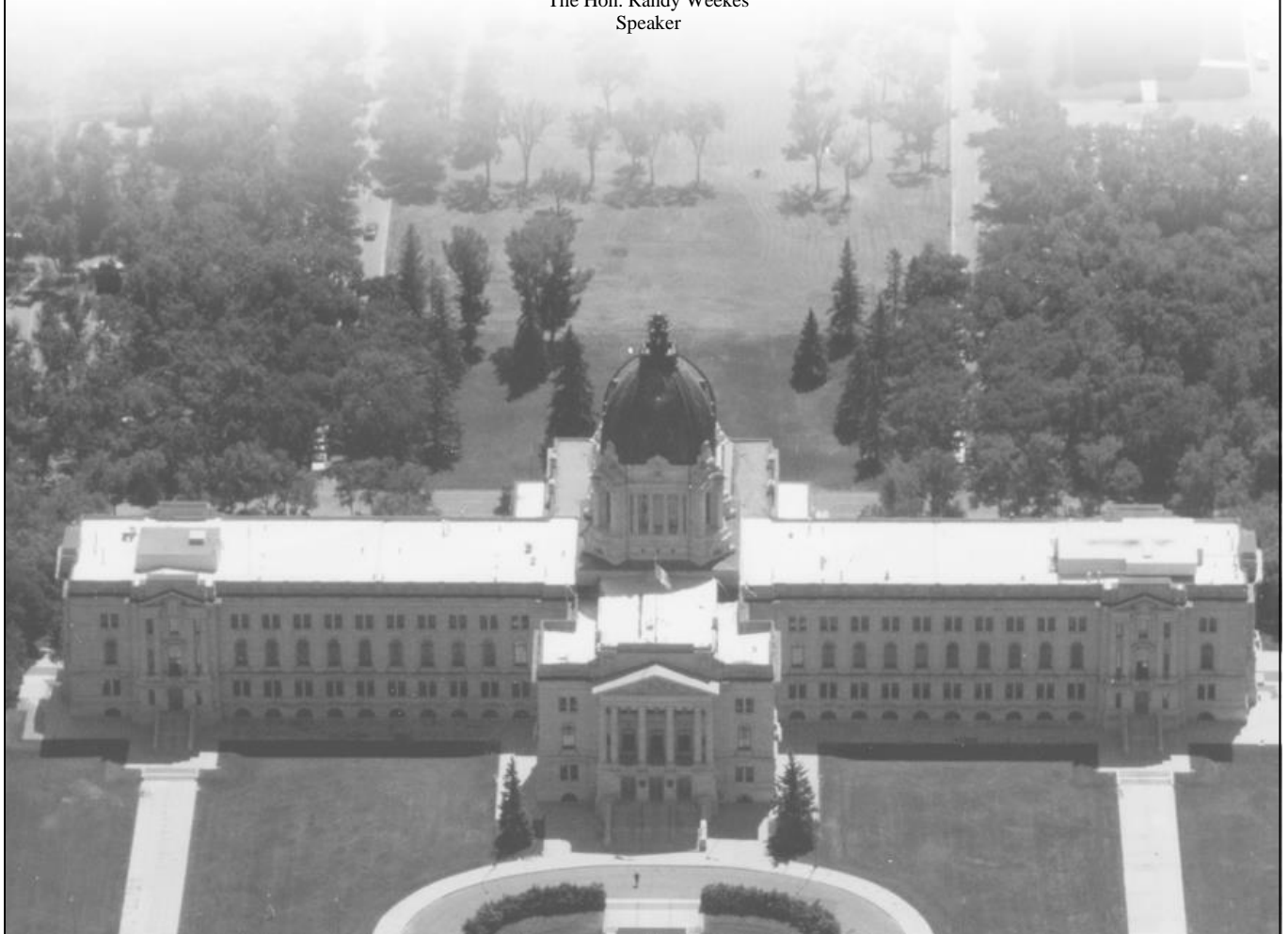
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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 10:00.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and a member opposite, we would like to jointly ask for leave to make a statement regarding the National Day of Mourning for workers killed, injured, and suffered illness on the job.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

COMMEMORATIVE STATEMENTS

National Day of Mourning

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in commemoration of this day which recognizes workers who have lost their lives, were seriously injured, or suffered illness due to a workplace-related hazard or occupational exposure. On behalf of the government, I offer our deepest condolences to the families, friends, colleagues, and community who are mourning the loss of a loved one due to workplace fatality. In recognition of this day, the flags at the Legislative Building and other government buildings will fly at half-mast on April 28th.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the legislature, as well as people throughout the province, take a moment to honour the lives lost and that we all work together to take action to prevent workplace injuries and fatalities.

Health and safety should always be a priority in whatever we do. This is the only way we can ensure that everyone comes home safe at the end of the workday. In 2023 Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board accepted 29 claims for workplace-related fatalities in the province. Not included in these numbers are those individuals who lost their lives working on Saskatchewan farms and ranches.

Mr. Speaker, it is truly sad that families, friends, and colleagues are left to mourn the lives of workers who never returned home after going to work. Mr. Speaker, everyone grieves a loss in different ways, and we want to respect all the families' wishes. So today we have consent to read aloud the 24 of the 29 individuals who lost their lives due to workplace illness or injury.

I ask all members to rise while I read the names of the following workers who lost their lives due to a workplace injury or illness.

Wayne Gracie	Andrew Abello
Beverly Jefferies	Benjamin Nowlin
Myles Goudy	Tyler Costain
Alan Prizeman	Gary Ronyk
Tony Leuschen	Grant Kennedy
Douglas King	Blake Caplette

I will now invite the member opposite to assist in reading the remaining names.

Ms. Sarauer: —

Kevin Krause	Edward Fetsch
Tyler Rusk	Brent Armstrong
Carey Heilman	Andrew Hjelmeland
Christopher Sedgewick	James William Morrison
Sumesh Pulavathil	Robert Morgan
Les Parker	Maxwell Cameron

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I now ask that we observe a moment of silence to commemorate the Day of Mourning and to honour the lives that have been lost in workplaces throughout the province.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

The Speaker: — Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Friesen: — Request leave for extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, it's my great pleasure today to introduce some constituents from the Saskatoon Riversdale area. And not all of them are from Saskatoon Riversdale, but it's always a great day in Regina when guests come here and we're able to do a little tour of the building. We got to the Premier's office and had a little tour there. We got them in the House here as well. Showed them what was going on here, and basically some of the proceedings.

So I am going to say Ram is here — and if you can just give a wave when I say your name — Kirti as well, Saanvi, Harshika, Prem, Kwashi, Theofurus, and Tammy. I did leave one out, Mr. Speaker, and I do want to say a little bit more about Yash.

And Yash, I was able to attend an event at the University of Saskatchewan recently and he has revitalized the Conservative Party youth organization in the University of Saskatchewan. And Yash is also interning under Andrew Scheer in Ottawa in the coming weeks. I think he leaves Saturday. But very, very organized, very driven young individual, and I'm so proud to have you and your family and friends here today. And I ask all members to join me and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to welcome two young men to the Assembly today who work in my office here in the Legislative Building each and every single day on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

I've introduced Aaron Hill before, a Moose Jaw boy originally who now does communications in my office and really has done an exemplary job over the last several months navigating different issues that our office deals with.

But I'd also like to introduce the newest member of my Ministry of Education team and that's Hunter Kristjansson. Hunter has come to the Legislative Building here in Saskatchewan from Manitoba, a Manitoba boy originally. We won't hold that against him, but we're sure happy to have Hunter as part of our Ministry of Education team and our Government of Saskatchewan team. And I can say that Hunter does an incredible job every day engaging with people who call or email our office and helping them to find answers and access government services and programs.

So on behalf of the Ministry of Education and myself and this government I'd like to ask all members to welcome Hunter and Aaron to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, I'd like to welcome two guests today. One is my mom and one is my sister. It's so good to have them join us today. I've welcomed my mom before during the emergency session, Ramona Clarke. It's wonderful to have you back, Mom. And just want to shout out to her, an incredible grandma. It's good to see you getting a little bit of time off from taking care of the grandkids today.

But I also want to recognize my sister Jessica Clarke who has not been to the Chamber before while I've been an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. But want to welcome her. You know, this is someone that I really appreciate in my life, have really developed a strong relationship with in the last few years, especially as she's become a mom to Kove and a great mom at that.

But you know, we've always had a special relationship as Jess and I would gang up on our middle sister, Kirsten. So we always connected over that. But really appreciate the friendship that we've built in the last little while. So I'd like to ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these two fine citizens of Saskatchewan to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet today to present our petition calling on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to suspend the fuel tax.

The undersigned residents of the province wish to bring to our attention Saskatchewan people are struggling to keep up with increased costs of food, shelter, and other basic necessities, as wages have not kept up with the rate of inflation; that according to an October 2023 Angus Reid poll, more than one-third of people in Saskatchewan are struggling with the cost of living.

The Sask Party government could provide immediate cost-of-living relief to Saskatchewan families by suspending the 15-cent-per-litre fuel tax and could follow other jurisdictions such as Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, and Newfoundland, who have suspended or reduced their provincial fuel tax to make life more affordable for residents of their provinces.

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 suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring your attention to 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 many more places.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly 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.

The below undersigned are residents of Yorkton and Kamsack. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to rise again today and present a petition to this Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments.

Mr. Speaker, it is Fertility Awareness Week here in Canada, and I would like to take this opportunity to ask all members to spare a thought and think about all those in Saskatchewan who are

unable to have healthy and happy pregnancies, who maybe have to struggle with the hope or with the fear of fertility treatments, struggle with the pain of losing a child or miscarriage, or those who worry that they may never be able to have a family. Mr. Speaker, other provinces, almost every other province in Canada has created a program to assist those financially who require some fertility care.

Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the dozens of people who've reached out to me this week. You are seen. You are heard. And the signatories of this petition today reside in Biggar and Wilkie.

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

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that the evidence shows that older adults in Saskatchewan want to age in their own home and communities; that the factors that drive older adults from their homes often go beyond their health needs, and provincial subsidized home support programs could help older adults with practical needs; when older adults have autonomy over their lives and decisions they experience better health and quality-of-life outcomes; that providing support to older adults in their homes and their communities comes at a significantly lower cost than providing institutionalized care; that other jurisdictions have successfully implemented the home support program that reduces strain on long-term care and improves the outcome of older adults.

[10:15]

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call upon the government to work with older adults, stakeholders, municipalities and to design a home support program that allows seniors to age with dignity and autonomy in their homes and their communities.

The residents of this petition reside in Unity, Saskatchewan. I do so present.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling for the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to fix the crisis in health care. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that there were 951 health care closures across rural Saskatchewan between August 2019 and July of 2023. We've heard Wilkie hasn't had their ER [emergency room] open since 2020. We know that the hyperbaric chamber has not been active for the last three years. Saskatchewan has the longest wait time for knee and hip replacement surgeries. And I think it's unacceptable, Mr.

Speaker, that women who are needing to get breast cancer care are having to drive 16 hours to Calgary to get that care when we should be able to provide that care here in Saskatchewan.

I'll 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 immediately address the short-staffing crisis in health care and work with health care workers on solutions to improve patient care.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Constituent Raises Awareness Through A Million Steps for Mental Health

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning I'd like to highlight an outstanding constituent of mine, Fran Sreedhar. In 2021 Fran turned to outdoor activity as a tool to strengthen her mental health during the pandemic, aiming to walk 1 million steps in a year. She used the beautiful trail system of the Meewasin Valley Authority as her outdoor gym, and she encourages others to do the same. She used the goal of 1 million steps to raise money — one cent per step, or \$10,000 — for the Meewasin Valley trails she loves walking so much.

Now in her fourth year and hitting 4 million steps, Fran's goal is to raise another \$10,000 for the Meewasin Valley Authority and the Canadian Mental Health Association. Fran has partnered with the Meewasin Valley Authority on a contest to encourage more people to get out and walk the trails. While it might seem daunting, Fran has noted that if you take 3,500 steps in a day, getting outside for just 15 minutes, you'll hit 1 million steps over the course of a year. After all, physical and mental health matter every single day.

I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Fran and the Meewasin Valley Authority for their commitment to raising awareness about mental health through A Million Steps for Mental Health. Thank you so much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River.

Bethune Sports Gala Helps to Support a Growing Community

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throw care, community, creativity, and class in a blender, and you will pour out the Bethune Sports Gala. Recently, Mr. Speaker, I was joined by the member from Riversdale at the ninth annual Bethune Sports Gala fundraising event held at the community hall in the village of Bethune. And, Mr. Speaker, this year's edition of the gala was truly next level. Guest speaker and Maple Leafs great Darryl Sittler entertained the capacity crowd with tales from hockey lore, while comedian Kelly Taylor, well he had us roaring.

But, Mr. Speaker, what makes the gala so spectacular is the sense of community that wraps itself right around this event. It's the over 100 volunteers, 200 sponsors, and gala attendees of all ages that made this spring evening in Bethune a special occasion. With over 240 donated items up for grabs, the gala truly had something for everyone.

This year over \$42,000 was raised, with half the proceeds going to the Bethune Childcare Centre, a facility being built to support a growing community. In fact since its inception in 2013, the Bethune gala fundraising committee machine has raised over \$430,000 for local initiatives.

This, Mr. Speaker, is what community in Saskatchewan is all about, and I ask all members to help me to congratulate this organization for simply being awesome. And I hope to see you all at next year's event.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Concerns Expressed Regarding Government's Fiscal Management

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve a responsible, accountable, and transparent government, a government that has its finances in order and delivers on its promises.

The Saskatchewan people are tired of seeing out-of-control debt by the government opposite, with little to no tangible results to show for it. In six years this Premier has doubled the debt, thanks to his liberal spending. And yet when we ask residents at our Saskatchewan United town halls if they are better off now or six years ago, they always say they are worse off now. They feel betrayed by a government that has promised them so much yet delivered so little, all while doubling the bill.

Mr. Speaker, rooms are filling up at our events with individuals frustrated and angry at how this government has turned their back on them. People feel like the trust they once had in this government has been broken. When they speak out and try to get in touch with their elected representative, they hear all too often the phrase "Well who else are you going to vote for?" The empty words, broken promises and callous behaviour have left so many people in our province without representation.

Mr. Speaker, our party is proud to be a growing home for the Saskatchewan men and women that have been left behind and taken for granted. It's these individuals that built our province, and it's these individuals that will rebuild it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Music Awards Recognizes Exceptional Talent and Great Music

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last December I had the pleasure of bringing greetings to the sixth annual Saskatchewan Music Awards at the Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon. Our government is proud of the exceptional talent and

great music being made right here in the province. And we are pleased to support the excellent work SaskMusic does with funding from Creative Saskatchewan.

This year featured performances from artists who helped shape the industry and our province's vibrant cultural scene today. Awards were given out in 21 categories representing a variety of genres and winners from across Saskatchewan, including Jake Vaadeland from Cut Knife for Roots or Folk Artist of the Year; Jess Moskaluke from Langenburg winning Single of the Year; and Saskatoon's Falynn Baptiste, who won Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year.

I was particularly excited to be in attendance this year, as a familiar face to us all, our digital media officer Spencer Brightman, alongside his collaborator Josh Kraft took home the award for Electronic Artist of the Year. Mr. Speaker, Spencer and Josh formed the group Footwurk in 2018 and have become known around the world for their creativity, technicality, and energetic performances.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in congratulating Spencer and Josh and all the very deserving artists and nominees from this year's SaskMusic Awards. Thank you.

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

Further Recognition for Melville's Award-Winning Mayor

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Melville mayor Walter Streelesky was recently honoured during the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association President's Gala. Mayor Streelesky was awarded an honorary service award for 24 years of municipal service. Mayor Streelesky has been the mayor of the city of Melville for 18 years and a councillor for six years previous to that. The award recognizes long-term dedication to and involvement in their local communities.

Mayor Walter, as he is affectionately referred to, has served on countless boards and community activity boards in the city, many as a founding member, and he has been a tireless advocate for services that support all citizens of the city of Melville. Provincially he serves on the board of directors for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency.

He has overseen multi-million-dollar infrastructure development to support economic growth in his city, from the state-of-the-art event complex, CN Community Centre, built in 2011; to a \$37 million water treatment project that services Melville, Yorkton, and area, built in 2018; to an almost completed wastewater treatment facility. He has been there to support major multi-million-dollar private sector investments in his community by the Prairie Co-op, Sobeys, McDonald's, Tim Hortons, Canadian Tire, Sigma Inn, G3 grain elevator, and many more small, medium, and large businesses in Melville.

Mr. Speaker, in 2020 Mayor Streelesky was awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and in 2023 the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal along with his very supportive wife, Carol Streelesky, who in her own right has been a strong advocate for education and health services for the city of Melville.

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to offer congratulations and best wishes to Mayor Streeleasky on his most recent, well-deserved service award.

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

Investment in Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Increases Training Opportunities

Mr. Friesen: — It's another great day in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Boeing, one of Canada's most recognizable companies, just recently announced an investment of \$17 million into the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. The funds will support services and operations, focusing on the expansion of Saskatoon Aviation Learning Centre to increase training of aircraft maintenance engineers into the province.

With this expansion of training facility, SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] is working to address the shortage of skilled labour in aerospace with talented Indigenous professionals. Boeing's donation is not just an investment towards education, but also an investment in the well-being of First Nations communities and a response to the needs of our growing province. As a result, Saskatchewan business and industries are gaining talent in research and development, helping drive innovation and growth. That is why this year our government is also providing SIIT with \$3.68 million in operating grants and \$27.6 million to support training programs and services.

It is necessary to build a strong and stable workforce that supports the growth occurring in our province today and into the future. Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to help students with the skills and experience they need to build their careers right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Growth in Saskatchewan Exports and Retail Trade Continues

Mr. Nerlien: — Even more great news from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Retail trade is on the rise as the province ranks second in the nation in year-over-year growth, with an increase of 3.9 per cent, or more than three times the national average. Month-over-month retail trade value also ranked second in the nation.

These increases should come as no surprise as Saskatchewan exports also continue to see positive results. Earlier this week we released the province's state of trade report which showed in 2023 provincial exports totalled nearly \$50 billion to 163 countries around the world. This includes 32 countries which saw exports exceeding \$100 million in goods sold. In fact per capita exports totalled \$40,425, ranking first in the nation and over double the national average of 18,925.

Despite all of this great news, the NDP would prefer to talk down Saskatchewan's economy. Maybe that's just what they teach at the Trudeau school of campaigning. Mr. Speaker, we won't take lessons from the opposition. Our government is proud of the Saskatchewan companies and the work they do in providing

sustainable energy solutions, resources, and food to every corner of the planet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Cost of Living and Affordability Measures

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government isn't focused on what matters most to people — the crushing cost of living, families who are forced to pay thousands flying out of the province because they can't get the care that they need here at home, almost 60 per cent of Saskatchewan people struggling just to pay for groceries.

And that poll that the member from Lloydminster quoted, well, Mr. Speaker, that poll shows that the cost of living is the number one issue for Saskatchewan families. Why won't the Premier finally act and suspend the fuel tax to give families a break?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — First, Mr. Speaker, because the fuel tax is invested and added to, into our highways each and every year to ensure that they're safe for our Saskatchewan families and to ensure that our highways are available and in condition where we can export the products that are employing people in the province in our natural resource-based industry.

In addition to that, it's through the strength of that very economy that is utilizing those upgraded highways that we have over 20 000 kilometres upgraded, Mr. Speaker, since we formed government, a commitment to do 10 000 additional kilometres by the year 2030.

It's through the strength of that very economy, Mr. Speaker, that we're able to preserve the over \$2 billion in affordability measures, taking, yes, 112,000 people off the tax rolls because you pay tax at a much higher level in Saskatchewan than you do for instance in NDP Manitoba. Today over \$50,000 you earn, a family of four would earn before they pay tax in this province. That number is about \$26,000 in neighbouring Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

In addition to that we saw tax affordability cheques go out about, just over a year ago, and this year Saskatchewan residents will not be paying the carbon tax on their home heating, electricity, or natural gas, Mr. Speaker, unlike anywhere else in the nation.

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

Contract for Tire Recycling

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing when it comes to the cost of living, but they're also failing when it comes to accountability and to transparency. Now we've asked about changes that were made to a lucrative contract under this Premier's watch that saw a tire recycling contract go to a company from Newport Beach, California.

But, Mr. Speaker, neither the Premier nor his Minister of Environment have had the courage to face reporters to answer questions. Why isn't the Premier taking questions? What is he afraid of?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate when we see a number of, you know, various drive-by smears that come from the members opposite.

And so what I would say very . . . what I would say very, you know, quickly and succinctly in this particular case: no one met with a consultant in this case from government, Mr. Speaker. I would say that the consultant was actually hired by the company six months after they received the one contract.

I would also say, Mr. Speaker, that the RFP [request for proposal] that is being referred to is not government's. The RFP is from an organization called Tire Stewardship Saskatchewan, Tire Stewardship Saskatchewan, which is an industry-led board, which is an industry-led board that has industry reps from across the province on it, Mr. Speaker.

And if there's questions with respect to that RFP or any other RFP that Tire Stewardship Saskatchewan is putting out, I would encourage the members opposite or the media to contact Tire Stewardship Saskatchewan. It's their RFP, Mr. Speaker, representing their members that are charging the recycling fees across the province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Well no more accountability there, Mr. Speaker. Now the Premier noted that there was an RFP. Let's take a look at that RFP. It explicitly excluded the Saskatchewan company that was already doing the work. I quote:

There's currently a single tire processor in the province, located in Saskatoon, and the TSS is interested in having a second processor, ideally in the southern part of the province.

Mr. Speaker, there's more:

The TSS, through this RFP, is looking to increase value-added processing in the province with new products and/or new markets, and wants to minimize overlap with the offerings of the existing processor in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I end the quote.

Why was this RFP written to explicitly exclude the Saskatchewan company that was already doing the work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — As was acknowledged in the Leader of the Opposition's question, Mr. Speaker, this is Tire Stewardship Saskatchewan's RFP. That question needs to be directed at Tire Stewardship Saskatchewan. I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition or anyone else there with questions to do so.

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

Ms. Conway: — What a weak answer from that Premier. The TSS [Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan] is a government agency, and the legislation is right here and I'm happy to table it, Mr. Speaker.

It's plain to see from the members opposite behaviour that they don't want us asking questions about this deal that saw a company from Newport Beach, California walk away with this contract, Mr. Speaker. The minister yesterday extolled the virtues of CRM [Crumb Rubber Manufacturers] for creating "dozens, if not 15 . . ." jobs. But her decision led to the layoff of over 60 workers in Saskatoon, and there are more jobs hanging in the balance.

But you know what they say, Mr. Speaker: where there's smoke, there's fire. Or maybe in this case where there's smoke, there's a tire fire. The RFP was written to exclude a Saskatchewan company already doing the work and to favour a company who hired Kevin Doherty as their lobbyist.

Why was this RFP written to shut out a Saskatchewan company already doing the work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I dismiss the entire question and premise of the question coming from the member opposite. It is wrong on many levels. The Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan is an independent industry-led organization that manages tire recycling in the province. Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan issued an open and public procurement process for recycling tires in southern Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan has no role in awarding the procurement contract.

It is our understanding . . . Are you listening, or what are you doing, man? It is our understanding that Mr. Doherty was not hired by CRM until November of 2022, months after the public procurement process — I'll say it slower for you if you would like — process for southern Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — I just want to remind the minister to speak through the Chair. I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday we asked about this shady tire deal and the Premier didn't take questions from reporters. Yesterday I asked questions about this deal to the minister, and she didn't answer a single question from reporters either. It all makes you wonder, what are they so afraid of over there? The minister is pointing fingers at the TSS, but she and she alone is responsible as minister for the tire recycling program in this province.

Section 5(3) of the scrap tire management Act, Mr. Speaker, she approves product stewardship programs. She and she alone approves any terms and . . . [inaudible] . . . she considers appropriate. I'd encourage her to review her guiding legislation a little better. Does she have the courage to face the media and defend her decisions today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan has no role in awarding any procurement contract. The Ministry of Environment's role is one of oversight to ensure that all commitments are fulfilled under the scrap tire recycling program.

And I'll come back to Mr. Doherty. He was hired by CRM in 2022, in November. The contract was awarded by TSS to CRM in June of 2022. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, this government promised to be the most open and accountable and transparent government in Saskatchewan history. How far they have fallen from that lofty goal.

This crackerjack, this crackerjack Minister of Environment who used to fight crime on the streets of Regina, apparently she's too afraid to show up and answer the media's questions — basic answers about her government's choices, choices that saw a contract handed to a company from Newport Beach, California and resulted in 60 layoffs in Saskatoon.

Will the minister have the courage to face the media later this morning? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I'd just like to remind the member not to make personal comments about another member. I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, I did speak to the media yesterday afternoon, for the member's information.

And again it is about that Trudeau's-choice NDP Party over there that continues to smear members of the public and . . .

The Speaker: — Would the minister answer the question? I mean you're getting into areas you shouldn't be talking about, Minister.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I spoke to the media yesterday, Mr. Speaker. If that's all they want to know, that's what they got.

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

Health Care Staffing and Provision of Pediatric Care

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This tired and out-of-touch government is clearly failing on transparency, and they're failing to deliver on health care.

Ever since, ever since the last pediatric gastroenterologist left the province, we've had family after family coming to this legislature to sound the alarm about the lack of access here in Saskatchewan. Yesterday it was the Weber family, but we've had so many more families — the Soron family, the Englot family, the Fleck family. So many kids forced to go without the care that they need here in this province. So many families forced to pay thousands of

dollars out of their own pocket to travel out of this province for the care that they should be able to get here.

Does the minister take any responsibility for letting things get so bad?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we have talked about in this Chamber, we are making significant historic investments into health care. That includes into children's care in this province. The opening of the children's hospital in Saskatoon in September of 2019, where we are making record investments into a variety of services there. Last year's budget, two and a half million dollars for a pediatric gastroenterology multidisciplinary team at the children's hospital, Mr. Speaker, and in this year's budget, an over-six-hundred-thousand-dollar increase over and above the investment the year before.

Mr. Speaker, I would say in addition to that, as I've stated, the crews and the officials at the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] and the health recruitment agency are working very hard, as it is a priority for this government to fill the vacancies that we have for pediatric gastroenterology. In the meantime, we have locums providing service, as much as we can, to families in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister can talk about the efforts to hire these specialists, but when we raised the case for the Sorons on April 10th, the minister said that they were in the final stages of getting two pediatric GIs [gastroenterologist] hired. But just two days later, two pediatric GI positions were then posted to the saskdocs website. It doesn't add up.

The minister said the same thing yesterday, Mr. Speaker. Are they actually any closer to filling the pediatric gastroenterology positions in Saskatoon, and will families finally be spared the cost of paying to access for care outside of the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The SHA and the officials remain, continue to work on the finalizing of the contracts for two pediatric gastroenterologists. And that work is continuing. This does not happen overnight, and I am assured that they are working to fill those vacancies and to hire those staff, Mr. Speaker.

And in addition to that, we have made a number of significant other hirings over the past number of years when it comes to pediatric care, Mr. Speaker. In January a pediatric neurologist was hired for Saskatchewan. In December a pediatric psychiatrist was hired here in Saskatchewan. November, a pediatric oncologist hired to work here in Saskatchewan. October, a pediatric emergency department physician was hired, Mr. Speaker.

Those are just some of the recent hirings for pediatric care that have been accomplished here in our province, and we're going to

continue to hire those staff so that we can provide that care here in our province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the government continues to hire, but pediatric specialists continue to leave this province at a worse rate. This government is failing to recruit and retain pediatric specialists, and the children's hospital can't see our sick kids. Let's talk about the vacancies that we're still experiencing, Mr. Speaker: pediatric emergency medicine, pediatric allergists, pediatric neurologists, pediatric respirologists, and the list goes on and on.

I asked the minister this question yesterday and he didn't answer, so I'm going to ask it again today. How many kids are being sent out of province due to this minister's inability to recruit and retain pediatric specialists?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, I would say prior to the opening of the children's hospital in September of 2019, there were a lot more children being sent out of province because there wasn't a children's hospital in this province.

Now it's important to recognize that we are trying to provide as many services as close to home as possible, Mr. Speaker, knowing of course that . . . are sometimes very, very complicated cases, cases that perhaps can only be handled by one specialist in the entire country — sometimes not even available in Canada.

So we're going to continue to hire these specialists, and I'll continue on my list of successes when it comes to hirings in the area of pediatric care, Mr. Speaker. A pediatric general surgeon was hired last summer. A pediatric emergency medicine specialist. Another pediatric oncologist hired April of 2023. A child and youth psychiatrist, March of last year, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

I know the members opposite don't want to hear it — the member for Elphinstone who's already had her questions, but she's not done apparently; the member for Meewasin who never gets questions. No wonder, Mr. Speaker. This government is going to continue to invest in health care.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Government's Energy Policies

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, in documents published by the government last fall, they project their net zero decarbonizing transition of our energy grid will cost taxpayers upward of \$57 billion. This is just a projection, Mr. Speaker. I shouldn't have to remind this government that all their capital projects run over budget — the Prince Albert hospital being a prime example, currently three times over budget.

After they are done decarbonizing our province, SaskPower is openly projecting power bills will increase by approximately 175

per cent. So after spending tens of billions of tax dollars to radically transform our energy grid, and as a reward taxpayers can expect their power bill to almost triple.

Mr. Speaker, how can the government defend such a ridiculous plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What certainly is not helping is an NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa that is putting in place clean electricity regulations that will be devastating to our province and to our economy. That's why we have provided feedback to the clean electricity regulation feedback session to indicate that this is impossible for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

That's why, frankly, we need a change from that Liberal-NDP coalition. And frankly that's why it's disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition and her Labour critic would have attended a Trudeau campaign school in Ottawa last week, Mr. Speaker. This is why we need to ensure that we have a made-in-Saskatchewan plan that can ensure that we have a grid that can support a growing province and a growing population, Mr. Speaker, and keep rates as low as possible. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Crime Rates and Policing Services

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the new provincial RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] deal, the Minister for Policing and Public Safety stated, "The citizens of Saskatchewan have asked this government to make sure that their communities are safe." Yes, Mr. Speaker, they have been asking that for years, ever since that Premier took over, while that government has done nothing.

As Assistant Commissioner Blackmore stated, "The Saskatchewan RCMP has been long understaffed." At the beginning of the year, Saskatchewan's office per capita ratio was at its lowest point in decades, Mr. Speaker. That is the record of this government.

Why did it take the Sask United Party and constant questioning in this Chamber over the government's failing record on crime for them to finally act?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And this government is very proud of our record working with the RCMP and specifically with Assistant Commissioner Blackmore. We've had the opportunity . . . And if the member opposite actually attended or watched committee, she would see that I presented this to the opposition, a letter of support from our Finance minister, our Deputy Premier, on go-forward funding for RCMP officers. We have up to 180 RCMP officers that we are prepared to fund in the provincial coffers, a letter that was sent to them a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker.

We are waiting on the federal commitment to be able to make sure that they pay their half to be able to fund the RCMPs that are in Saskatchewan. Until that point, Mr. Speaker, we have our other specialized teams that are working around the clock to make sure that our communities are safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Parental Rights and Education Legislation

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, if the government needs a reminder, it was Sask United that forced action on parental rights as well. After their embarrassment in Lumsden-Morse, the government indicated they were finally going to listen to parents.

We told the government to introduce pro-parental-rights policies, and they did, even though it didn't go far enough. We told them to evoke the non-withstanding clause. They did. When the dust settled and the Premier was asked how was he going to enforce these parental rights, he said he had no clue, no clue how it was going to be enforced. And it wasn't up to his government, and he passed the buck to the school boards. Smoke and mirrors once again.

It's always the case with this government, Mr. Speaker. Plenty of talk and no action. How can this government say they are defending parental rights when they won't even uphold the parental rights legislation they passed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was this government that brought in Bill 137 to this House in the fall, Mr. Speaker. That is provincial law now. It is something that we stand behind. You cannot put a price on defending parental rights in this province, compared to the NDP who would repeal Bill 137 and take away the rights of parents to be involved in their children's lives.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, I ask this government again, where is the teeth in the parental bill of rights? Where is the governance from the Ministry of Education? Parents want to know, will this government introduce amendments to the parental bill of rights that will ensure its enforcement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In case that member opposite forgot her time in government, Bill 137 is the law of the province, Mr. Speaker. This government will always look for more ways to involve parents in their children's lives. That is the priority of this government.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Government's Energy Policies

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well all these answers

today are no answers, so I ask again.

Since the Prince Albert hospital is a prime example, three times over budget . . . are they done decarbonizing our province? SaskPower is openly projecting power bills will increase by approximately 175 per cent — I say that again — 175 per cent. So how can the government defend such a ridiculous plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I certainly always enjoy the phone-a-friend section of question period. I'll just say that the Chinook power plant in Swift Current came in under budget and on time, Mr. Speaker. We're expecting the same for Great Plains in Moose Jaw, and we were pleased to announce the Aspen project is going to go forward to ensure that we have baseload power, reliable power for a growing province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I want to know: what is the government's commitment on renewable energy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're going to ensure that we have an all-of-the-above approach. We're going to ensure that we have natural gas. We're looking at small modular reactor. And yes, renewables are going to be a part of the plan going forward. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to know if the Government of Saskatchewan is going to shut down coal, and how soon.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly be looking to ensure that we can run coal as long as possible, Mr. Speaker, and that'll be easier the minute that we get rid of an NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Ms. Wilson: — I think the people of Saskatchewan would like to know when you are going to shut it down. When are you going to shut down coal production?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that a Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa has gotten us to this point, Mr. Speaker. We're going to run it as long as we can.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present the 10th report, which includes 2024-25 estimates and the 2023-24 supplementary estimates no. 2.

I move:

That the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2024* without amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that this bill be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 156, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2024* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 156 — *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2024*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024* without amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 157, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 157 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2024*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024* without amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill now be read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 159, *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 159 — *The Revenue and Financial Services Amendment Act, 2024*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Provision of Emergency Shelter

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Interesting day in the House so far this morning. Members opposite extremely triggered over there over some of the topics, I guess, that were raised during question period. And I don't think it's going to necessarily get any better, given the 75-minute topic of debate today which has to do with the Sunrise scandal, Mr. Speaker. It has to do with this Sask Party's government practice, the practice of the Ministry of Social Services of paying inflated rates to hotels here in the city of Regina connected to Sask Party MLAs, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

You know, there's been a lot on this, Mr. Speaker, and I think what I'll do is just start at the beginning, back in October 2023. And it's interesting to think about what actually led to the discovery of this practice, this shameful practice, was the eviction of a senior citizen, Evelyn Harper, from Cedar Wood Manor, from her Sask Housing Corporation unit.

And why was Evelyn Harper evicted, Mr. Speaker? Not because she wasn't paying her rent, but because she couldn't actually access the in-home supports that she needed to, to live an independent life. And then instead of work with Evelyn to find her a situation that would work for her and her grandson, under this government she was simply kicked out onto the street.

She called a cab, Mr. Speaker. And she didn't have anywhere else to go and she asked the cab driver to take her to a hotel. So the cab took her to the Sunrise Motel, Mr. Speaker. She checked into the Sunrise Motel, which is now a famous motel, Mr. Speaker, and she was charged a rate of about 100 bucks a night.

Now Evelyn Harper is a tremendous self-advocate. She contacted media about her situation or somehow media became aware of what had happened. Evelyn Harper was interviewed and she captured the hearts and the minds of the people of Saskatchewan. They saw this situation and they thought it was unacceptable. And Ms. Harper came also to this Legislative Assembly and she asked for help from this government. And eventually the minister stepped in and agreed to rehouse her — and to his credit that happened — but also cover her stay at the Sunrise Motel.

But something happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, once the Ministry of Social Services stepped in to cover that bill. Evelyn Harper, who had paid a damage deposit, who had been charged a market rate for someone coming in off the street, was suddenly charged \$200 a night — 200 bucks a night at the Sunrise Motel.

So Evelyn, she came to me and she said, wow, I mean something doesn't seem right here. And I said, well Evelyn I agree with you, and did you know that the Sunrise Motel is owned by a Sask Party

MLA? Well that shocked her and she wanted to pursue the matter further, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that's triggered a process, a six-month process where we have had to doggedly pursue basic numbers from the least transparent government in Saskatchewan history, Mr. Speaker.

It has taken us six months to get how much was paid out to the Sunrise Motel and to the other hotel connected to Sask Party MLA from Regina Northeast, the Thriftlodge motel, Mr. Speaker. Because when these Sunrise Motel answers finally came out in the new year about four months later, they showed that this Ministry of Social Services did almost no business with the Sunrise Motel. \$1,309 were paid out to the Sunrise Motel during the three years leading up to the election that saw its owner join this Sask Party government — \$1,309 total, Mr. Speaker.

And what did we see after that 2020 election? What did we see when the owner of that hotel joined the Sask Party government? Well we saw him make double, triple the salary that he gets thanks to the Saskatchewan taxpayers through the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. That's what we saw.

And they're groaning over there. The member from Kindersley is groaning, oh God, they're bringing it up again. The member from Kindersley, when the Leader of the Opposition started bringing up the RFP today, asked audibly if she could even read it. That's the stuff they're made out of over there. They don't want to talk about this. They're fine to launch base . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, how dare we raise this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The whole thing stinks, Mr. Speaker. So those Sunrise Motel numbers, very concerning to say the least. We had a Minister of Social Services stand up and say, here it is, folks. That's it; there are no . . . When he was asked a direct question from reporters, are there any other hotels connected to Sask Party MLAs, he said no. He said no.

Part of the package of disclosure that we got from the Sask Party government finally in early February showed the three top hotels utilized by the Ministry of Social Services, and one of the three top-utilized hotels by the Ministry of Social Services was the Sunrise Motel. You know what the other top three utilized hotels . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Okay, enough of this going back and forth. Let's continue and listen to the motion.

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know what the other top-utilized hotel by the Ministry of Social Services here in Regina was? The Thriftlodge motel. The Thriftlodge motel, which is listed as a source of income for the member from Regina Northeast. He's an investor in that hotel, Mr. Speaker. So we asked, well I think we'd also like to see numbers going back five years for the Thriftlodge motel because we're concerned it might follow the same pattern as the Sunrise Motel, which saw almost zero business with the ministry before 2020, and then suddenly an explosion of business to this hotel.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it took a while to get those numbers. We had to FOI [freedom of information] it. We had to ask written questions. Finally along came estimates. We asked the questions

and we finally got those answers. I believe it was a week or two ago.

And the results could . . . I could never have imagined that they would have been any worse than they are, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Zero — zero business with the Ministry of Social Services, the Thriftlodge hotel, before that member was elected. Zero dollars went from the Ministry of Social Services to the Thriftlodge hotel prior to the 2020 election. And then again we saw an explosion of payments out to this hotel — three-quarters of a million dollars, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This isn't chump change, but it's not even about the amounts. And it's not even about the fact that these hotels were suddenly the ministry's pick, the most-utilized hotels in Regina . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry? The ministry's what? Payer, yeah. The most-utilized hotels by the Ministry of Social Services — \$1,300 to three-quarters of a million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But that's not even the worst part. When you look at the average rates, we got the average rates paid by the top-utilized hotels in Saskatchewan. The Thriftlodge hotel charges the most inflated rate out of any other hotel used in the province of Saskatchewan. When you compare the market rate of the Thriftlodge hotel to the average rate paid by the Ministry of Social Services, it is inflated more than any other hotel in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is unacceptable and we have not gotten a satisfactory answer from the member from Regina Northeast, nor the Minister of Social Services, about how that happened. It's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

The second-most inflated rate paid out to hotels across Saskatchewan? I don't know if the members out there want to guess. Does anyone want to guess? The Sunrise Motel, Mr. Speaker. The Sunrise Motel charged an average rate of 65 per cent over the market rate. And in the case of Evelyn Harper, who by the way paid a damage deposit, so that whole explanation about how these inflated rates are driven by the fact that the ministry doesn't cover damage deposits . . . This is an individual who put that money down and was still charged \$200 a night by the Sunrise Motel, a 100 per cent markup from their market rate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Unacceptable, and we still haven't gotten satisfactory answers. Oh, they've explained this by the damage deposit. Again Evelyn Harper, she paid a damage deposit. She struggled to get it back. I think I had to write an open letter to the member from Regina Northeast and post it to Twitter before he would finally return those dollars to her. I tried to get it other ways. I called the hotel. We wrote private letters. It took publicly shaming him to get that money back to Ms. Evelyn Harper, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now if we take the Minister of Social Services at his word that there just weren't checks and balances in place . . . They like to say, oh, this is the practice that has gone back for years. Well as soon as he discovered that this transpired, it is now his responsibility to do everything in his power to make sure that this never happens again.

And one of the reasons this was allowed to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that individual amounts that go out to hotels, annual amounts that go out to hotels are not reported in volume 2 of Public Accounts like other amounts to payees. Anything

over \$50,000 has to be in volume 2 of Public Accounts, but this whole area is an exception to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And had it not been an exception to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, back in 2021 someone would have been able to go to volume 2 of Public Accounts and say, oh jeez; a hotel owned by a Sask Party MLA is getting well over \$50,000 suddenly from the Ministry of Social Services. And we could have nipped it right in the bud back then, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what did I do in committee? I asked the Minister of Social Services. I said, Minister, given everything that has happened, taking you at your word, your honest word that you had nothing to do with this, that you didn't know about it, that there weren't sufficient checks and balances in place, surely you are going to do everything you can and you are going to change this practice so that amounts paid out to hotels are reported in volume 2 of Public Accounts. What was the answer, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The answer was nope, we're not going to do that; we're going to continue with the status quo, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to continue with the status quo.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately what we see from this government is a pattern. A pattern of a lack of transparency. A pattern of situations that raise questions with the public. Awarding sole-source health care contracts to out-of-province companies, to donors of the Sask Party.

You know, I can hear the Deputy Government House Leader accusing me of smearing this government. The numbers speak for themselves. They are right there in black and white. And it is so sad that, instead of seeing a bit of contrition from that former minister of Social Services — some of this would have transpired under her watch — instead of saying, “wow, yeah, this is concerning; we're going to do everything in our power to make sure that this never happens again,” they dismiss me. They accuse me of personal smears, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have doggedly pursued these numbers, and I have gotten them, and they're right here in black and white: \$1,300 before the 2020 election, three-quarters of a million dollars after.

People do not want to see their money going out to Sask Party MLA businesses. They want to see their money going to schools, to roads, to sustainable housing. That is the last place that they want to see their taxpayer money going, to Sask Party MLA businesses — period, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately what we see here is a pattern, an established pattern. And I am so disappointed to see that, instead of doing everything that they can to ensure that something like this never happens again — the bare minimum of which would be to report these numbers through volume 2 of Public Accounts — they have not. They voted down our previous motion to have a special investigation from the Provincial Auditor so we can have the results of that investigation before the election. I hope they won't vote it down again. Now we have two hotels, lockstep, following the same lockstep pattern, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with that, it is my pleasure to move the following motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to request a special investigation by the Provincial Auditor into the government's use of public funds to pay for motel stays through the Ministry of Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, this motion is the absolute bare minimum if this government wants to claim to be an open and transparent government. So with that I do so move this motion, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to request a special investigation by the Provincial Auditor into the government's use of public funds to pay for motel stays through the Ministry of Social Services.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's an honour to get up and speak in this House today on this motion, Mr. Speaker. And it's an honour to stand up and speak in this House at any time, and especially when I have some constituents here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to speak . . . I'm going to paint a bit of a picture for the opposition. And I think they should understand what this is about, but I feel like maybe they don't. So I'm going to start and just talk about our homeless strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this absolutely pertains to this topic. And this year — I think it was in October or November — we announced over \$40 million into our strategy for the homeless. And, Mr. Speaker, this government is absolutely invested in the people of our communities and our province that are the most vulnerable. And we will continue to do those investments, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And part of these are some of the new homeless shelters that we've announced, going to some 30-bed spaces that we actively have the municipalities in Saskatoon and Regina, I believe, looking for facilities, suitable locations for these 30-bed facilities that will be run by Mustard Seed, which is a great organization giving full wraparound supports to the people that need them the most, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And another really important piece, moving from homeless shelters as they are a temporary shelter, is our complex-needs facilities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we have one of them that went in recently. I think it's going to be up and operational in the next couple of weeks, or maybe a month. But it's in Saskatoon just out of Riversdale; it's actually in the Saskatoon Centre constituency.

And I've met with many of the community members there — many, many different organizations in that community as well — explaining to them the benefit and the services provided in that facility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because that's going to be a secure facility with also full supports in that facility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they're actually . . . the people in that facility are the ones that are at risk of either harming themselves or harming others, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So you know, that is another investment that we've done. I know there's one to be going in Regina as well.

But those are really important tools in our tool kit. And the best way to really explain how we solve problems like this in this

province and help our most vulnerable is we have to come at this from many different angles. And so we need a lot of tools in that tool box in order to properly help our most vulnerable people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about supportive housing because — and in the whole theme of the hand up — as we, you know, help, there's social services or any of the surrounding supports in these different facilities that I previously mentioned. As we move from that, we need some supportive housing as people get back on their feet. And this government has invested over \$830 million into supportive housing — \$830 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I know the members opposite talk about we don't do enough; we never do enough. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm very proud of the investments, that we look after in our province our most vulnerable, and really for the people that maybe need a little help with their struggle with mental health and addictions, and part of that being our 24 locations of rapid access to counselling.

This is all part of this whole motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I will get there; I'm just . . . The transitional or supportive housing is such an important piece that we need to talk about. And I was talking to, involved with my community-based organizations very often. And there's talks of one going in very close to . . . well actually in the Riversdale constituency. Supportive housing going in there with . . . And I believe it was 37 beds is what it was going to be. And I just had that conversation yesterday when I was in Saskatoon briefly for an announcement.

But our community-based organizations do such an amazing job as well helping out. We had our St. Mary's community church that actually had a temporary warm-up this winter. And they did some great work for us as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm going to touch . . . The Salvation Army, one of the things we've tried over there is Social Services has a worker there full-time. And it's been a real blessing as the executive director, Gordon, has talked to me about this numerous times, how much that is a help to really give the people of our province that really are the most vulnerable a hand up, to help them through their programs and services that we offer.

And you know, we talk about the budget and what's in the budget, and of course the members opposite talk about what's not in the budget. There's nothing new apparently, according to the NDP opposition. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to touch on the supplementary employment income benefit.

And this is such a great program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now you've moved through the phases and you got a hand up and you got a part-time job and you're working and you've got your kids. And this is a top-up income for people that are trying to really develop a good life for themselves and their families. And with three children you get up to \$600 per month, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we can't call that nothing. That is a very significant investment, with over \$17 million in this program, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I do also want to touch on . . . I'm going to talk a little bit about a constituency story in my area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this is touching on the hotel piece. And in the winter — I believe it was the Minister of Corrections and Policing was the minister of Social Services at the time — I got a call on a Friday morning

quite early. And a constituent with their kids, in fact the youngest wasn't even a year old, their furnace had went down in their house. And they were on social assistance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And very quickly this was moved into casework.

And as the member from Regina Elphinstone should know, we don't debate casework on the floor of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. We look after that in our offices and in this building. And this was very quickly moved on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that family, because there was such a flood of furnaces going down and urgent needs that there was no company that was able to get there on time on that Friday, so they were actually put in a hotel, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they were so grateful for that.

And really, this is what this is about. This is about putting the people of this province, our most vulnerable people, putting them first and making sure that we have all of the wraparound services and supports for those vulnerable people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that was such a touching case in point for me, is to see this family get supported by our ministry and very quickly.

So I don't want to put a price on the safety and the well-being of members in my community, for sure, and members, community people, and members anywhere in this province. So I will always want to back a government like ours, that has such significant investments into our social services, our health.

Our mental health and addictions is over \$570 million this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that really ties to everything in my picture that I've been talking about, because it's really a recovery-oriented system of care, the ROSC model, which is really providing all those avenues of care. So many tools in that tool box. We're going for 500 beds over the next couple of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I believe we're almost at 200 already in the first year.

And so I'm so proud of these significant investments because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're about helping the most vulnerable on this side of the House and we're about getting them those supports that they need when they need them. And we will continue to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I'm going to wrap up my comments, and I just want to say to the people of this province, to the members, the constituents of Saskatoon Riversdale, thank you so much for your support. And I will continue to be your voice in this government, and look at what we've done just over this last couple of years alone. So thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's so nice to hear just how much this Sask Party government cares for the most vulnerable in our society. I really, really appreciated the member from Saskatoon Riversdale mansplaining Social Services programming to the people of Saskatchewan on this floor today.

But I digress, Mr. Speaker. As we always do say, it's an honour to enter into these 75-minute debates on the motion that the Assembly calls . . . Now I will read the motion so that the members opposite know to speak to the motion:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to request a special investigation by the Provincial Auditor into the government's use of public funds to pay for motel stays through the Ministry of Social Services.

Just so that the future debaters know where we are, where we're debating today. And, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to join my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre in pressing this government to do the right thing by sending the Sunrise scandal to the Provincial Auditor for a special investigation to be completed for the people of this province before the provincial election in October 2024.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are owed an explanation on this situation before they go to the polls. It's unconscionable to think that this government, once thought to be the most transparent — or said to be the most transparent — would decide to push off scandals until after a provincial election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about Evelyn Harper. In early November 2022, the opposition invited Evelyn Harper to her legislature to tell her story about being evicted from a government care home and her subsequent stay at the Sunrise Motel.

Now prior to her eviction, Ms. Harper had been a model tenant of Cedar Wood Manor, the government care home she had resided in for four years. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Evelyn was given three days' notice of an eviction and made to vacate her home with no alternative plan in place, no place to go. Cuts to care home services led to the home citing that she could no longer live there because she needed more care, something that Ms. Harper refused as she had family offering the care where home care services had been cut and no longer offered.

Lastly, she was notified by the care home that her unit was also in need of cockroach treatment. The rental board has described this unit as "cockroaches falling from the ceiling," Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let that image sink in for you. Care homes, for the most vulnerable in our province, with cockroaches falling from the ceiling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the events surrounding Ms. Harper's eviction in one of the richest countries in the world, in one of the richest provinces in Canada, is downright horrifying. That anyone could be evicted from their government care home with no assistance, no plan in place to ensure that they had a warm place to go, is downright inhumane and falls on this government. It's an awful, cold-hearted government that would allow such a situation to happen. Shame, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Ms. Harper was evicted from her care home unceremoniously, rolled out into the cold in her wheelchair, forced to call a cab, which evidently, in our story, takes her to the Sunrise Motel. She's quoted to say, "I wouldn't wish this upon anybody. To be homeless, to be kicked out of the place that you live, it's been the scariest thing of my life." She goes on to quote, "I've been in such shock and disbelief, not knowing what I'm going to do or where I am going to go." She said that Wednesday in the rotunda of her legislature.

From the same *Regina Leader-Post* news article, Harper says she

called Mobile Crisis after being rolled out of her home, who directed her to the Ministry of Social Services, but government officials told her she wouldn't be eligible for funds until her most recent monthly pension had gone through. A cold call, Mr. Speaker, on the Ministry of Social Services.

[11:30]

Thankfully Ms. Harper got in touch with the constituency office of my colleague in Regina Elphinstone-Centre, who leapt into action to ensure that Ms. Harper's stay would be taken care of, as we worked with the Ministry of Social Services to find appropriate accommodations for Ms. Harper. Again, Mr. Speaker, that it takes a constituency office getting involved to ensure that a vulnerable citizen of our province is cared for — absolutely shameful.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this story would be shocking on its own. This alone, this story alone would be enough to question this government's priorities. In the case of this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government, they are priorities to big out-of-province donors. That's where their priorities lie — to well-connected former Finance minister lobbyists and, soon to be revealed in this saga, well-connected Sask Party MLAs. This one, we should . . . We really should be entitling this the Sunrise Motel soap opera.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the plot really thickens on the story. Now we determine that the Sunrise Motel is owned by none other than a Sask Party MLA, the member from Regina Northeast. Under regular conditions, a stay at the Sunrise Motel would run the average person about \$80 — let's be serious; this isn't the Hotel Sask. How do we know? We called them.

Ms. Harper checked in on her own, paid a damage deposit, but when management found out who was footing the bill, the rates went up. She paid 132. Soon it went up to 200. She did not receive her damage deposit back until we publicly shamed the MLA member of this Sask Party government to return that deposit.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the plot continues to thicken. The least transparent government in history votes down our motion. After learning of this, after bringing this to the floor, they vote down our motion to send this to the Provincial Auditor. And instead we will learn we will not receive their support until 2024. Pressing on the fall, it reveals that the member from Regina Northeast had received 731,000 in government business since he was elected in 2022.

I'm going to put that in context for the people listening here. \$730,000 would buy you a pretty nice home anywhere here in Saskatchewan. It would buy the Finance minister a nice larger home in Saskatchewan. That's what \$731,000 means to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's how we're going to relate it today.

You know, prior to 2020, that hotel group didn't receive much at all. We saw maybe 1,000 bucks. And then we start to see the government business roll in when this member is elected in 2020, and when this Social Services minister shacks up in a constituency office on that side of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more written than I have time for but, you know, we can look at these — 37,000 in '21-22; 220,000 in 2022-2023 — years. In the first six months of the '23-24 fiscal year, Sunrise Motel got \$110,000. That's more than most people make in salary in a year, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And then suddenly we have more revelations. In fact we learn after pressing and pressing and pressing, and letters written and FOIs sent and letters to the minister — fix this problem — we learn that there's another motel involved in the Sunrise Motel scandal. Let's add the Thriftlodge motel to that number. It's another income and revenue stream for the MLA in this Sask Party government. Shocking, shocking numbers, Mr. Speaker.

I would encourage everyone to go and take a peek at those since I won't have enough time, and my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has already done such a good job of putting them on the record.

But, Mr. Speaker, these are public dollars going into the pocket of a Sask Party MLA. Great connections, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think any small-business owner in this province wishes they were a Sask Party MLA to start receiving such lucrative cuts.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we come down to the end here, I'm going to ask a few questions. Why did it take so long to get that information? This was the most transparent government in Saskatchewan's history we're working with. That number should be available. It should be given easily if this the most transparent government. No, we worked through costly FOIs, written questions, letters to the minister. Why block those requests? Why block a special investigation?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve answers on the Sunrise scandal, and that's why we brought this debate to this floor today. I really hope we'll hear some thoughts from these Sask Party MLAs speaking to this motion as we head forward with this debate.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I will reiterate our call on the government to call a special investigation by the Provincial Auditor into the use of government funds for motel stays through the Ministry of Social Services before the October 2024 provincial election, so that the people of Saskatchewan have all the facts before them from their most illustrious 17-year, most transparent Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And with that I'll take my seat, and I look forward to the debate portion that we'll find in a moment.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to begin my comments on this debate by sincerely thanking the 1,900 social and community workers along with the many, many CBOs [community-based organization] around the province who work tirelessly every day with a sincere and deep commitment to helping and supporting the most vulnerable in our communities. We need to be there for them.

It's not an easy job and can even be very emotional and heart-wrenching job to do when doing their very best each day to meet the needs and find the supports for those individuals who find

themselves homeless or seeking shelter for a number of reasons. That is why we have stepped up as a government with a record 1.54 billion in social services investments in the 2024-25 budget, an increase of 112 million, or 7.8 per cent, over last year's budget.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ministry's priority has always been and continues to be the safety and well-being of individuals, children, and family. Every day ministry staff have to balance urgency, safety, and cost-effectiveness when supporting the most vulnerable people in Saskatchewan. And yes, at times they need to use hotels or motels in many communities across the province. When an emergency shelter is not available or has no room, or if that shelter doesn't meet the needs of the individual or family, a hotel room may be needed. There are emergency shelters in many of our communities, but that shelter may not be the best placement in considering the immediate circumstance of the individual, circumstances which may include families at risk of being homeless; individuals fleeing interpersonal violence; maintaining a family unit, which a shelter can't always accommodate; even supporting caregivers are preventing a child from entering ministry care.

I know the Lloydminster Interval Home in my city is sometimes full, and a woman or mom and her children fleeing interpersonal violence has to be temporarily accommodated in a hotel. The Lloydminster Interval Home Society does amazing work in supporting women and women and their children fleeing from domestic violence. And that's why it was such a proud moment for me a few weeks ago to announce and present to them, on behalf the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, an additional \$160,000 over and above their annual funding to help with their increasing operational costs.

This government takes the protection of people and public safety seriously. And that is why in this budget we have dedicated over 16 million to address homelessness with new emergency shelter spaces and supportive housing. A total of 40.2 million will create 155 new supportive housing spaces, 120 permanent emergency shelter spaces, and 30 new complex-needs emergency shelter spaces. And I can tell you as of January 2024 the Ministry of Social Service now provides funding for 528 emergency shelter spaces across the province.

Our focus on community outreach continues to support individuals where they are with a \$690,000 increase into supporting mobile workforce staff on site and adding an additional 10 employees within different CBOs. Saskatchewan Housing Corporation aims to help those that have difficulty maintaining housing due to disability, mental health and addictions, or other factors.

I want to mention a community organization in the city of Lloydminster who, since last fall, has been working with Saskatchewan housing authority, Social Services, and SHA mental health and addictions staff to house and support, to date, 21 individuals whom otherwise would still be homeless. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is The Olive Tree with CEO [chief executive officer] Becky Schille who started Homebase.

I had the opportunity to meet with Becky and discuss the program and what it means for people in our community. Becky and her staff have done a tremendous job of helping individuals get off

the street into accommodations of their own, have helped them get ID [identification] if needed, have helped them get SIS [Saskatchewan income support] or SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] financial support depending on their situation, given their responsibilities and goals, and provide them continued daily support and monitoring to lead them on to a positive path of self-sufficiency. Becky and her staff believe having a safe place to live and to have the ongoing supports needed has boosted these individuals' confidence and has put them on the road to a much better life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year our government is investing an additional 7.4 million into SIS, which will be the third year in a row the program has seen an increase. As well an investment of an additional 250,000 into trusteeship and money-management support, which will allow CBOs to expand by 150 spaces. And I'll note that since 2020-2021 the number of trusteeship spaces available for clients has more than doubled from 613 to 1,262 spaces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, knowing the great work our ministry staff and CBOs do in this province to help and house the most vulnerable, hotels and motels are used as a last resort in our communities. But the reasons may not necessarily be used for those that are homeless. They're also used for caregivers supporting clients when attending appointments out of town, clients travelling for medical appointments such as cancer treatment or dialysis, and those who are without safe shelter for the night.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the opposition member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has stood up in this House many times questioning the use of hotels for vulnerable individuals. I would like to read into the record parts of the letter she received from the deputy minister's office, and this letter is dated February 8th, 2024:

Ministry staff and our after-hours providers work with vulnerable individuals and families with complex needs to secure safe living arrangements. These situations can be unplanned and challenging, and in many cases need to be addressed immediately because the client is in crisis. The ministry provides funds for clients to stay in hotels in a variety of circumstances as outlined below for those . . . to support their immediate needs and safety.

The ministry is committed to ensuring the shelter needs of clients are met. When applicable, individuals are first asked if they have friends or family with whom they could stay. When other options have been exhausted or do not meet the needs of the client or family, the ministry may pay for them to stay at a hotel, and funds can be provided directly to the client or to the hotel. If an individual or a family needs to be referred for a hotel stay, ministry staff or the after-hours service provider contacts the hotel to confirm availability and price, and conveys the terms of the stay, i.e. the duration and what the ministry will and will not pay for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I just read, and was the response to the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre queries, any decision made by ministry staff and service providers for vulnerable clients and families to stay in a hotel is about supporting that client's safety, keeping families together, and ensuring the well-

being of children.

Ministry staff working with community-based CBOs do important work, and at times have to make quick decisions to meet the needs of clients in emergency situations. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government knows that there is more work to do. And as noted in our budget commitment, we are working on meeting people where they are at and supporting them in finding stability and securing a better quality of life.

[11:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we trust our front-line workers to make these important decisions. And once again, I thank them — we thank them — for all they do to serve and support the most vulnerable in our society. We cannot — we cannot — underestimate the amount of work, commitment, that our ministry staff give to supporting families, children, and the most vulnerable in our society. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's, you know, it's sad that we have to do this when we are elected legislators that have to do right by the people that we serve. No, it's when decisions are being made that impact in a negative way the citizens of this province.

Now the motion that my colleague has presented:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to request a special investigation by the Provincial Auditor into the government's use of public funds to pay for hotel stays through the Ministry of Social Services.

You know, we hear a lot about how well this government is doing in taking care of those that are most vulnerable. Evelyn Harper who was evicted from the Sask Housing seniors' complex, not a care home as was reported in one story . . . How many individuals like Evelyn have to beg to have a place to be?

And when we are tasked to serve the people in this province with the taxpayers' dollars, it is so sad and so disheartening when these dollars are used in a way that benefits Sask Party donors and Sask Party MLAs. You know, it is sad when that happens.

I have been inundated with emails from my constituents who've shared concerns, and I'm going to read out some of them:

While our taxes are getting higher, MLAs are taking chauffeured tours sightseeing throughout Paris. While utility rates increase, Scott Moe is spending a lavish million-dollar week in Dubai. And while the cost of living continues to burden households throughout Saskatchewan, the Sask Party are flushing our tax dollars down the drain by investing in multi-million-dollar software like AIMS that doesn't even function properly.

And this is what they've asked me, and this is from many of my constituents:

I'm counting on you to bring Scott Moe and the Sask Party

back to basics, create decent jobs, support schools and hospitals, and show regular people the respect we deserve.

That's from my constituents. You know, when I think about this . . . And I think about how many people that have to use hotels, and it is really, really sad to know that a Sask Party MLA owning hotels is getting three-quarters of a million dollars. That is outrageous. That three-quarter million dollars could be used in a way to help those that this government says they care about and the most vulnerable.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the list, and there's a long list of Sask Party government's questionable ethics. Not only are they giving their buddies and their MLAs money, they've done a lot in terms of not serving the people in an ethical way.

Organizations like the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission used to be a place where people that were being discriminated against could go to where there was fairness, unbiased. Now this Sask Party government has stacked that Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission with their people. And how many people that it's taken years to take a complaint to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission now are not going to go? They're probably not going to because this Sask Party government has appointed their friends who think like them. And often there's people in this province . . . and we know we have issues with racism in the province.

So the other piece is about ethics. Throne Speech day, Colin Thatcher, a convicted wife-beater, murderer . . .

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Can I ask the member to just stay on the topic, please?

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Yes, I'm bringing it back. And this is about . . . These things should have been done. No, doing special investigation. In terms of the questionable ethics, how many decisions have been made that hurt the people in this province?

No, all you have to go back to and think about . . . And I know that the Sask Party government, this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government, keeps talking about 30 years ago. Well I don't mind talking about stuff like that. Let's talk about the legacy of the Devine government that was established by the expense fraud scandal, which has been called "easily the biggest political scandal in Saskatchewan history." And then you think about this, and you think about the three-quarter million dollars that is given to a Sask Party MLA. Is this government, this Sask Party government, is it their goal, is it their goal to become . . . Are they striving to become Grant Devine government 2.0? You know, there are similarities here.

Let's talk about Bill Boyd. Like, when you are looking at their record, this legacy, Bill Boyd. You know, he breached the conflict of interest Act by misrepresenting himself and the Government of Saskatchewan during a business trip to China. And this is the same person that was responsible for the failed smart meter project.

So when we look at how much wasted dollars, how much dollars that have been mismanaged by this government, you don't have far to look. You don't have a whole . . . not very far to look.

An Hon. Member: — Bill Boyd.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Bill Boyd, exactly. And the lean program. I was an employee with the Health Authority when this was introduced. The lean program that flopped. It flopped. It didn't change patients' lives. No, it didn't. Lean did not improve patient outcomes. Lean doesn't help patient satisfaction, help outcomes, and hurts worker satisfaction. This was what . . . This is lean.

And the two years, lean's two-year cost between 2012 and '14 was between 44 million to 49.9 million, and half of which went to consultation fees. So when you think about how interested the Sask Party government is in taking care of the most vulnerable, you know who they take care of? Their donors, their friends, and themselves — and especially themselves. Remember this is taxpayers' dollars, not yours.

If you're prepared to open your own personal wallet, by all means do it. But you're using Sask . . . the citizens of this province, their tax dollars. And it is our responsibility to do right by them, to serve them, not just your friends, not just yourselves. So with that, you know, I'm pleased to be supporting my colleague's motion that she had presented and, yeah, I look forward to talking more . . .

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Mr. B. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is really a privilege for me today to be able to stand in the House and bring remarks in regards to this motion. But I want to begin first of all, first of all to say thank you to the front-line workers, the front-line workers — 1,900 employees in social services — backed up by community-based organizations as well and very capably led by the Minister of Social Services, of Regina Gardiner Park, a great organization.

And it's their role and our role as government to take care of people and to ensure that their safety and well-being is of the utmost importance. They deliver that every day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the reason for them being able to have increases in budget and moving forward in the work that they do is because of the economy that allows us to do that, a growing and thriving economy that allows us to put resources into the area of need.

Now when I drive into work each morning — and I have a drive of roughly an hour — I get the opportunity to listen to radio if I'm not interrupted by calls, which are many. And there's an ad that I've heard numerous times on that drive, and it's a wonderful ad. And it actually is an ad by one of the community-based organizations that does help deliver care to the most vulnerable in society.

And it speaks of a woman who's exhausted and driven to make a decision and pulls up to YWCA looking for help, coming out of an abusive situation with bags, a few meagre belongings in hand, and kids in tow and finds that there is no help because there's no capacity to help her. So that clearly, clearly outlines the emergency use of hotels that this debate is centred on. Where is the space for someone like that when there is no capacity, no space?

That's where hotels are a solution, an over-capacity solution for pressing needs in emergency situations. It's not a long-term solution, and so that is why our government is proactively announcing and investing in long-term facilities which will increase our capacity to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in society.

And so when are hotels needed? I'm going to add a little more into the record from the letter of February 8th 2024 to the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre:

When do hotels need to be used? When there is risk of being homeless. An example: loss of home due to fire, and no emergency shelter available in their community and no shelter that meets the individual family needs. Seeking safety due to interpersonal violence [which I just spoke about in the advertisement that was read into record], living in unsafe conditions, facilitating family visits, participating in a family reunification plan, maintaining family contact under cultural case planning, attending health care appointments outside their home community, supporting foster parents and extended family care keepers.

The list goes on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the list goes on.

[12:00]

Community organizations themselves add, in a very significant way, to the social services staff that we already talked about — 1,900 people. They serve Saskatchewan people. Community partners are a significant part of enhancing service to individuals experiencing homelessness and those that may be at risk of homelessness. These partners, which are too numerous really to mention by name, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are an integral part of the province's service support system. Their impact and commitment and dedication to serving Saskatchewan families are exemplary. Every day these caring and committed employees who work at the numerous community-based organizations across the province make a meaningful difference in the lives of some of our most vulnerable people in all of our communities.

And so in this year's budget the Social Services portfolio will provide nearly 500 million in funding to our community-based service providers to help deliver services that enable Saskatchewan people to achieve a better quality of life. Five hundred million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, represents 30 per cent of the ministry's budget, and only again because our economy is solid and growing, are we able to provide this funding. And in this budget we've added significantly to that CBO funding.

Let me talk about Saskatchewan housing authority providing affordable rental options to people and families in 280 communities across Saskatchewan. This year SHA will invest 83.4 million in the repair and maintenance of provincially owned housing units, focused on where there is ongoing demand for those in greatest need — major urban centres and northern Saskatchewan. Again meeting the needs of those who need it most.

Under our plan, as my colleague from Lloydminster has already spoken of, 155 new supportive housing spaces and 120 new permanent emergency shelter spaces will be created over the next two years. Our government also plans to improve community

safety and outreach responses with the creation of 30 new complex-needs emergency shelter spaces to address those issues.

Those are the types of investments our party is supporting. When hotels are needed they are used to ensure the safety of vulnerable people. But they are not, and won't be, a long-term solution with our government in place. We are making the investments to make sure they're there.

So let's look at some recent announcements. October 6th, 2023: the province aims to address complex needs and community safety among other initiatives, with a 40.2 million homelessness plan announced. Nearly half of that investment, 19 million, will go toward community safety efforts, which includes 30 beds in two emergency shelters in Regina and Saskatoon.

January 9th, 2024: YWCA Regina and The Mustard Seed have been selected by the Saskatchewan government to operate new permanent emergency shelters in both of those respective cities. A quote, "The Ministry of Social Services supports vulnerable people in need of shelter by connecting them with community organizations that offer emergency shelter spaces."

So let's look at some budget highlights. A record 1.54 billion in social service investment, an increase, 7.8 per cent from the previous year; 16.7 million increase supporting the implementation of the provincial approach to homelessness — a terrific, terrific program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the ministry is fully participating with the Provincial Auditor in its review, and its findings will be shared. And we do look forward to the findings and recommendations of our auditor.

There is much more to do obviously, but we've committed to meeting people where they are and supporting them in finding stability and securing a better quality of life and having a hand up on their way to more prosperous involvement in Saskatchewan society. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a party that cares for the vulnerable people, and we will do our very best to work for them every, every day.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Sixty-five minutes' period has expired. Ten-minute question period begin. I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Every day ministry staff and our service providers are doing their best to support the most vulnerable people in Saskatchewan. Their goal is to keep clients safe, families together, and ensure the well-being and healthy development of children. Now apparently the opposition believes there should be a limit to what we spend on providing emergency housing for our most vulnerable.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: what do you believe should be the cap on spending when ministry officials are determining where to place clients in an emergency situation?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much. I thank the member opposite for the question. And first, you know, we are absolutely

aware of the hard work that ministry officials do every single day.

But I have to ask. Where does the buck stop with this Minister of Social Services? We have been succinctly critical of how much money is falling into the pockets of Sask Party MLAs on a manufactured housing crisis, and they don't want to talk about it.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This question is for the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. What does he think about the fact that one of his colleagues charged double the market rate to house a senior that was evicted by his government? And what does he think of his other colleague, the minister's decision to actually pay that rate?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you for the question. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what this is really about is looking after our most vulnerable. And what price does the NDP opposition putting after the people, putting on supporting the people that need help the most? This could be a family in a crisis situation with a fire in their house, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It could be any number of different reasons, but what price does the NDP opposition put on those lives?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Lemaigre: — Our government trusts front-line workers to determine the best solutions for clients in crisis. The first priority of the Ministry of Social Services is the safety and well-being of individuals' families and children in need. This means immediate help in emergencies and longer term support for families and children in crisis.

To the member of Saskatoon Meewasin: do you trust front-line workers to make important decisions about the needs of their clients?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Speaker, thank you so much to the member opposite for the question. I absolutely trust every one of our ministry officials.

And again I will ask, where does the buck stop when we find out that money is falling into the pockets of Sask Party MLAs, upwards of \$700,000 that could be being invested in health care and education and in the very housing crisis that this government has manufactured?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Can the member from Saskatoon Riversdale explain why the hotels owned by the member for Regina Northeast received \$1,300 before the election and 731,000 after the election?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I will say this. It's sad to see the NDP opposition play politics with people's lives. On this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we choose care of our communities and our most vulnerable.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Bonk: — The member from Regina Rosemont has said, "The Provincial Auditor is now reviewing this matter." Mr. Speaker, this government trusts the Provincial Auditor to review this process. The ministry is also participating with the auditor's office to review. We look forward to its findings and recommendations for further improvement.

This has always been about client safety and the well-being of families in critical situations delivered by dedicated, unbiased front-line workers. To the member from Saskatoon Centre: why don't you trust the Provincial Auditor, and why don't you trust the unbiased front-line workers that deliver such important services for the people of Saskatchewan?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Thank you for the question. We do trust the Provincial Auditor, and so much so that we've actually, my colleague put this motion forward to have the Provincial Auditor do this special investigation. So we do trust the Provincial Auditor.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the member from Saskatoon Riversdale not think it's important for Saskatchewan people to be fully informed about what went down with these hotels before they go to the ballot in 2024?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you for the question. And there is a process with the ministries, with all ministries, with the Provincial Auditor, which are being followed.

Again I'm going to say again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most important thing, more importantly, is that we are here to provide the supports for the people that are most vulnerable in our city and our province. I'm just wondering, why does the NDP opposition choose politics over caring for people?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Ministry of Social Services works every day to ensure that families are getting the help that they need when they need it. Any decision made by front-line workers is made with the interest of keeping vulnerable clients safe. Individuals with complex needs need a

place to stay, and the ministry is there to help them.

To the member from Saskatoon Meewasin: what price do you put on vulnerable clients and what are they worth to your party?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. This government has absolutely no legs to stand on when it comes to this file. They evicted a senior in a wheelchair out into the cold with absolutely no plan for her housing that night. She called Mobile Crisis, was put up at the member from Regina Northeast's Sunrise Motel, and suddenly the price doubled. That's the real situation here, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — To the member from Saskatoon Riversdale: does the member believe that \$1,300 before the election and 731,000 after the election to Sask Party MLA-owned hotels is a coincidence?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the comments in the member from Saskatoon Centre's speech was she believes in the Provincial Auditor. That's great, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we'll follow that process, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What I will say is, how dare you play politics with the lives of the most vulnerable in our province? We are after taking care of those most vulnerable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're going to continue to do that.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government is proud of the investments we've made into the social services system, and we believe that the front-line workers in the ministry have the best interests of the clients in mind when they're helping them in a negative emergency situation.

To the member from Saskatoon Centre: do you believe that the ministry should not provide clients and families with a safe place to stay in times of crisis?

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Now you want to listen to the people that have been raising these issues. Today we are calling on the government to request a special investigation by the Provincial Auditor into the government's use of public funds for motel stays through the Ministry of Social Services.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Teed: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it's quite interesting to

hear the questions coming out of this government. Some ask, what's the cap? Some of them say, we need cost-effective rates. So my question to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale: is doubling the price on a hotel for a vulnerable senior in need cost effective?

[12:15]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I just want to say, on this side of the House we care for our most vulnerable.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Seventy-five minute debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Regulation of Legal Firearms Possession

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Bradshaw.]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise with great honour to support the member's motion from Carrot River as we move forward here today. You know, historically gun registrations and handling and managing of firearms, just it seems to rise as the tides do on the ocean. Every once in a while, government . . . [inaudible] . . . got to come back to take control of these things.

You know, there's a lot of situations that in the past we've had firearms with historical, like antiques and stuff, get destroyed and thrown away, and history's being lost because of some policy that come from, most of the time, Eastern Canada. So today with the motion that's on the floor, it's like us as Saskatchewan people taking control of how we manage our firearms as we move forward.

I dug into some of the historical information in the past and when we talk about it, to go back to 1913, as far as gun control, pistols and firearms and carbines and flintlocks and all this stuff. Who could purchase and who couldn't.

We have a lot of people on both sides of the legislature here today that are people that are involved in hunting and tourism and these type of things. Well these firearms, you know, the folks that have owned them and purchased them, there's a lot, like I say, a lot of history behind them.

You come down into the Southwest there, there were Fort Walsh, Cypress Hills. Ranchers, homesteaders across the province brought firearms with them for, not for . . . They used them for hunting, for gathering food, for the protection and safety of their

families. And then we decide that, all of a sudden, that we have to take and look at these things and try to destroy and remove firearms from the public's hands. Firearm owners, licensed firearm owners don't . . . They're purchased to use for what they intend to use them for, as far as hunting, like I say, and for protection and different other things.

We see the numbers, like they say here, when the gun registration come in and we spent \$2 billion with the gun registration that we don't even have anymore. All those numbers are not there.

So like I say, gun registration, guns in general, you have your gun hobby shows in the spring and the summer, people come and they show and they trade and they show their firearms and deal. And this is part of our lifestyle in Saskatchewan. I know across Canada, there's a lot of this takes place too.

So you know, for us to have a member step up and say, you know, we're capable of taking and managing that side of gun registration and managing how we deal with firearm owners in our province, you know, is bang on. We can deal with that.

I know I have family members that were in the police service, a number of different ones, and I had my brother, for example. It was back at one point in time, all of a sudden there was a change of government. The government come out; we wanted everybody to bring in their firearms and dispose of them, all this. He carried a .357, I think it was what they were issued when they graduated, right. And he carried that on his hip. You know, his life at risk each day and going out to protect the public, serving the public, and has family at home like any of the rest of us.

And then all of a sudden they changed over to the 9mm. Well those members, I remember sitting talking with him. He says, you know, I carried that one for 26 years on my hip; every day it went with me. They couldn't keep them. You know, dismantle them — or not dismantle them — decommission them, put them in Plexiglas, put them on their mantels, say this is part of my history and part of my life.

So like I say, ridiculous thoughts like that. And if you take, like, everyday honest gun owners, like whether it's historical or passed down from a family member and things that they would like to keep, and then all of a sudden we come up with policies that remove them from their hands because it's not safe for the public.

Well when is reality going to kick in that we're going to realize criminals are going to have guns, not the guns that like the owners have in their homes or they've purchased. I'm sure most of them if not all of them have them locked up and secured in a safe place where no one, they're not accessible.

I know I've seen, well now I guess they can make firearms out of a 3-D system and put them on there. I've actually held one of those. There's no serial number. And guns are going to show up into, you know, our communities. But to take and throw our, you know, gun owners into that category, it seems really ridiculous to myself.

Like I say I had an uncle that was a gun collector for many years. He's passed away now. He had one of the better gun collections in Western Canada at one point in time. And like I say, when I

mention the Cypress Hills, Fort Walsh, and that part of the world, you know a lot of the older homesteaders, ranchers that come in there and they, you know, were selling them. But it was for collections and put up on display — this is what I brought with me when I brought my family and I started back here in 18-whatever-it-was, and to build a life and build a province. But that doesn't seem to be recognized. We lose that.

You go down to the Frenchman River Valley and down southern Saskatchewan right across the bottom end, a lot of outlaws come out of the States and landed in that part of the world. In the community of Bracken they had an old train station in there, and they had on display some of the most unique firearms, pistols, and these things that were collected and part of history of that part of the world. And then when this one government changed proposal and all this stuff, people were made to feel like they were criminals, it all disappeared. It was smelt or brought in and destroyed.

Well what did we accomplish by doing that? To myself, not a lot. Like I say, criminals . . . You know, we don't want to paint everybody with the same brush. You know, honest gun owners that purchase and abide by the rules and regulations and they have these things, it's part of their life. They could be, you know, competitive shooters that go out and they use their firearms to do that. And that's a sport.

And you know, I used to hunt as a young fellow, and I have a few guns at home. I passed them on to my son. You know, as I got older, we hunted for deer. We made sausage. We did that. We enjoyed the wild meat. And we got to see what we have to offer as far as environment and part of our province.

As I got older, it wasn't really the hunt or the excitement of it, the thrill of that. I still enjoy going out there, you know. I go out and maybe . . . I do buy a licence, not maybe. But it's not my interest of shooting an animal to bring it back really that much. It's because I enjoy being out there when you have the ruffed grouse up in the chokecherries on a frosty morning, and out there the sun's coming up in the fall.

And this lifestyle all of a sudden for, well I hope my grandsons — and my son, I know he's busy with stuff — they have this opportunity just to experience, to go out there. They might start off to think that maybe I want to go out and get a deer because young men and women or people, kind of each one has their own interest. But they might not have this opportunity. We keep coming at, you know, these people with ridiculous requests.

So like I say, to bring this back home where myself and the rest of the province and the people, I think we're very capable. We have a person in place to manage, you know, the arms and the guns and that type of thing right now and give us control of what's happening here. I'm sure with our policing, whether it's the marshals or the RCMP, you know, they're there. They're going to take care of what they need to do, and they'll take care of monitoring, you know, what crimes happen and where are the guns.

And the guns that are, like I say . . . And I did dig in here, and I got the stats. And you go back in history, not in history too far, and it shows a lot of these policies never helped anything. It's shown at the end of the day that it was nothing there. Like I say,

those black market guns and pistols and all, you know, we need to get on top of that and control that. But why, in the same breath, harm the people that are honest people, law-abiding citizens, that this is a piece of their life, a piece of their history that they would like to continue and carry on and, you know, own it again?

And it doesn't mean if regulations are too slack that everybody wants to go out and purchase a gun, in my mind. I'm sure there's many people that could care less or don't even want to have one for protection. But you know, in this day and age and all that type of thing, you know, it was mentioned in 1913 that you had to register three months in. You had to have good solid reasons to own a revolver — if you were fearful of your life or anything happening to you — in 1913. And we go through into 1977 and Bill C-83.

And every time it seems like the wind changed or a new government would come in or special interest groups come in and went with some facts, but not all the facts. It couldn't be here. We wouldn't end up discussing a lot of what we're dealing with today and going back and spending millions and billions of dollars — Bill C-21, Bill C-24.

You know, I feel so bad for these situations where people are . . . these criminals, and what I would call some of the others that come in and they'd take lives. Well it's not the gun. The gun doesn't do . . . It's used by an individual that creates a problem. So how do we come . . . We point at the gun and blame the guns. It's the person and how they're using it.

So if we want to really step on things, these criminals need to be dealt with in a harsher way and dealt with in a timely fashion, not tied up in a bunch of red tape. It's black and white what they did, plain and simple. Deal with it. Oh no, we'll throw it into the courts and we'll do this and do that. And you know, that way I think we'll get further ahead by allowing people to decide whether they want to own a firearm or not.

And you know, if somebody tells you that there isn't a need for a firearm — for example, for protection in Saskatchewan out in a rural area or a small community — I had a rancher I met and visited with the other day. He was out checking some of the herd and stuff like that, and there was a wolf walking right through. He wasn't quite sure. He thought it was a calf. Got over and it was a large wolf in that area. Well these animals aren't out just walking through there for a visit. You could run into a situation. And he wasn't going to shoot it, but he had something to defend himself if he had to.

They appreciate nature and what happens out there. They live it daily. And you know, these are examples I've seen. And I know myself, like cougars and stuff and those types of things, they migrate through and you can have them sitting there. And I know there were some of the ranchers talking about them. They're sitting up on top of the bale stack looking down and their kids are playing in the yard. Well you know, they might potentially need something to fend these animals off.

So like I say, it's a real honour to get up and speak on the member from Carrot River's motion because he's bang on. Like we had a talk about the historical value and the history of some of these firearms and all that stuff, and they're not really of any threat to anybody a lot of times when they get to a certain age. But if

they're well-kept, they're of a lot of value. If not money value, historical value.

But we're so quick to destroy. We need to stop this foolishness and take the bull by the horns — I've said that before here once, but — and deal with these things. And I think, you know, there's the knowledge . . . And the people in our province are very capable, both sides of the legislature, and the people in the public deciding on how we want to have our policy in our province. And that's where I see this is one step moving forward to say look, we can do this. So we'll throw it out to them and see what comes back, which we do on a lot of things, and a lot of times we don't, you know.

But I think it's a key thing to save history, to save history and move forward and allow others and young boys and girls and men and women to move up and maybe have that opportunity to experience being a gun owner or take part in, you know, trap shooting and those types of things. It's a sport.

I know my son, like pretty proud of him. And I mentioned he's a trained sniper. He shoots out of a helicopter; he teaches ERT [emergency response team], an instructor in ERT team. And if we don't need firearms . . . Those guys go into the worst-case scenarios you'll ever see, and we do worry about them. But I feel so proud that in what he's trained, he's got the capabilities. And they train them in how they need to do that. He trains with the elite group with the Canadian army . . . [inaudible].

[12:30]

Well you know, so to sit and turn a deaf ear to what's going on and what firearms can do. You know there's many countries right today that are in situations that they're using firearms in ways we wish they didn't have to, don't have to. But they are. So I'd hope we are successful in this.

And I won't adjourn, I guess, and I will stand on the record that I support the member from Carrot River's motion as we move forward. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — It has been moved by the member for carrot valley river:

That this Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada to devolve all relevant parts of the *Firearms Act* to the province of Saskatchewan in order to allow it to administer and regulate the legal firearms possession.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Okay. The rule 27(4), it is my duty to advise the Assembly that this item of the business has been previously adjourned three times and that every question necessary to dispose of the motion will be put now.

It has been moved by carrot valley river:

That this Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada to devolve all the relevant parts of the *Firearms Act* to the province of Saskatchewan in order to allow it to administer

and regulate legal firearms possession.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Agreed. Carried. Those in favour of the motion say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Those opposed to the motion say no. I guess yea has it. Call the members. Call the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:33 until 12:36.]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The question before the Assembly is:

That this Assembly calls upon the Government of Canada to devolve all the relevant parts of the *Firearms Act* to the province of Saskatchewan in order to allow it to administer and regulate the legal firearms possession.

All those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas — 40]

Moe	McMorris	Harpauer
Duncan	Merriman	Tell
Makowsky	Marit	Skoropad
Kaeding	Cockrill	L. Ross
Eyre	J. Harrison	Carr
Hargrave	T. McLeod	Bradshaw
Dennis	Ottenbreit	Francis
C. Young	Steele	D. Harrison
Bonk	Nerlien	B. McLeod
Grewal	Keisig	Lemaigre
Jenson	Beck	Wotherspoon
Teed	A. Young	Burki
Clarke	Sarauer	Conway
Domotor		

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — nil]

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees, the number for the motion, 40; the number opposed, zero.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I declare the motion carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that this House now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — This House now adjourns until Monday, 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:41.]

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
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

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
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for
Lotteries and Gaming Saskatchewan Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Environment

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Advanced Education