



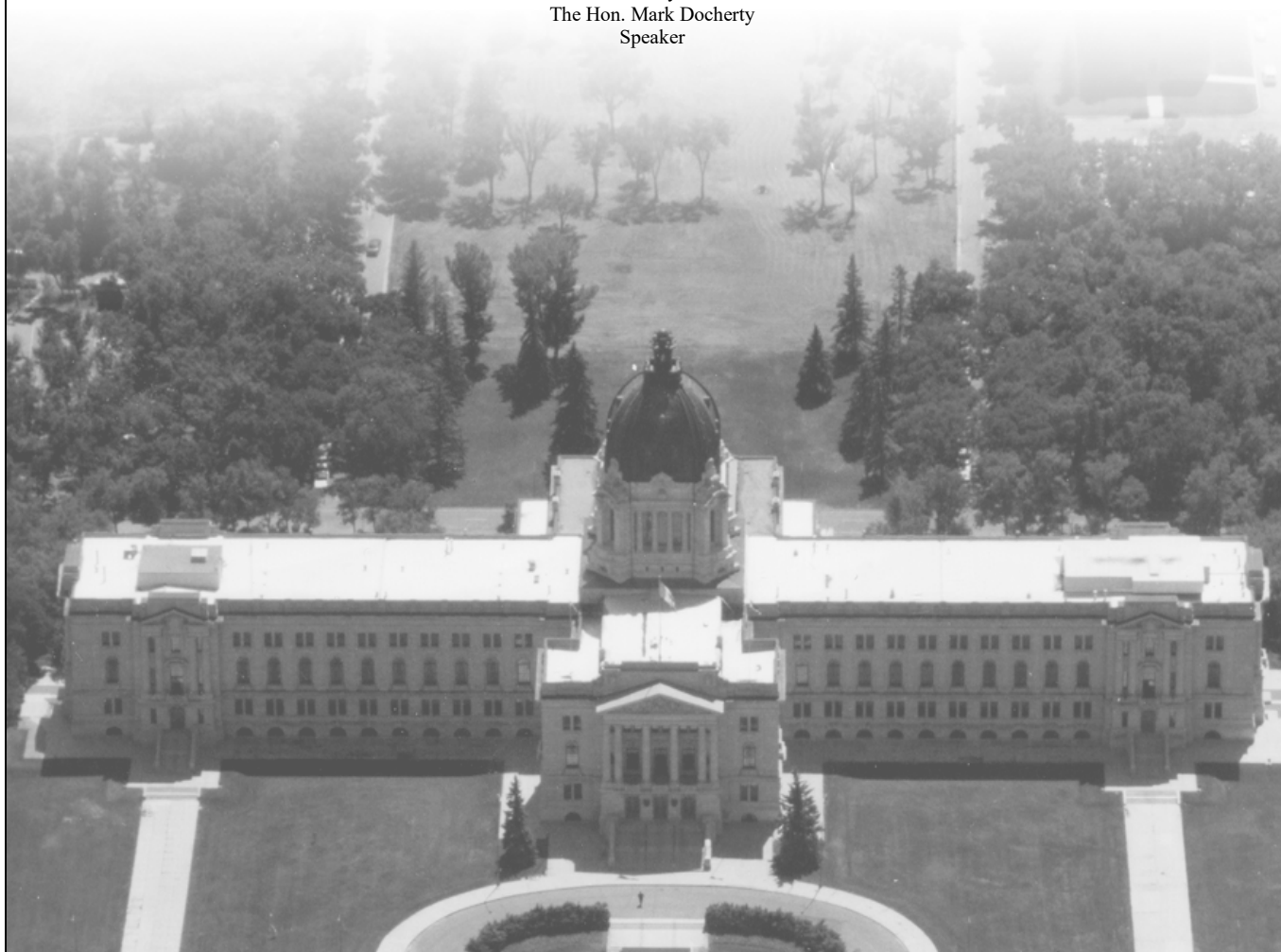
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 28th Legislature

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Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13; Vacant — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

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Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melfort.

Hon. Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could I ask leave for an extended introduction?

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Hon. Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan has proclaimed March 1st to 31st as le Rendez-vous de la Francophonie and the month of the francophonie in Saskatchewan. It's the time to celebrate the warmth, heritage, and growing diversity of Saskatchewan's francophonie community.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce several members of that community. There is no better place to start than by recognizing the up-and-coming generation. In the east gallery, we see a bright and energetic group of seventh grade students from l'École Monseigneur de Laval here in Regina . . .

An Hon. Member: — West.

Hon. Mr. Goudy: — That's the west gallery. There you are. Thank you. The Finance minister knows directions.

The students are accompanied today by long-time educator and school administrator, Claude Martel. These students are bilingual and many are multilingual, giving them great language skills for their future careers and helping make Saskatchewan more diverse and able to communicate in the world.

Mr. Speaker, in your gallery is another remarkable student finishing his degree at the University of Saskatchewan. Alasdair Rees is the first ever youth poet laureate of Saskatchewan selected by the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild. He didn't flex his muscles too hard for the other speakers that were standing up with him today. We appreciate that. Alasdair's term began April 1st, 2019 and will run until March 31st, 2020. Alasdair is fully bilingual. He publishes and performs in both English and in French.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also introduce Denis Simard, the current president of the ACF [l'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise]. Denis has worked hard to build a strong relationship between the community and government, and I commend and thank him for those efforts. Denis, a proud fact, he is the father of one of our newest citizens in Saskatchewan, 14 days old: Roux. Congratulations, Denis.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be activities across the province, both cultural and sporting in nature, that I would invite everyone to attend. I'd encourage you to get out and participate in these events, learn about the history and contributions of the Fransaskois to this province. I ask, Mr. Speaker, that all members please join me in recognizing and welcoming these guests to their legislature. Thank you.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join the Provincial Secretary in welcoming the members of the francophonie to the legislature.

Je suis vraiment content de vous voir ici aujourd'hui, tous les étudiants de Monseigneur de Laval, Monsieur Martel, bienvenue. Je suis vraiment content de vous voir, et aussi à Denis Simard, Alpha Barry, Marc. Alasdair, félicitations d'être le poète de la province, et félicitations à Denis pour le nouveau bébé. Ça c'est vraiment la bonne nouvelle.

Nous, on est vraiment fiers d'avoir une communauté francophone ici en Saskatchewan si forte, si fière. La Fransaskoisie fait une grande contribution à notre société, à notre province. Et ce n'est pas une chose d'hier. Comme on voit avec les étudiants ici, c'est une chose d'aujourd'hui; c'est une chose de l'avenir. Merci.

[Translation: I am really happy to see you here today, all the students of Monseigneur de Laval, Mr. Martel, welcome. I am truly happy to see you, and also Denis Simard, Alpha Barry, Marc. Alasdair, congratulations on being the provincial poet, and congratulations to Denis for the new baby. That is very good news.

We are very proud to have such a strong, proud Francophone community here in Saskatchewan. The Fransaskoisie makes a great contribution to our society, to our province. And it's not a thing of the past. As we see with the students here, it's a thing of today; it's a thing of the future. Thank you.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleagues and recognize both Denis Simard and my friend Alpha Barry who are here in your gallery. But I'd also like to introduce a number of students with their professor seated in the gallery from La Cité at the University of Regina. If you could please give a little wave when I call out your name. We have Cassandra Baragar. We have Brooklyn Cottenie. We have Temesha Kabeya. We have Sita Kane. We have Kiana Kirzinger, Luboya Musamu, Lucie Poirier, James Tuharsky, Jesse Wallace, Rebecca Williams, and of course their instructor Michael Poplyansky.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015 La Cité université francophone was established as a merger between the department of French and l'Institut français, creating the most comprehensive French-language institution in Saskatchewan. I'm looking forward to meeting with these folks after QP [question period] today. I would ask all members to join me in saying bienvenue

and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Merci, monsieur le Président. Je voudrais aussi dire bonjour et bienvenue à toutes et tous les francophones et les fransaskois ici aujourd'hui. J'étais la présidente de cette assemblée pour l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, et je suis désolée d'annoncer aujourd'hui que notre . . . On ne fait plus parti dans cette organisation parce que c'est un décision de la gouvernement. Alors j'étais la présidente, mais maintenant ce n'est pas possible. Mais alors, bienvenue. Ma mère est fransaskoise, alors je suis fransaskoise; et j'étais très fière de la francophonie en Saskatchewan et tous que vous faites. Alors merci et bienvenue.

[Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to say hello and welcome to all the Francophones and Fransaskois here today. I was the president of this Assembly for the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, and I am sorry to announce today that our . . . We no longer belong to that organization because of a decision by the government. So I was the president, but now it's no longer possible. But anyway, welcome. My mother is Fransaskois, so I am Fransaskois; and I'm very proud of the francophonie in Saskatchewan and all that you do. So thank you and welcome.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you a special guest seated in your gallery today, my sister Beverly from Saskatoon. She's down here visiting, and I think she's found herself house- and cat-sitting for my brother-in-law for a week. Bev is the youngest and next in line to me, but she's the 7th of 12 siblings. And she's been in this building before in the past, but this is her first time to watch the proceedings in person today.

So I ask all members to . . . Oh, and she's worked for 40 years for the Federated Co-op in the food marketing department and has been retired for almost two years now, so that's the cat-sitting job she's got, I think. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sitting behind me on the government side is my friend, former colleague, constituent, Victoria Jurgens. She was the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Prince Albert Northcote and worked very hard on behalf of Saskatchewan people. She is a wonderful constituent, and I would like everyone in the Assembly to wish her well-wishes. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join in welcoming Claude Martel to the Assembly. He's seated in the west gallery behind me. He's a friend and a parishioner at our church that we go to.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to again

introduce the members of Unifor 594 who are here today once again. They've been watching the proceedings over the last couple of weeks, and they're both in the east and west gallery. Mr. Speaker, of course you can't support the oil and gas sector without supporting oil and gas workers. And so I thank them for being here to watch the proceedings, and ask all members in joining me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these workers to the legislature. I know that they've been here virtually every day through the last number of . . . well since the session started. And we understand the processes that they're going through. We urge everybody to continue working. And, Mr. Speaker, these people work hard. They make valuable contributions to our province. We thank them for the work that they do every day.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from the citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose an unfair and ineffective carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

And I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by good citizens of the fair city of Moose Jaw. Thank you. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I guess speaking of another tax that is a concern to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens, people, communities, businesses from all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that's the concern with respect to the historic billion-dollar PST [provincial sales tax] hike, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party government brought forward a few years ago.

Of course this has hit our economy and hit households very hard, Mr. Speaker. The average household is now paying more than \$800 more per year than they were just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker. Of course that hits that family and that household hard but it's hurt our economy as well, Mr. Speaker.

And as it relates to the Sask Party government's choice to impose that PST onto construction labour, well quite simply that's the epitome of a job-killing tax, Mr. Speaker. Sadly the results speak for themselves. We see permits that have plummeted all across Saskatchewan, important projects that have been shelved, Mr. Speaker, and sadly thousands of hard-working tradespeople that

have lost their jobs, so many of those that have been forced outside of Saskatchewan in pursuit of employment, Mr. Speaker, a tremendous loss for them and their family, a tremendous loss for us as a province.

And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition once again to the Legislative Assembly calling for a \$15 minimum wage. And the undersigned residents of this province want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan now has the lowest minimum wage in Canada; that a minimum wage should never be a poverty wage, but we know that Saskatchewan people working full time at minimum wage jobs are living in poverty; that a \$15 wage will improve health and well-being and lift Saskatchewan workers out of poverty; and we know that a \$15 wage will benefit local businesses and support local economies by putting money in workers' pockets to spend in their own communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to adopt a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers here in Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people presenting this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to respect the North.

And the petition reads as follows: that northerners work hard as trappers, fishers, and hunters to be responsible stewards of the land; that northerners feel disrespected by the current Sask Party government and do not feel as though they are being treated fairly; that northerners want to ensure resources in fishing, forestry, and mining are developed responsibly in full partnership with northern communities; and that northerners are facing many challenges which only have been made worse by layoffs in the mining sector, the closure of Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre, and the sell-off of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company].

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop disrespecting the North and

begin immediate dialogue with northern communities to work towards an agreement for responsible, inclusive resource management.

[13:45]

And the people that have signed this particular page of the many petitions that I have received, Mr. Speaker, are from Beauval and Ile-a-la-Crosse. And I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to restore public control over Wascana Park.

Those who have signed the petition wish to draw our attention to a number of points: that Wascana Park is a treasured urban park and conservation area that has been responsibly managed through an equal partnership between the city of Regina, the provincial government, and the University of Regina for more than 50 years; that the government unilaterally gave itself majority control of the board of the Provincial Capital Commission through changes brought on by Bill 50; that the city of Regina and the University of Regina have both expressed openness to return to a governance model based on equality; and that more and more people in Regina and right across Saskatchewan are becoming concerned with the growing commercialization of Wascana Park and they would like to see it stopped.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to restore the governance structure of Wascana Centre Authority and end the commercialization of Wascana Park.

Those who have signed this petition today reside in Lumsden and Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition calling for a moratorium on logging in the Nesslin Lake area. And the people who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: Nesslin Lake, Ness Lake, and Zig Zag Bay campgrounds bring thousands of tourists to the area annually and is also the prime recreational area for the residents of Big River and the surrounding area. The Ness Creek site brings thousands of tourists to the area through its numerous events and activities, resulting in an additional 25,000 visitor days annually.

Portions of the forest in the Nesslin Lake area are slated for logging as early as September 2020, which will negatively impact tourism, traditional and recreational use, and its untapped economic potential. A moratorium on logging in this area is critical as, if this logging proceeds, it will cause irreparable harm to the economic potential of the area for decades. Local area residents and businesses need more time to ensure a more sustainable economic plan is put in place.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to place a moratorium on all proposed logging in the area between Nesslin Lake and the Ness Creek site, as well as immediately north of Nesslin Lake.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today are from the community of Big River and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place today to yet again introduce a petition to end unacceptable emergency room wait times. These individuals wish to bring to our attention: that despite the Sask Party government's promise to eliminate emergency room wait times in 2012, wait times in Saskatchewan's emergency rooms continue to grow; and instead of making smart investments to meet emergency room targets, the Sask Party watered down targets to the point that they no longer exist; and that the Sask Party has cut funding to address emergency room wait times and has no meaningful strategy to get emergency room wait times under control.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to fully fund and execute a plan, as they promised to do in 2012, to lower and eventually end ER wait times across Saskatchewan.

This petition is signed by individuals from Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Northeast.

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition from residents of Regina asking that the government fix the crisis in our classrooms. Mr. Speaker, every day that I go out talking to the residents of Regina in my constituency, the crisis in our classrooms is mentioned to me over and over again, many times with tears in their eyes. Whether it's parents whose kids aren't getting the supports that they need to get the future that they deserve, whether it's teachers or the families of teachers who are experiencing the strain of mental health and the pressures of an underfunded system. Mr. Speaker, it's widespread.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners in this petition want to draw to our attention that the Saskatchewan Party government's cuts to education mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students who need a little extra help.

They want to bring to our attention that the Saskatchewan Party government's cuts leave educators without the resources that they need to support student learning, that the Saskatchewan Party government is ignoring overcrowding in our classrooms by refusing to track and report classroom sizes, that the Saskatchewan Party government's lack of funding for school infrastructure has led to crumbling schools across

Saskatchewan, and that the Saskatchewan Party government's failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences today.

Mr. Speaker, in the prayer the petitioners:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by properly funding the most important investment that we can make in our children.

I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

4-H Celebrates 60 Years in Saskatchewan

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan 4-H Foundation is celebrating its 60th anniversary. The foundation was formed through an Act of this legislature on March 10, 1960 with the purpose of supporting the 4-H program in Saskatchewan. As part of one of Canada's largest youth organizations, 4-H Saskatchewan members pledge to put their heads, hearts, hands, and health towards the betterment of the clubs, communities, country, and the world.

This is the message that rings true to the purpose of the work that happens on the floor of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. 4-H provides young people in this province opportunities to learn about teamwork and develop leadership skills. 4-H helps to prepare members for a successful future through the 4-H concept of "learn to do by doing." Mr. Speaker, the program also connects young people to the agriculture industry and their communities. Many leaders in our agriculture industry were once part of the 4-H program and have continued to work with the organization as volunteers and mentors.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank 4-H Saskatchewan for 60 years of hard work and dedication to building our leaders of tomorrow. I ask that all members join me in congratulating the Saskatchewan 4-H Foundation on their 60th anniversary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Government Position on Crown Corporations

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government just isn't old, but they're tired. They're broke. They're out of touch. And I remind the people of Saskatchewan that they can't be trusted with Saskatchewan Crown corporations. Gone are the 2007 days when the Sask Party had to swoop in and clean up the mess from Cannington's mess, who was promoting the sale of the Crowns if the price was right. According to the Sask Party, I quote, "Crowns are not going to be privatized and subsidiaries are not going to be wound down."

You'd be hard pressed to find an emptier promise, Mr. Speaker. In 2010 the Sask Party sold SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] assets to Bluepoint, who flipped

them nearly 10 times the sale price two years later. In 2012 the Sask Party privatized and sold off the land titles. In 2003, 3sHealth [Health Shared Services Saskatchewan] signed a contract with K-Bro Linens, costing 350 Regina jobs. Not just that, Mr. Speaker. Laundry frequently comes back soiled and with what can only be called questionable items. Most recently a shiv was found by a health care worker in clean laundry.

In 2016 the then minister of STC told media that the Crown was “safe,” only for it to be sold off months later after the 2017 budget. In 2017 they claimed SaskTel is not for sale, only to introduce Bill 40 and explore selling off that Crown corporation. Finally, Mr. Speaker, in 2017 the president of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] admits they had discussions with 16 companies exploring a sale. Do not trust them with the Crowns, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon University.

University of Saskatchewan Community Centre Opens

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of January I had the privilege of attending the opening of the University of Saskatchewan Community Centre. As we know, none of us can reach our full potential without a healthy mind, a healthy body, and a healthy life. Mr. Speaker, to promote health and well-being, the University of Saskatchewan developed their wellness strategy, which led to the community centre. The centre provides a safe welcoming place for people of all cultures, religions, genders, and sexual orientation to find their true selves and a sense of community.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to helping our students both during and after their studies. To help post-secondary students remain in Saskatchewan after they finish their schooling, we offer a tax credit through the graduate retention program, the only program of its kind in Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, with our growth plan’s goal of creating 100,000 new jobs by 2030, our students will have 100,000 new reasons to stay in Saskatchewan.

I can’t wait to see the incredible things that our students will achieve with their world-class education at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Mr. Speaker, I now invite all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the University of Saskatchewan on the opening of their new community centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Abbeyfield House Volunteer Wins Award

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Located in my own community of Holiday Park, Abbeyfield House Saskatoon now displays another recognition award won by Florence Graham, the champion volunteer who has worked with the group home for independent seniors since its opening in 2005.

There are Abbeyfield Houses around the world. They offer small communal homes to independent seniors. Residents at Abbeyfield tend to their own daily activities, sometimes with the

help from family members or home care staff for heavier duties. Though these seniors each have their own bed sitting room with ensuite, they prefer to share some common space for companionship, entertainment, and shared meals. Abbeyfield hires staff for daytime shifts, for grocery shopping, cooking residents’ meals, and cleaning the common areas of the home.

Florence Graham volunteered for six years as president of the Abbeyfield Saskatoon board. She now volunteers as board treasurer. She has helped the board recruit new residents, hire staff, and stimulate activities in the home. Loved by residents and their families, Florence is the go-to person for solving problems and ensuring quality of life for residents. While she served for six years on the Abbeyfield homes Canada board, Florence also travelled across Canada to visit 22 Abbeyfield homes. Now in the Saskatoon home sunroom, Florence’s Abbeyfield Canada volunteer award sits proudly on a side table. Abbeyfield now hangs a framed certificate naming Florence as the recipient of the 2019 Abbeyfield International Volunteer Award, announced at a fall conference in England. Florence Graham was selected from Abbeyfield volunteers from six countries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Florence Graham on her recent award recognizing her Herculean and unwavering efforts to improve the quality of life for seniors through her work with Abbeyfield homes. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Westview.

Centres Help Develop Saskatchewan’s Labour Force

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was recently given the opportunity to tour the skills and trade centres in Regina and Saskatoon. Tradespeople are in demand in Saskatchewan, and these facilities deliver short-term trades and skills training that leads to jobs in industries where workers are in high demand. These facilities also work with the industry to develop and deliver relevant and recognized programs that are responsive to industry labour needs. There is no cost to train at the Trades and Skills Centres and students are even paid wages for the hours that they are in class.

Mr. Speaker, during the tours I noticed many enthusiastic students who were excited to soon be starting their new careers in fields like landscaping, concrete, and construction. These facilities also boast very high Indigenous engagement and connect students to careers as soon as they graduate.

Mr. Speaker, developing Saskatchewan’s labour force is one of the 20 actions in our new growth plan, and the Trades and Skills Centres in Regina and Saskatoon will play a big part of this initiative. Mr. Speaker, I encourage each member of this Assembly to visit Regina and Saskatoon Trades and Skills Centres and see for themselves the value that these facilities add to students’ lives as well as to the Saskatchewan economy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rochdale.

Celebration of Holi

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This past

Sunday I was pleased to join with the Gujarati Samaj of Saskatchewan in their celebration of the Indian festival of Holi, along with my colleagues. The Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport; the Minister of Social Services; and the member of Regina Pasqua; as well as yourself, Mr. Speaker, participated in Holi, this wonderful celebration. It was the first time ever that Holi was held indoors, and it was fun.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, Holi falls on the first day of the full moon in March. It's celebrated with much enthusiasm and bright colours. The festival signifies the victory of good over evil, the arrival of spring, and the blossoming of love. It was a day to rid oneself of past errors, to end conflict by meeting others, and a day to forgive and forget. The event was filled with laughter and colour, and people of all ages were in attendance.

Mr. Speaker, I now invite each member of this Assembly to join me in acknowledging the festival of Holi and congratulate the Gujarati Samaj of Saskatchewan on hosting this wonderful event. Mr. Speaker, namaste.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Increase in Employment Numbers

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people are hard at work. While members opposite dislike it when we present facts, I'm happy to stand today and present the most recent job numbers. Mr. Speaker, in February 569,700 people were employed in our province. That's an increase of 4,900 compared to February of 2019.

Full-time employment has increased 3,100 and part-time employment increased by 1,900 over this period. Compared to last year, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is seeing highs for the month of February for labour force, employment, full-time employment, male and female employment as well. Off-reserve Indigenous employment is seeing its eighth consecutive month of year-over-year increase, and Indigenous youth employment is up 2,500 jobs for the seventh consecutive month of gains. And the latest numbers also showed strength in retail trade and housing starts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think the economic events of yesterday highlight now more than ever the importance of a plan for our economy. And that's why on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we have a long-term plan for growth.

Saskatchewan remains strong, despite the fearmongering from the Leader of the Opposition. He may even be trying to disguise himself by ditching NDP [New Democratic Party] orange for dark-blue-coloured signs these days, but we know he represents one thing, Mr. Speaker, the NDP that led Saskatchewan to the worst job numbers in the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During members' statements, the member for Athabasca, who has a history of using unparliamentary language, did so again. He referred to the member of Cannington and said, I quote, "cannot be trusted." I would refer the Speaker to *Hansard* page 4511 of March 29, 2010, where Speaker Toth ruled that to be unparliamentary language. I would call on the member for Athabasca to stand in his place, withdraw, and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, I'll withdraw and I'll apologize.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Preparedness for COVID-19 Outbreak

Mr. Meili: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked the Premier about his plan to call a snap election call later this month in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic. This is a serious issue and a serious response would be required, but the Premier brushed it off.

Yesterday the Minister of Health said to the media that it is important for the public to practise social distancing and other precautions to prevent infections, precautions like avoiding handshakes, which certainly sounds like good evidence-based advice for infection control, Mr. Speaker. It also sounds completely incompatible with door-to-door campaigning and large campaign rallies during an election, Mr. Speaker. That's the opposite of social distancing.

So my question for the Premier is, has he had the time to think this through? Has he consulted the experts? Will the Premier come clean with the people of Saskatchewan about his plans for an election? Will he still call an election with a pandemic under way, or is he going to just keep playing political games?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, what we have always tried to provide on behalf of the people of the province — as we have had the honour for about a dozen years now to serve as their government — is a responsible and stable government here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. As we look ahead to days, weeks, months ahead, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to endeavour to make the very best decisions that we can on behalf of the people of this province and continue to be a responsible and a stable voice on behalf of the people that we serve.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, as we face not just in Saskatchewan, not even just in our nation of Canada, but across this continent and around the world, Mr. Speaker, we are facing a very serious, a very serious outbreak with COVID-19. Mr. Speaker, this outbreak has us having conversations with respect to how we are prepared from a health perspective — again on behalf of the people of this province — to ensure that health officials are talking to one another across Saskatchewan and having regular contact with officials across Canada so that we are

up to date with the latest occurrences and how we can provide the very best health care for the people should we have cases that arrive in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And thankfully in years gone by we have made some difficult decisions, yes, in this province. We have shifted our resource-revenue reliance away from natural resource revenues. And what we see in the economic fallout, Mr. Speaker, again around the world but affecting the province of Saskatchewan, we are very well prepared from a financial perspective to go into the next number of weeks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Responsible and stable government is an excellent goal and it's exactly what members on this side would provide. Calling an election in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic, in the midst of a worldwide economic crash would be unstable and irresponsible. Which is the Premier planning to be?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has already promised a billion-dollar deficit before we're even talking or even into a campaign season, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly we would not be in a financial situation, a strong financial situation that we offer today going into this type of an economic challenge, Mr. Speaker, that is, yes, precipitated by a health outbreak, Mr. Speaker, in COVID-19 around the world.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, as we go through the next number of days, there are some things that we are just simply unable to control, Mr. Speaker. We are unable to control the daily market impact that COVID-19 is having with, Mr. Speaker, the price of oil, the price of our stock markets, what is occurring there. But fiscally in this province, Mr. Speaker, we are in a strong position to manage our way through that, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the next days, weeks, or however long it takes.

Health officials — I know, very competent health officials that we have the greatest of faith in, Mr. Speaker — continue to work amongst themselves within the province so that we are well prepared to provide the health services should we need to, Mr. Speaker, in the case of an outbreak or multiple cases here, of which we have none today. Mr. Speaker, they are conversing, as I said, with other health officials across the province. We're well prepared from a health service perspective. We're well prepared from a financial and a fiscal perspective, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to the next number of days.

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

Provincial Budget

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government, who has said that the budget documents were put to bed on February 28th, this government should see what's happening with the world economy as a wake-up call. In last year's estimates the Minister of Finance said that for every dollar drop in the price of oil, we lose \$15 million to the provincial budget. That means a \$20 drop in the price of oil would be a \$300 million hit to the provincial finances, not to mention, not to mention the impact on

provincial GDP [gross domestic product], not to mention the impact on decreased money circulating in the economy, not to mention the job losses, not to mention the impact on struggling Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier brushed this all off yesterday. He heard this and he said, aw, it's minor; it doesn't really matter, Mr. Speaker. But these are serious challenges, and they deserve serious leadership. Mr. Speaker, if last month's budget is presented next week, it won't be worth the paper it's printed on. Will the Premier give us some new information? Will he release the third quarter report today? Will he give us an update on the finances, our pension liabilities, and all of our funds, Mr. Speaker? And will he do the right thing and postpone the budget long enough to get an honest re-evaluation of the road ahead?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, questions such as those is exactly why the people of this province have no confidence in the NDP and in their leadership, Mr. Speaker. The minute that there is an issue in the markets, Mr. Speaker, what do those members do? They panic and they demand a knee-jerk reaction, Mr. Speaker. Doctor doom and his whole caucus of gloom, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, would bring forward a disastrous budget.

Mr. Speaker, if you evaluate the entire year at \$30 a barrel, that is a \$500 million loss. We recognize that. But the price that we have in our budget has to be balanced across the entire year, Mr. Speaker. And in that year there's going to be ups and there's going to be downs. And what's the average at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker? They already have made a billion dollars' worth of promises, Mr. Speaker, with no plan of how they're going to pay for it.

And his sidekick, mister gloom, Mr. Speaker, has time and time again said we need to reverse all the measures that we put in place that stabilized our budget so that we can weather these situations. Mr. Speaker, that's two and a half billion . . .

The Speaker: — Next question. I'll caution the Minister of Finance in regards to referring to the member by his correct title. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Failing to respond to the realities around us isn't leadership. The Premier thought it was just fine to delay a budget back in April 2018 when it was convenient for him and the Sask Party's leadership race. That was no problem. But now, despite major shocks to the world economy, despite a COVID-19 pandemic, despite all these new pressures that invalidate the existing budget, everything is suddenly set in stone. Mr. Speaker, time and again, this Premier puts his party ahead of the people of Saskatchewan. And if this government puts forward last month's budget next week, Mr. Speaker, it will be a fiction, a Premier whistling past the graveyard, pretending everything is fine while the people around him are hurting.

Mr. Speaker, this government can't seriously be considering tabling a budget that deceives the people of Saskatchewan about the real state of Saskatchewan's finances and economy on the eve of an election. So I ask, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier release the third quarter report today? Will he release the third quarter report

today, an update on our finances, and will he postpone the budget and allow enough time for an honest assessment about the real state of our province's affairs and the road ahead?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, what this budget will not have in it is a two-and-a-half-billion-dollar deficit. And that's what it would have in it if we put in what the NDP have been asking for day after day. Mr. Speaker, that's not sustainable and it's damaging to the future of the province.

Mr. Speaker, what makes that member opposite think that we don't have stimulus initiatives within our budget, Mr. Speaker? What makes the member opposite think that we won't have a budget that is going to have health care and education sustainable into the future? Mr. Speaker, he just wants to scrap it, knee-jerk react, and right away redo the whole thing. Maybe we have a building budget, Mr. Speaker, a budget that's going to continue to invest in infrastructure in this province — much as we have done in the past — which is a stimulus for the economy, which is quite frankly going to struggle through this downturn.

The Speaker: — I'll caution the Leader of the Opposition, "deceive" is out of order. It's out of order. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the Premier that that question was for him. But he doesn't seem to want to be responding to the reality that we're facing today, which is a nice luxury for him but it's something the Saskatchewan people can't afford. The people are stretched and stressed across this province. They are living paycheque to paycheque. We've got the lowest wage growth in the country, the lowest minimum wage, and the highest number of people who are having to walk away from their homes because they can't pay their mortgage, Mr. Speaker.

And on top of all that today, people are worried about new challenges, about the crashing world economy, about a COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Speaker, and they have no reason at all to believe that the Sask Party is serious about addressing those concerns.

The Premier appears hell-bent on calling an election in the midst of a global pandemic, ignoring expert advice and public safety. He has no plan, no plan to address the damage this market crash is going to do to people's savings and pensions and he's fully committed, he's fully committed to plowing ahead with a budget that's only hope is getting to be a finalist as the best work of fiction in the Sask Book Awards, Mr. Speaker.

Why would the people of Saskatchewan have any confidence at all, any confidence at all in this Premier's willingness to acknowledge and address the real suffering they're experiencing? Why would they have any faith in him having any plans to be upfront about the real challenges on the horizon when he's hiding from the questions every day?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, to quote the Leader of the Opposition and just to add my comments in front of that quote, Mr. Speaker, this Premier, this government, is not hell-bent on

anything. We most certainly are here to serve the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. We most certainly are here to serve the people of this province, and to serve so, Mr. Speaker . . . and to provide this most stable environment so that we can make what are some very serious situations that lie before us in the days ahead.

[14:15]

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, is that due to some daily market conditions that are happening here today that, yes, may hang around for some period of time, Mr. Speaker . . . But we are not going to make some panicky and knee-jerk reactions due to, Mr. Speaker, what has occurred here over the course of the last couple of days. Mr. Speaker, we are going to provide that stable environment so that we can make the very serious decisions that the people of this province expect their Government of Saskatchewan to be making.

Mr. Speaker, next week we are going to table a budget. Mr. Speaker, that budget is going to be a balanced budget. It's going to be a budget that will continue to build our province. It is going to be a budget that most certainly is going to build not only a new hospital in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, it's going to be a budget that is going to continue to build schools across this province. It's going to be a budget that continues to replace the highways that the members opposite allowed to crumble, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly it is not going to be a budget where we hire and fire teachers, nurses, and doctors on the price of a barrel of oil.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Negotiations With Teachers' Union

Ms. Beck: — Speaking of teachers, you know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't so long ago that that minister was on the campaign trail, leaning up against his sports car, next to his motorcycle, recording a video full of promises to teachers and students. I quote: "We need to talk to teachers. We need to understand exactly what they need in their classrooms so that their children can be successful."

Fast forward to yesterday where the minister was hollering across this Assembly, blaming teachers for the mess that his government created, accusing them of walking away from children. Mr. Speaker, the only person walking away is that minister from his platitudes on education that he hoped would make him premier.

So my question is this: will the minister apologize for his disparaging remarks about Saskatchewan teachers, and will he get back to the table with the resources that they need to help kids succeed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to apologize for the union that takes teachers out of the classrooms, Mr. Speaker, or that prevents . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to apologize, Mr. Speaker, for the fact that the union representing teachers has decided to take the actions that they have taken to withdraw voluntary services and preventing children from participating in extracurricular activities, Mr. Speaker.

And talk about people that have walked away from the table, Mr. Speaker. From negotiations to arbitration to negotiations to conciliation, all the union has done is walked away, Mr. Speaker, and refused to participate with this government. Mr. Speaker, there's a standing offer. There is a standing offer for the union to return to the bargaining table to talk about the important issues that are facing teachers, Mr. Speaker.

I've indicated to the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] last week and to their president, Mr. Speaker, that there is a new bargaining mandate and we're willing to discuss that, Mr. Speaker. But it's the union that's walked away from the negotiating table.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. We know that the minister offered \$5 million a year to deal with complexity, and we understand that the other half was to come out of teachers' health benefits. Seriously, Mr. Speaker, \$5 million is as much as Chinook, a small school division, had to cut from their operating budget last year alone just to cover this government's shortfall. This is a drop in the bucket compared to the needs in divisions and would barely backfill cuts in a single division.

In the same video, from when that minister was running to be the premier, the minister said, "If you invest in the classroom today, you'll reap benefits, tremendous benefits in the future." So what changed, Mr. Speaker? Are kids no longer worth the investment? Or is this government crusading to balance the budget on the backs of Saskatchewan children?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — This is the record of this government, Mr. Speaker: a 37 per cent increase in funding since we've had the privilege of forming government, Mr. Speaker; over a 14 per cent increase in student population, Mr. Speaker; continued investments, ongoing investments in public education, not just on the operating side but on the capital side.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage the union to return to the bargaining table so that we can present the new bargaining mandate, which will represent a fair offer to teachers, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have offered to have a conversation about how we can start to begin moving forward with solving some of the challenges in our classroom.

Mr. Speaker, we can't solve this overnight by simply throwing \$120 million at it, Mr. Speaker. The suggestion that we add \$5 million, Mr. Speaker, to be matched by the STF which, incidentally, was an offer that they made at the bargaining table to contribute the excess of their health benefit fund, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, that minister's numbers are simply

incredible. This government's spin on education does not match the reality. Every kid in our school system this year is receiving \$400 less than they were in 2016. That's a \$78 million shortfall even without inflation or salary increases. It's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that teachers are standing up for the kids that they support.

The Minister of Education promised that his latest distraction from the crisis in our classrooms, his committee on class sizes and composition, would report back before this budget this spring. There is no sign of that report, Mr. Speaker. We know that the budget is inked. Will the minister be releasing that report today? Will he please enlighten us all on his plan to address class size and composition? Or his plan simply to keep insulting teachers and distracting from his own failures?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, this government and this minister, we have great respect for teachers and the work that they do to deliver quality education to the children in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker. I've delivered to the STF, Mr. Speaker, a plan to begin to address the issue of class size and composition. It was categorically rejected by the STF last week.

Mr. Speaker, in arbitration a couple of years ago, the arbitrator — binding arbitration which the union requested — advised in that report that class size and composition shouldn't be in the collective agreement. Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard from that member or the other two former trustees on that side of the House what their view is on that. Should it be in the collective agreement or shouldn't it be, Mr. Speaker? The arbitrator says no. The STF is trying to get class size and composition into the collective agreement through the back door, Mr. Speaker.

We want a fair deal with teachers, Mr. Speaker, and we want to be able to move forward with a proper process to deal with class composition — we offered that last week — a long-term process while we're waiting for the work of the committee to be done, Mr. Speaker.

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

Preparedness for COVID-19 Outbreak

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, it was pretty surprising to see the flippant reactions yesterday from Sask Party members in response to recommendations from a public health expert on containment of COVID-19, and I guess we now know why. Yesterday the minister admitted this government is not able to produce any kind of documented plan or a report on government preparations for dealing with a potential outbreak and has even less of a plan if the government calls a snap election.

It's great to hear the minister has a plan to no longer shake hands and the Premier says they're having conversations, but how on earth has this government failed to develop a plan to keep Saskatchewan people safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I

couldn't disagree with the premise of that question more. There was no flippant response on this side, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite as they're wont to do, there's heckling going in the legislature and they torque it, Mr. Speaker.

We take this issue very, very seriously, Mr. Speaker. I've had numerous meetings with officials. I've had numerous meetings with Dr. Shahab, the chief medical officer, Mr. Speaker. There is a plan in place, Mr. Speaker. There's an emergency preparedness plan in place that has been for some time. It's tweaked for different types of emergencies, Mr. Speaker. They're working on it for the coronavirus.

Mr. Speaker, as far as the comment about during an election campaign, Mr. Speaker, here's what needs to be weighed in the context of government and the Premier's decision: an election needs to be called in the next approximately six months, Mr. Speaker. When would be the safest month for a writ period?

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, members laughed about this yesterday and the minister knows that. Our health system is stretched to its limits and emergency rooms are already bursting at the seams. It's hard to imagine how they could handle the pressures from a COVID-19 outbreak. And it's concerning that this government hasn't devoted the resources to develop a path forward.

They've taken their eye off the ball. They're putting political interest in a spring election ahead of people's needs. The possibility of a spring election could lead to COVID-19 cases spreading quickly across the province and make it harder to prevent an outbreak. Dusting off the 10-year-old H1N1 plan is not enough. This is a new virus; it needs a new plan. To the minister: what's the plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, what utter nonsense. The Leader of the Opposition just a few weeks ago was in my office with the chief medical officer, Mr. Speaker, at his request, which I was happy to comply with. And we had a discussion about the fact that it's important that this stays above politics, Mr. Speaker, that we all communicate the message clearly to the citizens of this province who deserve no less, Mr. Speaker.

There is a plan in place. They're tweaking it to fit the coronavirus, Mr. Speaker. And to be fearmongering is absolutely despicable, Mr. Speaker, from the member who was going to do politics different, Mr. Speaker. Yes, he's doing it different all right. He's doing it worse than Dwain Lingenfelter.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, health care in our province has already reached a breaking point. Emergency rooms are over capacity. Hospitals have water that patients can't drink. And chronic understaffing in our care homes leaves people without the care they need.

When there's a possibility of a flood of new patients coming in with symptoms of COVID-19, what's going to happen when there are more ventilators needed but they aren't available because they're all being used? Where are patients going to be treated when hallway medicine is already the new norm? How are our emergency rooms going to handle a big addition of new patients without additional resources? And how is the Sask Party supposed to come up with a plan when they're out campaigning?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I realize that the members opposite are terrified of an election. If I was them, I would be too, Mr. Speaker. But the fact of the matter is, on this issue, a very serious issue, the issue of coronavirus, Mr. Speaker, officials do have a plan in place.

Dr. Shahab keeps the media briefed, Mr. Speaker. He does a weekly briefing on that. Information is available on the website, Mr. Speaker. And as far as being short of supplies, not only province-wide are we relying on officials to make sure we have appropriate supplies, Mr. Speaker, we're doing that nationally.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Shahab is the Co-Chair of the FPT [federal-provincial-territorial] for Canada along with Dr. Tam, who's with the federal government, Mr. Speaker. We have great faith in Dr. Shahab and all our officials. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Well we can certainly do better than what we just presented as legislators, especially . . . We had a school group in here when we were sitting here and discussing education in front of them. We can do better. You can do better.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 103.

The Speaker: — Tabled, 103. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 104 to 107.

The Speaker: — Ordered, 104 to 107. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question no. 108.

The Speaker: — Tabled, 108. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 109.

The Speaker: — Ordered, 109.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 194

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 194 — *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be rather brief here today with respect to Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*. I know many members have weighed in at this point and we'll deal with this in committee, Mr. Speaker, which we look forward to.

I guess what I would like to say is just a big thank you to all those municipal leaders, all those municipalities across Saskatchewan, rural and urban, Mr. Speaker. I spent the morning over at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, the association of rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker. I know those municipal leaders take their duties seriously in serving and representing their communities, Mr. Speaker, as do those that represent the villages and towns and cities across the province, as do those throughout the North.

Too often, Mr. Speaker, we see legislation brought forward by the Sask Party government without consultation with the stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. We hope that's not the case with this piece of legislation because it's important that we get this right. When a government rams forward with legislative change without thoughtful consultation, it's at risk of creating unintended consequences, Mr. Speaker, that have a negative impact on direct stakeholders and Saskatchewan people. That's why this process of consultation and then committee is going to be important.

Many of the measures that have been brought forward are aimed to improve accountability and transparency of municipalities across Saskatchewan, and that's an important aim. That's something we should be aiming for, for all public bodies and governments, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be constructive in working to improve accountability and transparency on those fronts, Mr. Speaker.

But it's certainly rather hypocritical for this Sask Party government to be making this their aim when they certainly don't lead by example, Mr. Speaker, day in, day out failing Saskatchewan people as far as sort of the very basic standard tests that you'd expect when it comes to accountability and transparency. A government that, you know, filled the pockets of insiders, Mr. Speaker, with a deal like the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]. A government that pretended that they were open at one point, or that some members of that side were open to an inquiry into this front, Mr. Speaker, but of course the Sask Party cabinet has prevented that from happening, and there's been no light shed on that GTH land scandal that ripped off the nuns and that filled the pockets of Sask Party insiders, Mr.

Speaker. And so . . .

An Hon. Member: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Government House Leader, what's your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Twice in the last five minutes the member opposite referred to filling the pockets of friends and insiders — clearly unparliamentary language. There are numerous examples in debates from *Hansard*. Aspersions can't be cast in that way on other members, and the member should know that.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So to continue on with this legislation . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you consider the words of my colleague as he continues on with his speech.

The Speaker: — Yes, we'll be happy to review the . . . We'll review the tape. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll continue on with respect to Bill No. 194, which is aimed to improve transparency and accountability of local governments, Mr. Speaker. Again this is a constructive and important exercise, one that we're happy to play our part of, Mr. Speaker. But as I've said, it's so hypocritical coming from this Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, that has been anything but accountable and transparent, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Again, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite using unparliamentary language. I would refer the Speaker to *Debates*, February 21st, 1961, page 2284; *Debates*, June 22nd, 1961, page 6916. "Hypocritical" is an unparliamentary word and the member opposite should withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that you review the record.

The Speaker: — Well I'm getting a little tired of having to review the record so, Member for Rosemont, please come to order in regards to your use of language. Don't . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, I understand, right. I understand you have no respect for the Chair. Okay, I get that. Finish your comments. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the bill before us will be

dealt with at committee. We'll deal with it there.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion of the minister that Bill No. 194 be now read a second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 195

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 195 — *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and once again it's my honour to be able to rise in this Assembly and enter into the debate on the bills that are being brought forth by this government. As I've said many times in the past, it seems like there's a lot of recycling going on, and this was a bill that was introduced not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, originally I think in 2012 or 2013 when the original legislation . . . Here it is back on the floor of the Assembly again and, Mr. Speaker, mainly because of recommendations from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and the registrar of lobbying, Mr. Speaker. And there is some important changes that are being brought forward in this bill for sure, and I think definitely are improvements on the existing bill.

It's a bit of a full circle for me myself too. As members opposite are indicating that there's an election call coming very soon, this may very well be one of my very last opportunities to rise in the Assembly and enter into the debate. And so it's interesting because back when I was first elected, I was asked to be part of the subcommittee that prepared a report. The Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice produced a report in May of 2012 that went to the Assembly for approval, and at that time, Mr. Speaker, being as green as I was . . . There was some other green members as well who are no longer in this Assembly. They actually jumped fence to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, but they were there as well, as we were capably led by our staff support, and I want to thank staff again for their invaluable support in helping us prepare the report.

And we were fortunate enough to take time in Ottawa, to get to Ottawa to actually hear some of the debates that were happening about the registry in Ottawa at the time. And it was very

informative, Mr. Speaker, because we got an opportunity to hear from some of the leading minds in Canada on the debate about lobbying and how it should be reported and how the public should know when lobbying is happening, Mr. Speaker.

And we heard from Guy Giorno, who is a well-known lawyer from Montreal who has written extensively on this. We've heard from Duff Conacher with Democracy Watch, Mr. Speaker. And they all made presentations to the cabinet committee in Ottawa that we were very fortunate to be able to sit down and be part of that discussion.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think the recommendations that came forward, this was new legislation. We saw this was new legislation. We weren't sure how the public would respond to it, but I think now that we're into it a few years, we can see there are some gaps, Mr. Speaker. And those gaps definitely need to be dealt with.

At the time of bringing this report forward, I was a bit surprised when government members had met separately to make some further recommendations that I was not informed of, Mr. Speaker, so I felt at the time it was important for me to file a minority opinion to the report because obviously those discussions were taking place without the full committee's participation, Mr. Speaker, and I was very uncomfortable about that. But anyways, at the time, I was and did insist on having an opportunity to provide a minority opinion.

And much of the discussion was that we had chosen the threshold of 100 hours, Mr. Speaker, but it was going to be much more comprehensive than it actually turned out to be, Mr. Speaker. Because how do you get to 100 hours to determine that this is actually lobbying under the Act? And my view was that we create as broad as possible a registry that would bring in as many activities as possible because there's nothing wrong with lobbying per se, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What is important is that the public is informed that that lobbying is taking place.

So it's important to have as broad a net . . . And I said that in the committee. I said we need to cast as wide a net as we possibly can to capture those activities and make it as simple as possible for those people who are legitimately doing lobbying to record and make that information available. Many of the complaints about other lobby registries across the country was that it was time-consuming, it was complicated, and it was difficult. And I thought there's no reason why we couldn't have created a registry that would be easy to register, that you wouldn't take a lot of time to get your activities registered.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe in some ways that was achieved, but clearly the discussions around the definition of lobbying and the definition of what constituted that would affect whether a 100-hour threshold was appropriate. Mr. Speaker, having seen what's happened, and I think now the registry is up and running, I'm not even sure 30 hours is enough, Mr. Speaker, and in fact many people are recommending that it be zero hours. You had the glib comments of the Minister of Justice saying, well what if I run into somebody in the grocery store and we talk? I mean certainly as MLAs, we all have those experiences, Mr. Speaker. But there's a much more concise definition of lobbying in the Act currently so I don't think the minister's glibness really helped the debate at all. But he entered into it on that level, and I'm not sure

why he chose to do that.

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, I think these changes are necessary. I hope to see a continuation of the evolving of this registry because we know how important — government decision makers, opposition members — how important it is that we have the full picture before we blast ahead with a decision.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know even in my work that sometimes you hear from one side. And I'm sure you've done that with casework yourself, Mr. Speaker. You hear one side of the story and you think, this is terrible, and then all of a sudden you hear the other side of the story, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's what debate is about, is making sure that we hear all sides of the story. And so you know, that's something I think we need to learn. And lobbying is a very, very important part of that.

How people get access to the government, it's a little more difficult. I know I've tried to get access to a cabinet minister recently, and his staff would not allow him . . . I think that's basically what it came down, but his chief of staff wouldn't let him meet with some citizens who were concerned about a particular issue. And I'm not going to name names, but I think it's unfortunate when chiefs of staff interfere in cabinet ministers meeting with people with valid concerns. That bothers me, Mr. Speaker.

So there's the reverse of lobbying, is where government won't listen. And I think that's also something that needs to be addressed. And hopefully this government would keep more of an open door on those conversations with citizens who are concerned about what's going on in their communities. So I'm really uncomfortable about that as well.

[14:45]

But today we're talking about lobbying and people who actually do have access, who get inside that door, and it's not in the aisle in the grocery store, Mr. Speaker. These are bona fide lobbying attempts by people that have a concern and they want to bring it to the government's attention. It's very valuable and, Mr. Speaker, I hope that we continue to make this registry better than it is.

I know that this legislation doesn't actually incorporate all the changes that were recommended by the registrar of lobbying, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure why the government chose to do that. We'll certainly have an opportunity in committee to go through it clause by clause and find out why they didn't.

But, Mr. Speaker, at this point I know we have other people who want to get up and speak today. And I just want to say it was an honour to be able to be part of the subcommittee back in the days when I knew virtually zero about how this place operated. Learned a lot, had an opportunity to see how Ottawa manages their lobbying registry. We listened to all the registrars from across Canada and I think the committee was given the best possible information we could be given.

Given that it was new legislation here, I think there is some work to be done on improving it. This is part of the way there. And as I close down my political career, I'm glad to see that it is evolving, perhaps not quickly enough, but at least there are

changes being made. And we have an active registrar who is ensuring that it reflects the needs of Saskatchewan people.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 195. Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 196

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 196 — *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this Bill No. 196, *An Act to amend The Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. And as all of us know, we're in that season this month of filing our statements or disclosures, and very, very important this process that has become the norm here.

But of course as we discover, there are shortcomings and gaps. And a couple of gaps that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner has identified, the government is working to resolve them and of course they are very, very important. And one of them of course is when you're dealing with assets that are currently described by number or numbered assets. And that really doesn't mean a lot to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner so he wants more description of what they actually are so we know what the business of the MLA is. So when we're talking about conflict of interest, it's very, very important that we understand, and the commissioner can do their work as completely as they possibly can.

The other gap is of course between the time we leave here and the filing of the report. Now ironically if this government does push ahead with an early election, we'll have just finished doing a disclosure statement; then we'll have to do another one. That's kind of odd, but there's so many reasons why that government should really review that.

The other issue really, and this is one . . . well of course is around the idea of gift or personal benefit. You know, Mr. Speaker, we've just gone through this report about the Pinehouse situation. And we had quite a . . . actually it was the difference between the Robertson inspection and the Vancise report was quite amazing. And it was interesting that one of the issues, I'll just say it was an issue was around the members' conflict of interest in the description of a gift or hospitality. And I'll read the section 7:

The following subsection is added after subsection 7(4):

a service, hospitality or property, including the use of

property, that is provided without charge or for a charge that is less than its commercial value.

And of course this applies to both members and members' family. And this is very important. This is very important because we know that while people are trying to get a better leverage with the government or with MLAs, they can do it with the members directly or indirectly through their family. And so it's very important that we establish protocols that are open and transparent and that the members are held accountable.

So I've had some experience in this area as critic of ethics, making sure that we've seen situations that have really caused a lot of questions. And some of the carryings-on for some Sask Party members, government members, and what has happened really has raised a lot of questions. And so, Mr. Speaker, I know there'll be more questions about that in the House, and the application of what the recommendations were, both from Judge Robertson, now the Judge Robertson, and also the former Judge Vancise.

What does that mean in terms of this conflict of interest? If there ever was a case, there was one we could learn a lot of lessons from. And so we want to make sure we don't let that report, and the inspection report particularly, lie silent. We have a lot we can learn from that. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn Bill No. 196, *An Act to amend The Members' Conflict of Interest Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 196. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 197

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 197 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into debate on Bill No. 197, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act* of 2019. This bill was introduced in second reading by the minister back in November of last year. And it's quite a lengthy bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the bulk of the changes are really around housekeeping issues, updating the language to gender-neutral language, and I believe, correcting at least one typo in the existing legislation. So those I won't spend very much time on. I think they speak for themselves.

There are a couple of substantive pieces to this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One is around the appeal mechanisms for SGI, and that would require both SGI and the claimant to have leave from the Court of Appeal before appealing a decision. And that is a rather substantial claim. I certainly understand the need to ensure that

the court's time is used judiciously, I guess, Mr. Speaker. But I think we have to be very, very sure that we have the balance right here and that we are not precluding people from being able to enter into appeal.

I know when people reach that appeal stage with SGI . . . I did have the opportunity to be the critic for SGI for a brief period, which seems like a very long time ago now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But when we did have those critic duties, often we heard from people who were interested in that appeal process. And this is very important to make sure that that process is fair and we don't preclude anyone unnecessarily from being able to access that appeal process. So that's something that I think we will be paying very, very close attention to.

The other major change here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it removes references of "any law" in the Act and replaces them with "any law of any jurisdiction". So currently, I think there was some need for clarification or want of clarification about jurisdiction. So if someone had their licence restricted in another jurisdiction, if they had a drinking and driving charge in the States or in another province, that now with these proposed changes, a suspension in another jurisdiction would also be deemed to be a suspension in Saskatchewan. So I understand certainly the need for that.

But one thing I do want to put on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is I do remember back from committee all those months ago some very significant concerns about the ability of those folks at SGI to actually enter those changes due to really a lack of, shortage of people doing that work. We've seen cut after cut, and that caseload was deemed, I believe, an issue by the Provincial Auditor. So I'm not sure that that has been rectified to any degree. That's something that I know that my colleague from Prince Albert Northcote will be paying attention to in committee when she does have time with the minister. But that is a question.

You know, it's great to make the changes in legislation, but we have to make sure that we actually have people on the front line who are able to do that work in a timely manner. And that was noted as a concern by the Provincial Auditor, as I have already said, so that's something that we will be looking at.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I have concluded my concerns and remarks on this bill, and I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 197.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 197, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2019*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 198

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 198 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate today to talk about Bill No. 198, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act* of 2019. There's a number of different changes that are being presented here. The explanatory notes go on for pages and pages, and I don't know if I will go on as extensively as they do, but I do want to get a couple of points on the record here today.

We live in interesting times and, you know, I know that as soon as you start to talk about traffic safety, you know, people start to think about accidents they've been in, people that they know that have been impacted. It is an area that impacts all of us every day as we're on our way to our workplaces.

And some of the changes that are being presented here really remind us of the times that we're in because, you know, there's some changes that are necessary because of autonomous vehicles. And I remember the first time someone told me about the prospect of autonomous vehicles, I thought there was absolutely no way that that was going to happen or that it would be safe. And now, you know, as I'm learning about human error and the errors that we all make as we're driving, I start to think that, you know, maybe it wouldn't be a bad idea. And I don't think I'm that bad of a driver as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So there's a few changes that are being presented here. One of them is that it specifies the driver's licence that's required for the operation of class 1 motor vehicles, updates section numbering to accommodate offence provisions in the summary offences procedures regulations. So some of these are more housekeeping regulations.

It adds new definitions to section 75 of "automated driving system," "automated vehicle permit," "connected vehicle," etc. It authorizes the administrator to issue permits for the operation of automated vehicles and connected vehicles, creates an offence for the operation of an automated vehicle or a connected vehicle. It incorporates the term "signing officer" to accommodate a change in terminology with respect to vehicle safety standards and inspections. It updates the language to reflect the standard applied by peace officers when administering a field sobriety test, and it incorporates the definition of "drug recognition evaluator."

So there's going to be a number of areas that we will look into to assess what the impact is of these changes and to explore any unintended consequences, but I will leave more of the bulk of that work to the critic. And with that I would move to adjourn debate on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 198. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 199

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 199 — *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my privilege to weigh into the discussion today on Bill No. 199, *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act*, 2019.

Just to tell you a little bit about what this particular bill does . . . So it will help support Saskatchewan participate in British Columbia's legal suit against opioid manufacturers and distributors. It will give the province the ability to have a direct action against opioid manufacturers and distributors. And also there are amendments to *The Health Administration Act*, allowing the Health minister to take direct action on behalf of the government to recover past and future health care costs.

[15:00]

So there's concern that opioid manufacturers and distributors . . . I don't know why I'm having . . . Those are two multi-syllable words here today that I'm struggling with a bit. But those manufacturers and distributors need to be held accountable for their role in the ongoing addiction and overdose crisis, both in Saskatchewan and across Canada, Mr. Speaker. There are concerns that people have been dying in large quantities for several years.

Now I know you've heard me here speak in this House and in public a great deal about crystal meth and how crystal meth is really a huge problem here in Saskatchewan, and it is. But opioids have been an issue for a few years and we continue to see the numbers rise. We had just recently a contaminated supply of street drugs — meaning drugs that people thought they were getting weren't necessarily the drugs that they were getting — and we had a number of overdoses here in Regina.

But it's important to recognize that there's often a link between prescribed opioids and eventual street use. Not always, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but on many occasions people get legally prescribed opioids, and they can be . . . particularly fentanyl. They are very addictive. And when you're taken off these medications and they're not readily available to you anymore, you often seek those substances in the community and in illegal places, and you never know exactly what you're getting with those drugs, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to point you to the Provincial Auditor's report of last . . . I believe it was last June, 2019. So I know, as I said, I talk a lot about crystal meth in here. But just to keep in context here, opioid poisoning hospitalization rankings among 19 Canadian cities in 2016-17 in populations over 100,000: so Regina was number one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at 28.3 per 100,000, and Saskatoon was number two at 26.1 — higher than Vancouver's rate of 20.5 per 100,000. So we hear what's going on in BC [British Columbia] and all the resources that have had to be marshalled and the efforts that are being made, which I think are far and above what we've done here. But I know, speaking to activists in BC, there's always more work and more lives to be saved, but the efforts there have been huge.

And in fact our numbers per capita in our two major cities are not anything to be proud of, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan in 2018, recorded, there were 119 deaths due to opioid drug toxicity, with 441,354 opioid prescriptions filled and 359,681 opioid prescriptions dispensed used to treat addiction, like methadone or Suboxone, so opioid replacement therapies.

The one thing that the auditor pointed out, when we talk about legal prescribing leading to use in community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the audit that the Provincial Auditor's office performed and discovered that since 1988, the province supports the prescription review program to the tune of \$276,000 annually. This program identifies prescribers with inappropriate prescribing practices by monitoring 19 types of prescribed opioids. But the auditor points out it does not monitor five federally controlled opioid medications or an opioid, Tramadol, that Health Canada plans to add to its list of controlled medications. So if we know that these drugs . . . So this committee does great work, but in times where drugs are constantly . . . new drugs are coming online, it's important that our review processes stay on top of those new drugs as well to make sure we know what's going on.

I had an opportunity last summer to do a media event with a young man who was flagging concerns on easy access, still in 2019, to prescription opioids. And I know that I've also had anecdotal . . . many, many people come into our offices. And I can remember two conversations with individuals telling me about how readily, for simple surgeries — a knee surgery and I can't recall what the other one was. But doctors were more than willing and happy to prescribe opioids in both those cases. And the patient was not interested or willing, but the doctor was in one case quite insistent saying, oh, fill the prescription. Trust me, you'll probably want it.

So we need to stay on top of the drugs that doctors are prescribing and making sure we're monitoring that well. And if there's any new drugs that are coming online we need to be monitoring those as well. So I'm not sure where the government is at in terms of . . . I suspect they've probably accepted the auditor's recommendations, but I'm not sure where they are at in actually implementing those recommendations.

The audit also identified improvements needing to . . . in delivering the program. So the auditor pointed out keeping a listing of opioids to monitor current, eliminating delays in notifying physicians of prescribing concerns, and better documenting activities related to following up on prescribing concerns. The auditor points out that, "Because the ministry does not monitor all opioids prescribed in the province or actively monitor the Program, it does not know whether the Program [actually] helps reduce prescribed opioid misuse." So those are important things to keep in mind. She also pointed out that the ministry doesn't actively monitor opioid dispensing practices in our province's pharmacies, so we don't know if provincial pharmacies contribute to our opioid crisis here as well.

So this bill is important in terms of trying to recoup some of the costs of the damages to our health care system, to people's lives. But keep in mind . . . So that is important to have resources to be brought to bear on these issues, but this is also a government who has been a little late to the game in recognizing that we have an addiction crisis here in the province. And I'm glad to see the

minister . . . It's been heartening in the last six months or so. I've read many news releases and comments from the minister talking about the crisis, and in his second reading speech he says here, ". . . there's a public health crisis in Canada arising from the use and abuse of opioids."

So I'm glad to see the minister has started to recognize that in fact we do have a crisis around addiction here in the province, both related to opioids and crystal meth. But this government's inaction has led to people not doing well, people not getting the care that they need and the support that they need when they do have a substance use disorder, preventing people from developing substance use disorders because they're not getting the proper mental health care, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm glad that this government in the last budget, after many months in the previous session came and expressed their concerns to the minister, that this minister and this government has decided to put more money into mental health and addictions, and I'm hoping that'll be the case in this budget. I know there will be more money in this budget because we have increased federal dollars coming for sure, but I'm eager to see what the provincial share will be as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's a couple things around opioids that I had an opportunity to ask some written questions. As you know, we ask written questions in this House to try to dig down and get answers to things that are of concern to us and people in the community. Last . . . and then the government has an opportunity to answer those questions within six days, or they order them, which means you don't get your answers for six months, Mr. Speaker.

And particularly around opioids, I asked about naloxone. And I've heard stories at our detox facilities, where naloxone kits that should be given out for free to people who are leaving our detox facilities, who are known users, who are in a community where people are at risk of an overdose, Mr. Speaker — and naloxone has the ability to temporarily turn around that opioid use — I've heard stories of those naloxone kits expiring.

So I don't have numbers, because the government ordered those questions. But I'm told by people who work in those organizations that many naloxone kits have gone unused, undispensed to people in the community where they could save lives. So I'm curious if the government is planning on tabling those numbers in perhaps the dying days of this . . . If we have a snap election, I'd love to see those numbers before then.

I think another concern around naloxone when it comes to opioids is the availability. I know the government has made some efforts in trying to make it more available, but right now it's only in the free kits for those who are users or who have a loved one or someone close to them who is a user of opioids. You can only access them in certain pharmacies or organizations.

I've had a few occasions now where people have done their training and they're eager to get the kits. Well one case in particular, a community lost one of their friends by an opioid overdose and it was going into the long weekend. One of their community members actually was a public health nurse and trained them all. They were all eager; they all wanted to get their naloxone kits. So they go to the pharmacy only to discover that they didn't realize it's not all pharmacies where you can get the

free kit. So I know other jurisdictions have provided for some of that, Mr. Speaker, where you can get a kit, and the government, all of us, bear that cost. Because there's a cost when people overdose.

Speaking of cost when people overdose, another set of questions that I asked that I really, really would like the answer to, Mr. Speaker, are on people who overdosed, who have experienced overdoses but did not die, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't thought about this issue until just last fall, when it came to my attention that in BC there are a number of people who've overdosed and end up with an acquired brain injury, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and require permanent long-term care.

So I am curious if this government is tracking those numbers, if we know what those numbers are. If not, I'd like that answer as well because it seems like something we should know, especially with this particular lawsuit, because that's a cost borne by all of us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So those would be good numbers to know. If they aren't tracking the number of people who survive an overdose and end up with an acquired brain injury, they should be, because that will probably prove to be helpful in this lawsuit, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again I'm glad to see we are participating in this lawsuit, and this bill, Bill No. 199, *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act*, is one tool. And I hope that we're still here for this whole legislative session, because this is a bill that needs to be passed, Mr. Speaker, so we can try . . . This isn't a quick fix. This isn't money that will be in our pockets, in the pockets of Saskatchewan tomorrow to pay for the costs of our opioid crisis. So it would be good to get this bill passed sooner than later, and this legislative session is a good time. We're here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're all prepared to sit as we normally would until mid-May to get some of these things done.

And I also know that I'd like to have those answers back to those questions that I asked. These are just two areas that have popped into my head, but there are more questions that were asked and ordered that have relevance and are important information for people here in Saskatchewan to know.

But with that, this bill needs to pass in order for us to participate in the lawsuit, so I hate to see this delayed till who knows when, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the government needs . . . I'm eager to see what the government brings to bear, what resources the government brings to bear around mental health and addictions next week, because it has a huge personal cost for so many people but it also has a huge societal cost. It's part of the challenge that we're facing in our emergency rooms. Those emergency rooms are the canary in the coal mine. People are showing up because we don't have proper community care. People aren't getting the treatment and support they need.

But I do know I have other colleagues who will be weighing in to the debate on Bill 199, and there's more bills ahead of us here today. But with that, for now, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 199. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 201

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 201 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in on Bill 201, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2019*.

I guess initially there are some suggestions, some changes that are going to come forward with the legislation. But before I talk about that I just want to talk about I guess the regulations that are here. We're going to be talking about a warehouse and where someone will be able to apply to Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming to be awarded a permit to operate a business, warehousing I guess, especially wines, spirit drink, some beer, stuff like that.

[15:15]

But before I get into that and we talk about the privatization of stuff and that's what it looks like . . . And I know my colleagues have made comments about the privatization, about some of the concerns about privatization in general. And you know, it just takes . . . You do one thing, you do the next thing, you quietly do the next thing and the next thing.

But I want to talk a little bit about, I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the effects of alcohol and the struggles I've seen, people with addictions. And alcohol has caused so much harm. And we've seen what the harm has done in many of our communities, and personally, many of our families. I've lost loved ones to alcohol. They're not here with us because unfortunately it took their life.

But having said that, we know that there's a lot of revenue that comes into the government's coffers and revenue that the government uses, and it decides how it wants to spend the revenue. And I understand the good people of our province decide who government is, and they get to manage that.

But you have to understand that there's a lot of people and concerns about dealing with addictions. And it's not just about, as my colleagues are very passionate about, you know, there are many different types of addictions and we see the drug, the illegal street drugs that are out there causing harm. But I guess I'm thinking more when, as my comments into this bill, just to come back to it, about the alcohol and the health challenge it's causing our health system and the damage it's done to many of our families. And it's there. It's present whether, you know, the danger that it's caused on some of our highways. I was part of, you know, a committee that went around our province and, you know, we did some good work, made some recommendations as a committee of this Legislative Assembly to hear about ways of improving, you know, safety. And that's so important.

But having said that, you know, the challenges that government has and there's challenges and people are looking for supports. When somebody has an addiction problem . . . And I'm going to get into a little bit about the regulations in here and what they're going to do. It's interesting to see. And I'm curious in committee when we get a chance to talk to the minister and officials exactly what does this mean.

But having said that, the families that struggle and somebody has an addiction with alcohol and they want to go to a treatment centre, a detox. And unfortunately, you know, sometimes this gives us an opportunity, when we're coming against legislation that's being introduced by government, it gives us a chance to talk about the effects of alcohol and about the changes. And sometimes it's an opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to actually express the challenges that our communities are facing.

And people have expressed to myself and to members on both sides when it comes to maybe addictions and making sure that those services are there for people when they reach out and they want to get into a detox or they want to get into a treatment centre. And I'm sorry but unfortunately many are in the lineup and many are waiting months and longer. Like it's sad, but when somebody's ready to get the help, that's it's not available to them. And we've heard that in many areas when we're talking about addictions, and it's not just the alcohol. It's those that are addicted to street drugs.

So there's many challenges, and I don't want to take a lot of time in it. But coming back to the actual bill . . . And I'm hoping my colleague will be able to get clarification because in here it refers to if the permit holder asks somebody and they're serving liquor or going to sell liquor, there is a provision in here. It talks about if you're asked to produce ID [identification] and you've ordered a drink, and I don't know if that's the case. And I'm curious about it. And if you've ordered a drink and you're a young person and you're asked to produce your ID, if you don't produce the ID — and I don't understand it — now they can give you a ticket. It sounds like there's powers now for them to, you know, get a penalty, a ticket. So I want to check in here if that is in this legislation, if that's in there, and in committee we can ask some of those questions.

And again about opening up and going against the privatization as we've been saying, concerned about when you have a warehouse. So there are a number of different pieces in here that the minister referred to in there, but that was just one when I talk about . . . And we will have a chance in committee to find out exactly. You know, sometimes the devil's in the details, as they say, and you can work out in committee and find out exactly what they're up to and what they're doing. And sometimes it's not very clear, and sometimes in committee the good work that our critics do and our colleagues, we can flush it out and find out exactly what it's meaning. Maybe it's, you know, our interpretation is wrong, and sometimes that happens. I mean, no one's perfect at it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but you try to make sure you've consulted with people that you're going to impact when you're passing legislation and making amendments to legislation, making sure you understand how it's going to impact Saskatchewan people.

So at this point I know my colleagues will have more questions in committee when it gets there and it goes there, but at this point

I am prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 201, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 201. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 203

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 203 — *The Financial Planners and Financial Advisors Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to weigh in here again now on the second bill for the day for me, Bill No. 203, *The Financial Planners and Financial Advisors Act*. I'll just lay out a little bit of what the bill will do and just a couple concerns or thoughts here, Mr. Speaker.

This particular bill sets out the definition of financial planner, financial advisor, and other terms to be used under the legislation, provides for the requirement of a credentialing body to assess the credentials and education of financial planners and advisors. It authorizes the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority to approve credentialing bodies and the credentials offered through these institutions. It sets out the conditions for suspension or revocation of credentialing bodies and sets out the duties and powers of credentialing bodies. It sets out the procedures for inspection and investigation of the activities of financial planners and advisors, provides for administrative penalties to be observed under the legislation.

So basically it is regulating financial planners and financial advisors here in Saskatchewan, making sure that they have the credentials and education required to provide these services, which is fair enough, Mr. Speaker.

This particular piece of legislation, the minister points out in his second reading speech, “. . . is modelled on Ontario's *Financial Professionals Title Protection Act, 2019*.” I think the minister goes on to say that this legislation will provide important protection to consumers and investors and promote consumer confidence in financial planners and advisors. But he says it also talks about national . . . “The regulations will also be made consistent with Ontario's regulations, as much as possible, to support national consistency.” So I think some questions to ask in committee.

So Ontario is doing this, and I'm curious to see what other jurisdictions, what other provinces and territories are doing this. Why have we picked Ontario's? I think questions that, when we have legislation before us, that we always need to ask: who has called for this legislation; who have you consulted in creating this legislation? I know I actually had a call into my office yesterday from someone who works in this industry who had some concerns, so I passed him on to the relevant critic in this area to

have a conversation about that. But I think those are always important questions to ask.

It's not that it's not important to regulate financial planners and advisors, but making sure that all those who work in the industry or are impacted by the industry, you want to cast your net as wide as possible to get a full hearing of people who know this industry from many different vantage points, to make sure that your legislation is doing what you think your legislation should be doing so you don't have any unintended consequences, which often happens if you don't properly and meaningfully consult, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think the minister in his second reading speech comments that many of the details, like Ontario's legislation, many of our details of this legislation will be found in the regulations, which may be the right thing to do. But things in regulations that aren't quite as transparent as when we're making legislation and it's before the legislature, open for debate, you always wonder if it's better in the legislation or regulations, just in terms of transparency and the ability for government to change things without people being as aware of things that are in regulation, Mr. Speaker. So I'm sure the critic will have some questions around that. But I think the big question is around who has been consulted.

And the minister says they will consult on the regulations, but I just caution that that's important to make sure that a broad net is cast and including many voices in this particular discussion. But with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues will have further comments and the critic will have many questions when this bill makes it to committee. But for the moment, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 203. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 203. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 204

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 204 — *The Jury Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur le jury*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is it for me; this is the last bill that I'll speak to in this Assembly in the adjourned debates. So it's not exactly the most exciting bill that I would've wanted to talk to, but I do really appreciate the opportunity to be able to stand in my place here, representing the people of Saskatoon Nutana, and providing thoughts and comments for the record on the government's legislative agenda.

As I've said in the past, often I don't find this particular legislative agenda is one that shows a lot of forward thinking and some positive policy proposals for the people of Saskatchewan.

That was a lot of alliteration there too, by the way. But, Mr. Speaker, it is an Act that is important, and again we see this continual evolution of bills as they go through the House. And I don't have anything really profound or pithy to say at this point in time, and I know I will have other opportunities to rise in the House before my time here is done.

But certainly as the adjourned debate process goes through — and I know we have a number of people in the Assembly who have been attending for several days now seeing how, sort of the sausage is made, so to speak, Mr. Speaker — it isn't always an exciting time in the Assembly. And it isn't always a particularly effective way, maybe if I can say, because we have lots of concerns about the bills that are brought forward. We get to say our piece, but very seldom can I say the government has ever taken any of those concerns seriously. And even less seldom have they actually made changes to bills based on some of the feedback that the opposition brings forward.

So in some ways, it may feel ineffective, Mr. Speaker, but we're on the record. And I think that's what's the important part is, that the loyal opposition has an opportunity to speak to these bills and get our thoughts on the record. And certainly I've appreciated your patience, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the years and certainly that of the various Speakers we've had as we try and put those thoughts down on the record and bring those concerns forward for the people of Saskatchewan.

So with no further ado, I think I'll get into this bill. *The Jury Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker, is a number of changes that are being proposed to help people who are called for jury duty. And, Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat disappointed when I found out, once that I was admitted to the bar as a lawyer in the province of Saskatchewan, I can never be a juror. I've been excluded from jury duty, I suppose, for the rest of my life. I don't know if I stop being a registered lawyer, maybe I'd be able to be called. But I think it would be really interesting to be a juror, although I have had friends who've gone through the experience, and it's not a fun experience, Mr. Speaker.

Being called for jury duty is a real inconvenience for most people, and I think a very difficult, very difficult thing for people to do. I had a friend who was on a murder trial, and it was a domestic violence trial. And it was really hard. I think the emotional impact of hearing all that evidence, as you can well imagine, would have a real negative impact on the people that are selected for the jury. So it's a duty that, I think, as citizens we take very, very seriously. But often I don't know that we consider the impact and the toll that it takes on those that we do call to provide that public service.

So I'm not sure if there's counselling, and former ministers of Justice here may be able to provide more information about that. But the impact of the trauma that jurors go through when they see these trials unfolding in front of them, would be of concern, I think. And hopefully there is access to counselling services and other sort of methods to help them cope with the trauma of being a juror, Mr. Speaker. And I just can't imagine how that would be, to have to sit and listen to some of those traumatic details in the courtroom.

At any rate, the minister in his speech on December 3rd, talked about improving and modernizing the jury selection process and

encouraging increased juror participation. There have been notable, notorious cases in the media where juror selection has been criticized by the public. And I do like to say that I do have confidence in our legal system, Mr. Speaker. And the way it's been set up is designed to ensure that we have a jury of 12 that will come forward and listen, hopefully without any preconceived biases, Mr. Speaker.

And that's what the jury selection process is designed to do, is to weed out those jurors who may not be appropriate for that particular trial. And it works, I think, by and large. But there are those cases where it is called in question, and I think we have to take that very seriously, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

There's a few changes that are being made. For example, the two-draw process is going to be replaced with one targeted draw. I'm not sure I know fully what that means. I think of Quick Draw McGraw, but I don't think that's exactly what we're talking about here, Mr. Speaker. But it's the way that the pool is created to select jurors from. So that's being changed.

And then it is giving the Inspector of Court Offices the ability to determine the specific geographical area from which to summon jurors for a particular trial, and that will allow for us to better take into account travel time. So those are concerns as well for jurors. I mean they're being taken away from their job, they're being taken away from their family, and they often may have to travel long distances. So this hopefully will improve the participation for jurors.

Currently municipal council members are not allowed to be part of a jury. I'm not sure what the historical reason is for that and would be interested in knowing that. But, Mr. Speaker, this bill is also going to extend that same exemption to chiefs and council members of First Nation bands, so that's bringing some equality to the process there. And there was an exclusion of spouses of these municipal elected officials, and that's being removed. So that's another small detail that will actually expand the pool of eligible jurors, particularly in smaller communities.

So those are some of the amendments. There's other smaller amendments that are being included and, Mr. Speaker, I know that our Justice critic, the member for Regina Douglas Park, is on top of all of these and will be able to ask, I think, some of these questions when this bill eventually makes its way into the committee. But at this point in time, I just want to say it's been a good ride, Mr. Speaker, and I move that we adjourn Bill No. 204, *An Act to amend The Jury Act, 1998*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 204, *The Jury Amendment Act, 2019*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of the committee this evening, I move

that this House do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that this House adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:33.]

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