



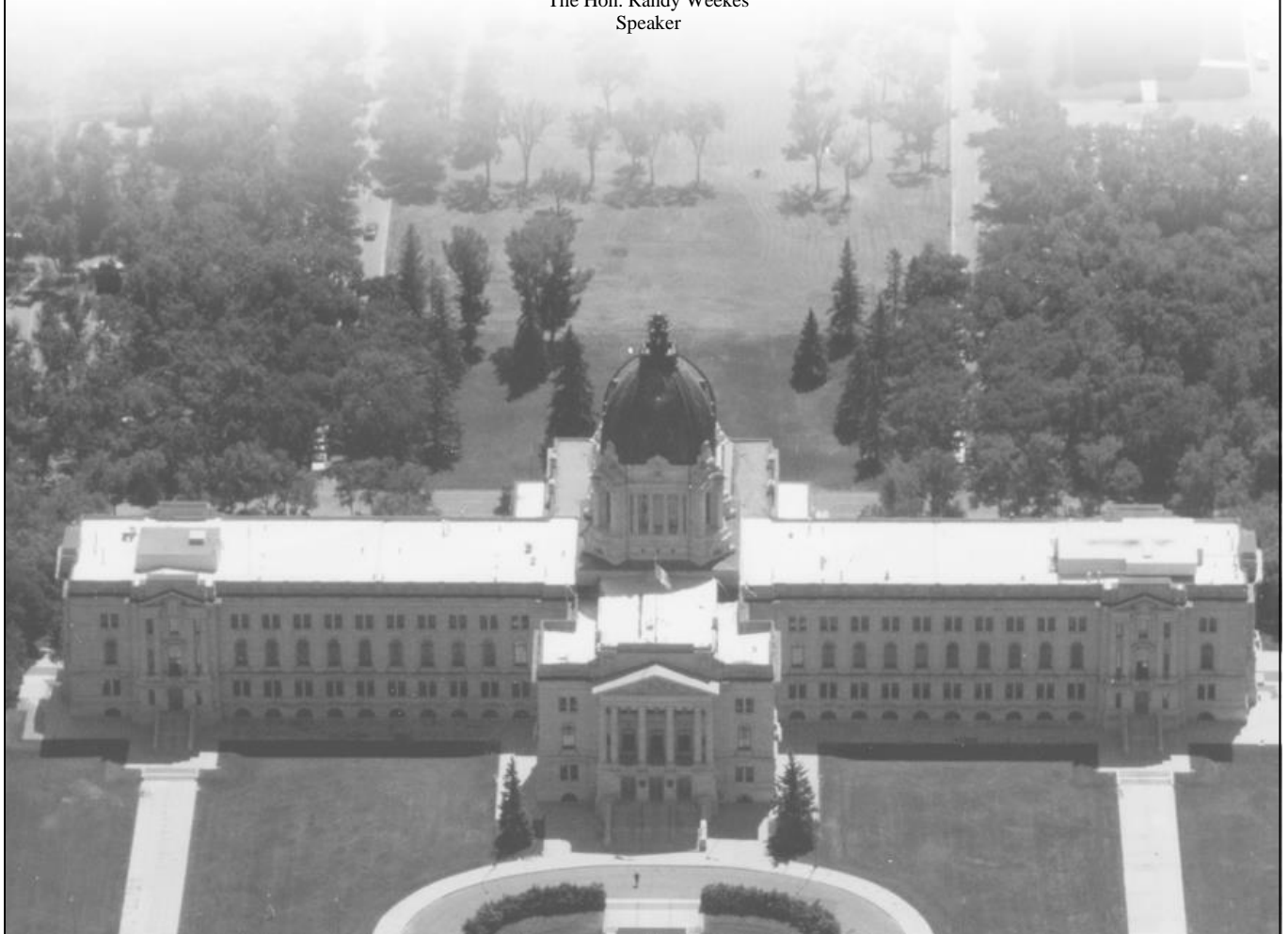
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

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

Standings

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — On Thursday, May 9th, 2024 the Opposition House Leader rose on a point of order alleging that during the 75-minute debate the member from Moosomin referred to the official opposition as socialists. The Deputy Chair of Committees of the Whole Assembly committed to reviewing the record.

The Deputy Chair of Committees and I discussed the matter, and I reviewed the *Hansard*. While the member from Moosomin did refer to a “socialist system” on page 5666, he did not reference opposition members in his statement. I therefore find the point of order not well taken.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d ask leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, seated in the west gallery, it is my pleasure to introduce our Parks, Culture and Sport deputy minister, Twyla MacDougall. Twyla, give us a wave.

Twyla has served the Government of Saskatchewan for 30 years, 12 of which was with the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport and 7 as our deputy minister. Twyla’s the deputy minister of Parks, Culture and Sport, francophonie affairs, and the Status of Women office. The ministry also oversees the Royal Saskatchewan Museum as well as Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for provincial culture and sport.

Prior to assuming the position of deputy minister, Twyla held two assistant deputy minister positions within the ministry; also served as assistant deputy minister, corporation and financial services for the Ministry of Energy and Resources.

She’s an amazing asset to our province, providing her talent, her leadership, her kindness to all areas she has worked in. I feel very lucky to have worked with Twyla. Her work ethic and her support is truly unmatched.

Now Twyla has recently announced her upcoming retirement with May 31st . . . and I said, that’s May 31st, 2025. She said, no;

it would be this May will be her last day with government. She has assured us she leaves the file in great hands with her amazing passion and dedicated team within the ministry. While I know without a doubt that this is true, I think we all would agree that her contributions have played such an important role in the continued success and the great environment at Parks, Culture and Sport.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Twyla all the best as she embarks on a new chapter in her life with those grandbabies. Twyla told me they sold the farm and now she’s prepared to enjoy life to the fullest. I’d like to offer my sincere thanks on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan for your service, and invite all members to join me in thanking Twyla and wishing her happy retirement.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I’m on my feet I would like to introduce to you and through you, it is my pleasure to introduce representatives from Women Entrepreneurs Saskatchewan, or better known as WESK, to the Legislative Assembly. Seated in the west gallery is chief executive officer, Miriam Johnson — give us a wave — program and growth manager, Jessica Pegg, and brand manager, Michael Betteridge.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to once again partner with WESK to designate May 12th to 18th as Women Entrepreneurs Week here in Saskatchewan. WESK has proudly supported women entrepreneurs for over 30 years. As a distinguished non-profit with over 800 members, WESK supports inspiring and establishing entrepreneurs to start and scale up their business in Saskatchewan. They offer extensive resources, mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and ultimately empower female entrepreneurs at every age and at every stage in their workplace.

This Wednesday WESK will be hosting their annual gala to recognize and celebrate Saskatchewan’s outstanding female entrepreneurs. The contribution of women entrepreneurs to our province’s economy is incredible and it’s far-reaching. In rural and urban centres women are shaping industries, creating jobs, and driving innovation.

I’d like to thank WESK for their dedication to Saskatchewan women and work ethics to our communities and drive economic prosperity. Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in welcoming Miriam, Jessica, and Michael to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much and enjoy your time here.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s an honour to be on my feet and join in with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport — as the opposition critic for Parks, Culture and Sport — and welcome Twyla MacDougall to her Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the official opposition we just want to thank you for the long career you have served here in our province.

You have given a career that has guided so many, as it sounds, many different ministries but most recently our Parks, Culture and Sport ministry. And that is where I’ve had the pleasure of getting to know you a bit more through our committee work. And

so I just want to thank you so much for that work that you've put in, in service to this province.

I hope that you have an absolutely lovely retirement ahead and can get to spend lots of time with family. And so on behalf of the official opposition, I just want to thank you for your service and ask all members to join me in welcoming Twyla to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The minister has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is proud to proclaim May 12 to 18 Victims and Survivors of Crime Week in Saskatchewan and to thank the over 65 dedicated staff members, 133 volunteer victim support workers, and 81 community board members across Saskatchewan who work tirelessly to support victims and survivors. Mr. Speaker, in '23-24 these outstanding volunteers dedicated almost 7,000 hours to help more than 15,000 survivors and victims of crime — volunteers and staff who serve their communities every year through police-based victim services programs.

Mr. Speaker, about an hour ago I had the honour of recognizing seven dedicated volunteer victim support workers, community board members, and staff who have dedicated 10, 15, 20, or 25 years to serving their communities through victim services programs across the province. Their dedication is inspiring and a critical support that helps to reduce re-traumatization as victims and their families navigate the justice system.

Mr. Speaker, with us in your gallery today, if you could give a wave, is 25-year recipient, Stephanie O'Soup, from Regina who is a coordinator with Regina Victim Services. Betsy Kelly from La Ronge has spent 20 years with North Sask Victim Services, first as a staff member and currently as a community board member. Coleen Foster of Langenburg with Parkland Victims Services has served as a volunteer victim support worker for 15 years.

With us we also have the following 10-year volunteer victim support workers: Shiuly Chakma from Regina with Regina Victim Services; Penny Hoffman of Tuffnell with Parkland Victims Services; and Laura Nesland from Shaunavon with Southwest Victim Services.

Thank you for the comfort and hope that you provide, and connection to other programs and services that are available across the province. Thank you for being someone whom victims and survivors can lean on for support during a time of real need and for so selflessly, compassionately supporting them. Please join me, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming these police-based victim services volunteers, staff, and community board members to their

Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the minister in welcoming this amazing group of people to their Legislative Assembly. Those who work with victims, Mr. Speaker, whether it's paid or unpaid, are truly doing some of the most important work in the province, helping people at what is for many of them the worst experience they've ever had.

Guiding them through a difficult court process and guiding them through the supports that they need is so incredibly important to the justice system and so important to society at large. We all know that Saskatchewan is made on the backs of the countless thousands of volunteer hours of the volunteers of this province. So just a heartfelt thank you on behalf of the opposition to all of you for all of the work you do in serving so many people. Thank you.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce a group of students seated in the east gallery. These are 16 grade 8 students from Prairie Sky School. Give a wave. Good to see you all here today. You're here with your teacher, Jasmine Holmes, as well as some other folks here too. I hope you've had an enjoyable time so far in the Legislative Building, and I'm looking forward to answering your hard-hitting questions after question period. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their legislative gallery as well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure this afternoon to introduce some folks from the disability sector, more specifically, as this is the first official day of Disability Service Professionals Week. We'll hear more in a member's statement in just a few minutes, but I want to quickly introduce the folks that made it down here today.

They're from several CBOs [community-based organization] around the province and they are Tori Sutherland, Alisha Moore with Citizens All from Moose Jaw, Joyce Illah, Eric James, and Rosa Smith with Clare Parker Homes in Regina, and of course Amy McNeil and Melanie Weiss with SARC [Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres].

All of these folks were here last week when there was a meeting with MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and spoke about the important work that is done each and every day. And there's dozens if not hundreds of support workers . . . or sorry, CBOs but there's hundreds of support workers out there, and just glad that they're here today.

We have people from Elmwood as well, Elmwood from Saskatoon. I understand . . . I don't see Rachael or her crew but . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There's a few of them? Okay. Thank you. That's good. Can't see from my seat but Bo Kristensen, Sam Marks, Rejeanne Cooper, James Hatley, and Murray Fulton are here. And again I encourage all members, if they're able, to come and meet this important CBO in our province at 3 o'clock today.

But SARC was here last week, as I mentioned, Elmwood here today, and we want to thank them for all the work that they do each and every day to help people living with disabilities, to help them meet their full potential. So on behalf of the government I want to welcome them here today and again thank them for that important work.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these incredible individuals to their Legislative Assembly. I heard mention of Elmwood, Clare Parker Homes, the folks at SARC, Citizens All, and I'm sorry if I left any of the organizations that are here with us today out.

Mr. Speaker, these folks do incredible work for some of the province's most vulnerable. They do tough work. We on this side will continue to advocate for, you know, good pay, good supports in this area. But I know that today is one of celebration of the work that they continue to do, so I'm happy to leave it just at that and welcome these folks to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[13:45]

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, colleagues. It's my distinct honour to introduce, on the floor of the Chamber, Kyrell Sopoty, who is currently a resident of Aberdeen but formerly a resident of Porcupine Plain. A few weeks ago in a member's statement I brought Kyrell's achievements to your attention.

Quickly refreshing our memories, Kyrell was an elite prospect WHL [Western Hockey League] player with the Kamloops Blazers, where he played 107 games prior to suffering a life-changing snowboard accident in January 2021. Within weeks of his accident, he was embarking on a new opportunity to excel as an athlete. I could go on for some time about his achievements in the last couple of years, but I can summarize by saying that he was at the national Summer Games a year and a half after his first use of a racing wheelchair.

In 2023 at the Canadian Track and Field Championships he was awarded three gold medals. In May 2024 at the Canadian Wheelchair Basketball League he was a gold-medal winner with the Calgary Rollers wheelchair basketball team. In 2023 he was the 2023 Canadian Junior Athlete of the Year. He was also at the recent North American wheelchair basketball championships. June 19th of this year he will attend the national team training camp, who are in preparations for Paris. He hasn't quite made the

team yet, but he's hoping for a call-up.

So in summary, I'll just quote from his mom, Lori. She said the word "can't" doesn't exist in his vocabulary. In addition, Kyrell has become an inspirational leader and speaker in hospitals and elsewhere with the message, "your circumstances have changed, but your opportunities are endless." We can all learn from this great attitude. Please join me in welcoming Kyrell to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in the Minister of Justice and my colleague, the critic for Justice, to welcome a constituent from the riding, La Ronge, Betsy Kelly, who has done amazing work volunteering, helping out. I just want to take the time to acknowledge you and the good work you do. Many of us know back home, people struggle and victim services show up and do amazing jobs. So I would like to take an opportunity to welcome you, as the MLA for Cumberland, welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

But also I want to welcome . . . I know you have a chauffeur. His name's Warren, and he's here. And I just want to acknowledge that your chauffeur has driven you. So with that, I'll just say, teamwork is really good. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly, both of you. I would just like to say, it's an honour to introduce you to your Assembly. You're so far from home. With that, I will just ask all my colleagues to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a couple of gals seated in your gallery. Certainly no stranger to members on both sides, we have Jennifer May and her mom, Susan May. Now these ladies both reside in Saskatoon, but they come from west central Saskatchewan and the community of Alsask in my constituency. And they have strong ties to my home community of Mantario as well. My grandmother was a member of the May family — shirttail relatives for sure.

And as I said, Jen's well known in this building for her advocacy, and I'll have more to say about that in an upcoming member's statement. But for now, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Jennifer May and her mom, Susan, to their legislature.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the member opposite in welcoming Jennifer and her mom, Sue, to the Assembly today.

Of course members on both sides will be very familiar with Jennifer's work in advocacy as she's been involved for a number of years with Lung Saskatchewan, with talking to us about protecting kids from smoking and vaping, and with the Youth4Change group that always puts on an amazing reception and is so informative in terms of what kids are dealing with these days and what vapes look like. Because I feel like you can lose

sight of that very quickly as you grow if you are not in those circles. So I much appreciate her advocacy.

Congratulations on the award that she's receiving for leadership as well, Mr. Speaker. And I'm assuming that's what the member's statement is about today. And I know it's tremendously deserved, and that the award goes to folks who have been involved in helping to shape public policy. And that certainly fits Jennifer to the T. And I want to thank her for all the work she does for this province, and ask all members to join me in welcoming her to her Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've heard the word "inspiration" used in a number of introductions, and as everyone in this House knows, my greatest inspiration is my three daughters. So it is my pleasure to recognize my oldest daughter, Crystal, my son-in-law Rusty, and my grandsons Lucas and James are with us today. And I want all members to join me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, I just want to pop up quickly on behalf of the official opposition and just give a shout-out to Miriam and the whole team from WESK that's here today.

Miriam, we just . . . Like, it's a fantastic organization. We know woman-owned businesses are the backbone of so many economies. We know they create jobs; they grow jobs. We know they actually often outperform regularly male-owned businesses, doubling ROI [return on investment], things like that. But we also know too many entrepreneurs, female entrepreneurs still face gendered barriers in their entrepreneurship journey.

But you're there from start to success, helping them along the way. You just do extraordinary work. And Miriam, in particular, like this organization has just soared under your leadership. A proud member, and I want to thank you and your team for all the work that you do, not just for the upcoming gala, but every day from member services to advocacy to financing, on behalf of women entrepreneurs and the entire . . . [inaudible] . . . here in Saskatchewan. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you this afternoon, I'd like to introduce a guest in the west gallery, my son Asher. He's decided to join us for the first time in the building. It's his first time seeing his dad and his colleagues in the Assembly. And we spent some time earlier this morning, you know, taking him around the building and meeting some of my colleagues and some of the staff, including you, Mr. Speaker, and that was very gracious of you.

Asher's in grade 12. He's going to be graduating in a few short weeks. We consider this a field trip. He's getting a little bit of ELA [English language arts], a little bit of math, a little bit of history all rolled into one this afternoon. So it's great to have him

here.

Asher is an accomplished athlete, Mr. Speaker, particularly in hockey. He just finished his minor hockey career a few weeks ago and finished his career as the captain of his U18 [under 18] hockey team. He's also a cross-country runner, Mr. Speaker. He loves going to the gym, staying in shape. And something that's been . . . Yeah, not like me. So something that's been said here before is, we don't do this job alone, Mr. Speaker. And there's times where I've had to be here instead of being there for his events and for when he needed me the most. And for that all I can say is thank you, son, for standing beside me and listening to me when I've needed to be listened to, and I've done the same for you.

You know, and it's not just me saying this. It's also the people of Saskatchewan. It's our families that enable us to do this job on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. So not just me, son. It's also you taking part in this, and I thank you so much for that. So with that, would you please welcome my son Asher to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I just want to join with the member opposite in welcoming Kyrell to his Legislative Assembly as the opposition critic for Parks, Culture and Sport.

Your story is truly inspiring. As I was listening to the member opposite I was quickly googling a little bit about some of your accomplishments. But we've been talking about inspiration. Your athletic background is just so inspiring, whether it be in the wheelchair basketball, wheelchair racing that you've had so many accomplishments in. I know that your story will continue to be an inspiration to Saskatchewanians for so many years to come.

And I wish you so much success in the future in whatever you continue to choose to partake in. And so I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Kyrell to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Friesen: — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members it gives me great pleasure and honour today to introduce my daughters in the Assembly in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And you can give a wave when I say your name. Morgan has been here before, Mr. Speaker, and she took a couple hours off work to drive down here today and visit with her sister Danielle, who came all the way from Vancouver, Mr. Speaker.

And my colleague from Martensville-Warman just mentioned about how we serve with our family, Mr. Speaker. And to that end, Friday night I think it was, Danielle, that we booked a flight for her to get down to be here this week because I've already had the honour of introducing my other children and she wanted to be part of it as well.

So my daughter Danielle, as I said, is here from Vancouver. She's

working as a behaviour interventionist for children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Mr. Speaker, we have made significant investments into autism services in this province, and I'm very proud of that. And I've worked with children for many years, and it's just such a pleasure to see my daughter working with kids in Vancouver. She is going to be attending Capilano University in the fall for a diploma in applied behaviour analysis with an emphasis on autism.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Morgan and Danielle to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you. To you and through you, it's my honour to recognize seven students, College of Medicine students who are here today with the group, Students for Harm Reduction and Informed Policy. We have in your gallery Jenna England, Micaela Haroldson, Sam Bundus, Mikayla Rudniski, Whitney Curtis, Kacie Kushniruk, and Ryan Krochak.

They come from Regina, Rocanville, Saskatoon, Hudson Bay, Yorkton — all across the province — but they're here in Regina with the College of Medicine as first-year, second-year, and third-year med students. And I had the honour of meeting many of these students a few weeks ago. They gave us a tour of harm reduction organizations in Regina. I'm going to be speaking about those in a member's statement shortly, but I'd ask all members here to join in welcoming these amazing young leaders and students to their Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's a great pleasure to introduce today, seated in your west gallery, two outstanding people, Woody Huber and his son-in-law, Brent Borschneck. Mr. Speaker, if Brent looks a little relaxed today it's because he is, because after 35 years this past October he retired from the Co-op Refinery. And he certainly is just an outstanding community member. See him always around when we're in events or the like in Bethune.

And then there's Woody or Elwood. But I just learned that his name is Elwood — I've always known him as Woody — but he said to me here earlier today actually only his banker and his mother calls him Elwood, so I won't call him Elwood here today. I'll call him Woody, as I know him. And he is certainly one of those people who every community needs because he is community minded through and through. And, Mr. Speaker, if you ever need to know something that's going on in the community of Bethune, people say just ask Woody and he'll know.

So with that it's an absolute honour to welcome Brent and Woody to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Burki: — Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I have three incredible doctors in the east gallery: Dr. Abdul Bais, Dr. Golam Kabir, and Dr. Mohammad Khondoker. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Abdul Bais has been with the University of Regina for 14 years. He's currently serving as associate professor and program Chair of electronic systems engineering. His research is in developing innovative applications of AI [artificial intelligence] in agriculture to increase efficiency, enhance productivity, and contribute to sustainable food production. His research is supported by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the ag tech industry.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Golam is currently serving as program Chair and associate professor of industrial systems engineering program at the University of Regina. Before joining U of R [University of Regina], he was an assistant professor in the department of mechanical, automotive, and materials engineering at the University of Windsor. He received his Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in civil engineering from the University of British Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Mohammad Khondoker has established a unique 3-D [three-dimensional] printing research lab at the University of Regina, the first of its kind in the province of Saskatchewan. His team's research focuses on assisting local businesses in using, advancing manufacturing technology to enhance their performance and promote sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of this great work of these individuals in our province. I will request all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me and to give them a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to, in the west gallery, introduce 14 community leaders in the future. I think they're close to graduation. It's grade 3 and 4 up there. Look at those fine young men and women.

But I'd like to introduce their teacher, Bobbi Caswell — Bobbi, give us a wave — Cam Krell ... [inaudible] ... and also Courtney McIntosh. I'd like to welcome you to your legislature and hope we see you later after, and we've got ice cream for you.

See you later.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: the Sask Party government voted against duty-to-consult legislation, and we need legislation in this province to ensure that the province honours the duty-to-consult, and it's fulfilled and is carried out with the honour of the Crown; and this Sask Party government continues to move forward in duty-to-consult processes without constitutional obligations set through many court cases that have shaped how duty-to-consult should be observed in present day, including multiple court rulings; and also the Sask Party government has never addressed cumulative impacts.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The folks who signed this petition reside in Regina and Yellow Quill First Nation. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to reverse the ban on third-party sex ed providers in public schools. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that banning providers of sexual health education means that fewer kids will receive evidence-based education. It's alarming with our staggering rates of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and STI [sexually transmitted infection] transmission that the minister has no plan to address infectious diseases and is in fact implementing policies that will make things worse. Education is prevention, an important part of public health. The government's actions are beyond irresponsible and downright harmful to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately reverse its policy decision to ban third-party sexual health educators in Saskatchewan schools and listen to experts and stakeholders in developing comprehensive sex education curriculum for all publicly funded schools.

This is signed by individuals in Regina today, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Champion for Lung Health Recognized for Exceptional Leadership

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year the Public Affairs Association of Canada has put together a new award in honour of the legacy of Brenda Barootes.

Brenda was a highly respected public affairs professional who made significant contributions to the industry throughout her career. The award will recognize individuals and teams who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and impact in the field of public affairs. This award will be presented annually, and the inaugural winner is Jennifer May, government relations and vice-president of health promotion for the lung society of Saskatchewan.

Jennifer's career has been dedicated to tobacco control and advocating for positive change to protect public health. Jennifer spearheads provincial respiratory health promotion activities, including education, prevention, radon awareness, and is the co-founder and adult advisor of the provincial Youth4Change movement.

Throughout her career, Jennifer's passion for advocating for change has been instrumental in driving significant legislative and policy advancements. Her efforts have helped lead to the establishment of Saskatchewan's provincial tobacco legislation in 2004, an asbestos bill in 2013, vaping legislation in 2020, and so much more.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government, thank you to Jennifer for all the great work she has done, and congratulations on this distinction. Thanks.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Expression of Thanks

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank all the constituents of the Cumberland constituency, their support and encouragement. We have been able to bring many important issues to the table for discussion. All of the CAs [constituency assistant] who have assisted me and guided me have been so helpful to help our many constituents.

I also want to acknowledge our northern First Nations, Métis, and municipal leaders, as well our northern trappers, fishers, and their organizations. Also to the Cumberland NDP [New Democratic Party] executive for all their hard work and support and the provincial NDP team, our caucus staff, and my NDP colleagues, all the legislative services, and a special thank you to members' payments and to the Clerk's office.

I want to acknowledge chaplain Fred Hill for your prayers and support. I want to acknowledge the elders for their guidance, and so many others who have been there to offer good advice and strong guidance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my wife, family, extended family, and many great friends.

I would also like to thank you for your fairness, and to everyone who has helped me in any way throughout the years I have served

as your MLA.

To all of you who I have acknowledged, from the bottom of my heart I want to say thank you, thank you, and thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

STARS Will Expand Emergency Coverage with New Helipad in Nipawin

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, last Monday I was privileged to attend an event in Nipawin where SaskPower was donating \$50,000 to the soon-to-be-built helipad at the Nipawin Hospital.

Carrot River Valley has a number of industries that STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service] could support in the unfortunate event of an accident. There are two hydroelectric dams, the forest industry, the tourist industry, and of course the ag industry, all needing STARS's support.

Mr. Speaker, STARS has become a mainstay for transporting critical medical patients to our health care facilities throughout the province. Since its inception in 2012, STARS has transported over 4,100 critical patients.

It's great news to see one of our Crown corporations stepping up to the plate, helping to provide the infrastructure that is needed.

Mr. Speaker, we have to thank former member Rod Gantefoer for all the hard work he did in pushing STARS forward.

The NDP at the time was dead set against it, claiming our province was just a wee province and could never support STARS. They haven't changed, Mr. Speaker. They still can't see the bright future Saskatchewan has ahead of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Medical Students Advocate for Harm Reduction Funding

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, April 26th, 2024 the member for Regina Coronation Park and I had the opportunity to attend a walking tour of harm reduction organizations in Regina. It was organized by first- and second-year medical students from Students for Harm Reduction and Informed Policy.

During the walk we visited Nēwo-Yôtina Friendship Centre and the Queen City Wellness Pharmacy. At both locations we heard first-hand accounts of the efforts each of these organizations make to help some of the most vulnerable people in our province. We also saw some examples of their work while we were there. It was both gut-wrenching and inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, as we walked, we talked with these students to learn about their perspectives on the need for harm reduction methods to keep people safe. They were well informed, articulate, and passionate about how harm reduction saves lives, and many of them volunteer in the organizations we visited.

These young leaders are here today to advocate for this government to recognize harm reduction saves lives. They know the facts. They see the need regularly through their own experiences. What they need and what Saskatchewan people need is for this government to fund harm reduction in addition to recovery.

Will this government listen to these future health care leaders? Or will their choices and empty political spin push these future doctors out of our province?

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

Saskatoon Philanthropists Make Significant Donation to Nursing Program

Mr. Friesen: — It's another great day in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. Last week officials from Sask Polytech announced that the Dubé family had agreed to donate 7.5 million to support polytech's nursing program, including 1 million allocated to the psychiatric nursing program. In honour of this donation, the nursing school at the new campus will be named the Leslie and Irene Dubé School of Nursing.

Polytech is continuing to work towards raising \$100 million through its Time to Rise campaign to support the construction of the new campus. Major contributions have already been made, with 15 million from Nutrien and 25 million from Joseph Remail who the campus will be named after.

Mr. Speaker, the Dubé family has done so much for our communities, our province, and mental health, and even my own family. My daughter Danielle, Mr. Speaker, was a recipient of the Les and Irene Dubé Service & Justice award. Further to that, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of getting to know David Dubé quite well as we spent 36 hours on the street with Sanctum. I'm honoured to give this statement today and recognize the amazing contributions that the Dubé family continues to make in our province.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Saskatchewan, thank you to the Dubé family for continuing to believe in our province and their continued commitment to philanthropy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Disability Service Professionals Help Build Inclusive Communities

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is Disability Service Professionals Week. This is the time to recognize and celebrate the disability service professionals and the vital support they provide for people with disabilities all across this province. Disability service professionals ensure that people are safe, supported, and included in their home communities. From administrative staff to supervisors and front-line support workers, these professionals play a huge part in the lives of so many Saskatchewan residents.

Disability Service Professionals Week is proclaimed in

partnership with SARC. Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres is a provincial association of approximately 100 community-based organizations that are dedicated to supporting people with disabilities to achieve their full potential. For more than five decades, SARC has helped people participate fully in their communities. Our government is proud of its relationship with SARC. We value their important work to nurture a more inclusive province.

Disability service professionals help us achieve our shared vision of a supportive, welcoming, and inclusive Saskatchewan where everyone can develop their potential and fully participate in their communities. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing Disability Service Professionals Week, thank these dedicated professionals for the work they do each and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Saskatchewan Employment Numbers Reflective of Growing Economy

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another great day in Saskatchewan as more people are working in our province. According to the latest StatsCan report released on Friday, 12,300 more people are working in Saskatchewan today than a year ago.

There are more women working, more men working, and more young people working than a year ago. There are 6,900 more people working in Regina, 8,200 more people working in Saskatoon. And there are 600 more people working in our resource sector, 1,200 more working in manufacturing, 2,600 more working in information services, 2,800 more working in business services. There is 3,000 more in accommodation and food services, 3,900 more in transportation, 4,600 more in scientific and technical services. And to top off that list, Mr. Speaker, 5,300 more Saskatchewan people are working in education. Our unemployment rate remains well below the national average.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, more people, more jobs, and more opportunities. Our economy is strong and growing, and with a strong and growing economy, we can continue to make record investments into classrooms, care, and communities. And that's great news for Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the Leader of the Opposition

Provincial Fuel Tax and Affordability Measures

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver across the board. Now they said they'd be good at the economy, but this Premier has the worst job creation record in the country. The Sask Party promised that they'd fix classrooms, care, and communities, but this Premier is worst in the country on education funding, wait times, and crime rates.

It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are ready for change. Why won't the Premier listen for once, take one of our ideas, and cut the fuel tax for families?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Finance minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I'm kind of humoured. I think that's the only idea I've heard the members opposite come up with so far. And in fact just the indexation alone of the personal income tax that we reduced and have reduced in each and every budget saves families and individuals more than what cutting the fuel tax would do. And in fact there is a number of measures in this budget that saves families, individuals, students, seniors more than what the NDP are proposing. What the NDP don't want to say is how they're going to pay for their proposal.

Mr. Speaker, are they going to cut the highways budget? Is that where they're going to find the money to do this? It's about \$500 million, Mr. Speaker. Where are they going to find the money? What program, what budget, what tax? Where are they going to find it, Mr. Speaker? We never hear that.

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

Contract Negotiations with Teachers

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver on education. And on Thursday teachers said no to this Premier and this Education minister who should have been fired a long time ago.

The Premier said the teachers have been heard when 3,000 of them showed up on the steps of this legislature. And he said the people had been heard after the Regina by-elections. But, Mr. Speaker, nothing has changed. The only way that there will be a change is when we change the government. Now why won't the Premier get to work, negotiate a fair deal on class size and complexity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition what has changed, Mr. Speaker. Let's just go back to budget day earlier in this spring session: almost a 9 per cent increase in school operating funding to the 27 school divisions around the province, Mr. Speaker. That's a 9 per cent school operating increase for next school year, with a forecasted enrolment growth of just under 2 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That is making sure that our 27 school divisions have the funds that they need to be able to provide the supports and support a growing province, Mr. Speaker.

Not to mention, Mr. Speaker, four new schools announced in Saskatoon, four new schools announced in Regina, Mr. Speaker. That is what's changed in education.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I wondered if we might see some contrition from that minister after that vote, but I guess, Mr. Speaker, it's clear to the people of this province that's not going to happen. And it's time for change.

Now everything that the Premier and that minister have tried on this file has failed. They tried to vilify teachers with a bad-faith billboard campaign paid for by taxpayers, but support for teachers has never been higher. And then they tried to threaten and divide teachers, Mr. Speaker, but teachers are more united than ever.

Now Thursday's vote was a damning indictment of this tired and out-of-touch government's record on education. Why won't the Premier negotiate a deal that includes class size and complexity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government has been clear right from the beginning that decisions around class size, complexity belong with our locally elected school divisions. Mr. Speaker, whereas this government has had that position right from the beginning, we've heard flip-flop after flip-flop from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. Would she put it in the contract? Would she not put it in the contract?

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that myself, the Premier, this government, are focused on getting to a fair agreement for teachers, a fair agreement that will work for teachers, families, and students in this province, Mr. Speaker. Even today, Mr. Speaker, earlier this morning, representatives from both bargaining committees met and will continue to meet this week as we work towards a fair agreement for all. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government has got to go, and that Education minister has got to go. It's time for real change in Saskatchewan.

Now this government continues to refuse to negotiate in good faith. If the Premier won't ensure that they get back to the table and negotiate a deal that addresses class size and complexity that preserves, that preserves the school year for students, will they at least send this mess of their own creation to an arbitrator to get some resolution?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been clear from the beginning, as well as members on this side of the House, that we believe the best deal's going to happen at the bargaining table, Mr. Speaker. We've had the opportunity to bargain for just a short period of time several months ago, and then three weeks ago we had the opportunity to spend a couple days at the bargaining table. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, made some significant progress towards getting to a fair agreement.

As I said in my previous answer, as I said in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker, members from . . . the leaders of both bargaining committees met this morning, have plans to meet later this week, Mr. Speaker, as we work towards a fair agreement for families, for teachers, and for students.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Access to Addictions Treatment

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, 10 per cent is hardly a passing grade for that Education minister. Now they're not only failing to deliver, Mr. Speaker, on education. They're failing to deliver on mental health and addictions, the crisis that is gripping our province.

Now we're joined today, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery by Jenny Churchill from Moms Stop the Harm, and she's joined by Bonnie Godfrey. Bonnie's husband, Peter, decided that he was ready to get treatment for his addiction. And after waiting weeks, he got the call that a bed was available for him at the Wakamow detox centre in Moose Jaw. But when he arrived, Mr. Speaker, he was denied treatment and told to go home.

What does the minister have to say to Bonnie after her husband was denied access to treatment that he was finally, finally ready to receive?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would begin just by welcoming Jenny and Bonnie to their Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with Peter's situation, but I would be happy to meet with Bonnie and learn more about it after question period if she would so wish.

I would just say, Mr. Speaker, the challenges in terms of receiving addictions treatment is precisely why our government has committed to more than doubling the number of addictions treatment spaces available across this province, Mr. Speaker. We are working to expand addictions treatment capacity by 500 spaces in all communities across this province, Mr. Speaker, and making access to those spaces easier for individuals so that they can self-refer in that moment when they are ready for treatment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, that minister likes to boast about the number of treatment spaces that his government has opened, and of course treatment is important. But those beds don't help if people can't access them. That minister should know that it takes a lot of courage for someone who is struggling with addiction to get to a place where they're ready for treatment. To get there and be denied access due to short-staffing is unacceptable.

Does the minister think it's acceptable that people ready to access treatment are being denied?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, access to these addictions treatment spaces that we are expanding across the province is a key pillar of our action plan so that people can access treatment when they are ready. This is an action plan that we just recently announced in the fall of 2023, Mr. Speaker, and we are actively pursuing the expansion of that capacity.

We are creating a system that will make it easier for individuals to access those addictions treatment spaces. And we are transitioning to a recovery-oriented system of care, Mr. Speaker, so that the supports that that individual needs can be provided to the individual in a more holistic way to ensure long-lasting recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this family did everything right. Bonnie's husband prepared for weeks to go to treatment. He worked with his family doctor, who wrote a letter giving Peter the all-clear to attend treatment. He called every day to keep his position on the wait-list. He was told that Wakamow detox would take him, that they understood his needs. He and Bonnie were assured that there was no problem, Mr. Speaker.

When they arrived after travelling 115 kilometres from Bulyea, they were told that the facility was short-staffed, that there was only one nurse and that they couldn't accommodate Peter. Mr. Speaker, Peter waited and prepared for weeks to go to treatment just to be told to go home and try again.

Does the minister think that this is acceptable?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — No, Mr. Speaker, that's not an acceptable result for Peter or for anyone in Peter's situation. And that's why we have transitioned our system so that people who are seeking access don't have to experience what Peter experienced, Mr. Speaker.

What the member opposite is describing is the way the system used to operate when people had to get a physician's referral. We have changed that, Mr. Speaker, so that people can now self-refer to addictions treatment, so that when they are ready to receive treatment, we don't miss that window of opportunity and they can refer themselves to treatment, Mr. Speaker.

We are expanding capacity to ensure that we have 500 more addictions treatment spaces available across this province, Mr. Speaker, so that when people are ready, they have easy access and they have a space waiting for them to provide them with the most appropriate treatment for their personal needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, he had the physician referral. The issue in this case was short-staffing. That's why he was turned away.

Mr. Speaker, the Godfreys tried to file a complaint with the patient advocate regarding their ill-treatment, but they were told that the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] couldn't accept their complaint, that the SHA can't accept any complaints about third-party addictions treatment centres, and that the SHA only funds these centres.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister think it's acceptable that there is no accountability for Peter being turned away from Wakamow detox?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I'm not familiar with the specifics because I haven't had an opportunity to meet with Bonnie or Peter about this specific case. As the member opposite referenced, this is a third-party provider who does receive funding, Mr. Speaker, but they operate independently. Mr. Speaker, I have toured this facility. I have met with the operator and the staff that operate Wakamow, and I am happy to, again, meet with Bonnie and hear the circumstances so that we can try and find a resolution and a path forward for Peter.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, it is our goal that everybody who is ready to receive addictions treatment has a space, has easy access to that treatment, and is provided with the individualized wraparound supports that they need to ensure that they can live a healthy life in recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, yet again the minister says that he's focused on treatment, but that's cold comfort for people who can't get access to those treatment spaces. This is not the first time that this facility has come under scrutiny, Mr. Speaker. And the minister is taking no responsibility for the actions of this facility despite the fact that he is the minister responsible and his ministry provides funding to this space. Does he think it's acceptable that there's no accountability mechanism in place when situations like this occur?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to advise the member opposite that, as part of the plan, what we are doing is expanding capacity and improving access to the system that she's referring to. One of those measures, Mr. Speaker, will include an accountability measure so that all of the providers across the province are in fact held accountable and providing adequate and appropriate care.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have committed to expanding addictions treatment by 500 more spaces across the province. Of that 500, Mr. Speaker, only in the first few months of this province we've now announced 198 additional addictions treatment spaces across the province. We are continuing to expand that with further announcements in the very near future. And we again, Mr. Speaker, are ensuring that we can transition to a recovery-oriented system of care so that people receive the individualized care that they need for their specific circumstances. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about expanding treatment spaces. How can we be assured that these treatment

spaces will have staff to make sure that they can operate when the existing treatment spaces are understaffed?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, the way the expansion of these spaces works is providers who are experts in that space apply through an RFP [request for proposal] or an RFSQ [request for supplier qualification] committing to provide those services, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

The government simply contracts those spaces and pays for those spaces with public funds, from the providers who are the experts in that area, Mr. Speaker. They are providing the services through their expertise, with their staff, on their programs, Mr. Speaker. Again, we are contracting the spaces from them. They are the experts in this area. And we will have an accountability system put in place to ensure that that system of care that they are providing is appropriate and is consistent with the recovery-oriented system of care that we have announced as a government that we are pursuing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, we're also joined today by seven medical students as part of SHRIP [Students for Harm Reduction & Informed Policy] from the University of Saskatchewan. They're here to advocate for increased supports for people dealing with addiction. These future doctors and community leaders know that evidence-based supports save lives. They know that this minister's widely criticized policy shift, based solely on ideology, will cost lives. Alberta is seeing this right now with an increase in overdose deaths by 25 per cent.

The minister has seen the research provided to the ministry directly by these students, and he's heard the outcry from addictions specialists. Will the minister finally listen to these students and those on the front lines, change course, and implement an evidence-based plan today?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would also welcome these guests to their Legislative Assembly. I'd be happy to meet with them, if they're interested, after question period as well.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, day after day, week after week talk about an evidence-based plan. Mr. Speaker, the evidence is right in front of us. We only need to look to the British Columbia NDP and their failed ideological plans that have resulted in unsafe communities, Mr. Speaker. They have resulted in public use of illicit drugs, Mr. Speaker. It has not reduced overdoses; it has not reduced deaths. Mr. Speaker, we know very well what the evidence is from a plan that the NDP would have this province hold. We will not follow that plan.

Our government has a plan that saves lives, that heals families

and it strengthens communities, Mr. Speaker. Our government's focus is on making it easier for people to access treatment and for them to receive wraparound supports specific to their individual need, Mr. Speaker, so that they can receive the treatments they need and live healthy lives in recovery.

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

Provision of Health Care in Rural Communities

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, that tired and out-of-touch government has no solutions for the addictions crisis, and they've got no solutions for the rural health care crisis. Last week we met people from Duck Lake, the RM [rural municipality], and Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation. There are eight empty beds in Duck Lake's special care home, and it's not because of a lack of demand. They don't have enough people to staff that home, so the beds go empty.

How did the minister let the crisis in rural health care get so bad?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to meet with the individuals from Duck Lake and Beardy's and Okemasis and Rosthern last week, Mr. Speaker. We had a great conversation afterward. And as I explained to them and as I had mentioned in the House last week, Mr. Speaker, we have an action plan for health human resources to specifically address the needs that we have in our rural communities, Mr. Speaker.

That plan is yielding results across the province. Yes, we recognize there are still challenges, and Duck Lake understands that they are one of those communities in that situation, Mr. Speaker.

However, through that plan we have recruited SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] doctors in Rosthern, Mr. Speaker, and there's two new SIPPA doctors with a third arriving soon. And those doctors service the community of Duck Lake, Mr. Speaker, to specifically address this challenge. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, all we hear from this minister is that he says we're working on it, we're working on it. Well how would the folks in Duck Lake and area know that they're working on it when they never received a reply from that government and their beds are still empty?

People shouldn't have to beg for two years and then drive four hours to Regina and advocate in front of the whole province just to get a "we're working on it" from that minister. So to the minister: why should people who live around Duck Lake go without the health care that they need and deserve?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, I met with that community and I was happy to do that. And I expressed to the community my regret that they did not receive a reply. That should not have happened. And I invited them . . . I gave them my personal phone number, Mr. Speaker. They are free to call me at any time if they have concerns. They understood and appreciated very much the efforts that we are going through to address their concerns, Mr. Speaker.

They were also very pleased to hear, Mr. Speaker, that that plan that I've referenced, the health human resources action plan, is having significant results across the province, Mr. Speaker.

I mentioned these results last week, Mr. Speaker, but I'll mention them again. Communities like North Battleford have received 97 new positions as a result of that plan. Prince Albert has 69 positions. Moose Jaw has 47 positions; Yorkton, 30; Swift Current, 29; Weyburn, 28. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on, communities across this province that have received additional supports through the health human resources action plan which is the most ambitious plan of its kind in the country.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, it certainly isn't just Duck Lake that that minister is failing. There are 1,600 people who live on-reserve in Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation. Of those 1,600 residents, 1,000 do not have access to a family doctor. They have to drive to Rosthern and pray that the ER [emergency room] is actually open on that day.

Now maybe the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook knows for himself what the odds are of that ER being open. Does the minister think that this is an acceptable state of health care for the people of Beardy's?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — No, Mr. Speaker, it's not an acceptable state of the health care on Beardy's Okemasis, which is an Indigenous reserve, which is federally funded health care, Mr. Speaker. And I specifically spoke about this with the chief from Beardy's and Okemasis, Mr. Speaker.

The reference that they're making to a health care facility that is a federal responsibility is certainly a concern, Mr. Speaker. However I committed to the chief and to that delegation that we would be happy to continue to work with them to ensure that the federal government meets their commitments in health care on-reserve. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'll remind the minister we had these leaders here from the RM, from the town, from the care home, and from Beardy's who did not get an answer from this minister when they wrote him two years ago. They did not get an answer from this government.

They left home at 5:30 in the morning to come here. Is that the

kind of treatment that they received when they came here, knowing the system and its failures well? Did that minister give those leaders, especially the chief from Beardy's, that same treatment and that same out-of-touch answer when they met here last week?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, when I met with the delegation last week, I explained the facts to them. I explained the situation, that we understand that they are experiencing challenges. They understand, Mr. Speaker. We understand and acknowledge that this is a challenge across the province and across the country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I committed to that delegation that we would continue to work with them with regard to making sure that the federal government meets their obligations to the reserve and to the First Nations members there, Mr. Speaker. And I also committed to that delegation, Mr. Speaker, that we are continuing to work on the situation in Duck Lake and Rosthern to ensure that they have the health care services that they expect. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Care for Addictions

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, the facts are the mental health and addictions crisis continues to take lives in our province. And the crisis continues to have a disproportionate impact on First Nation and Métis people in Saskatchewan.

We know from the coroner that the majority of those that are dying are First Nation and Métis. Just this past week and weekend we lost more people in the Touchwood Hills. One of those people is being buried today. Mr. Speaker, enough's enough.

When will the Sask Party work with Indigenous communities on evidence-based solutions like the Poundmaker Cree Nation Cree treatment centre to help to stop this crisis that is taking the lives of too many First Nation and Métis people in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll begin by extending our sincere condolences to the families of all those who have lost a loved one to this addictions crisis, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we understand very well that helping people overcome their addictions and supporting their recovery will save lives. It will heal families and it will strengthen communities, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite speaks about addictions treatment, specifically targeting Indigenous members of society, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have addictions treatment spaces, as she said, Poundmaker in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. We've also announced addictions treatment spaces in Onion Lake, Mr.

Speaker. We have addictions treatment spaces at Muskeg Lake in Pinehouse, Mr. Speaker.

We also have addictions treatment spaces, Mr. Speaker, of every other variety across the continuum of care to ensure that everyone in Saskatchewan receives the treatment that they need so that they can live healthy lives in recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:42.]

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