



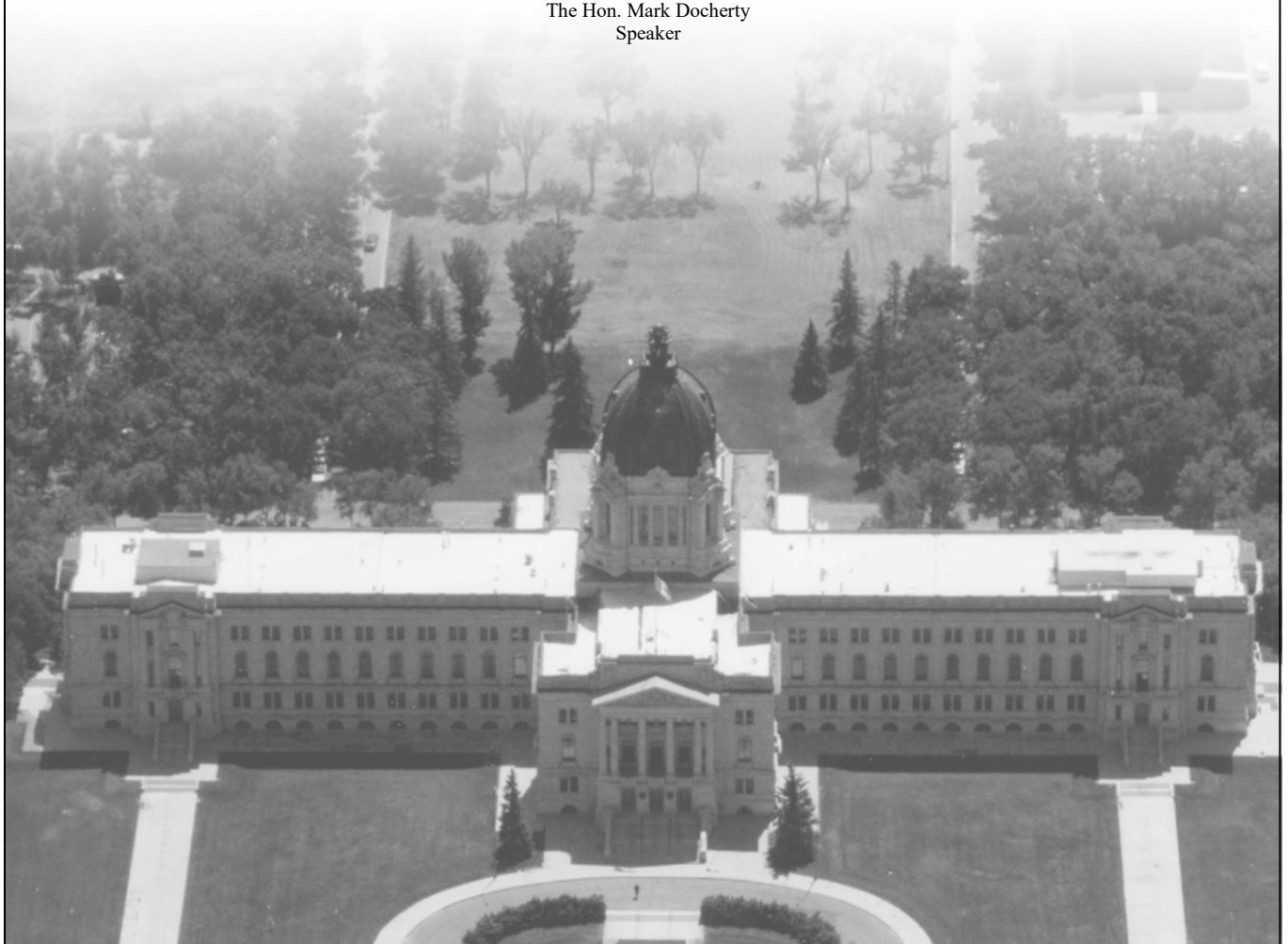
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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

Speaker — Hon. Mark Docherty
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

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

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Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. The federal carbon tax increased from \$20 per tonne to \$30 per tonne on April 1st, in the midst of a global pandemic. As we face significant challenges in our economy to deal with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, the carbon tax adds more pressure to expenses for residents of our province, businesses, farmers, and families.

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 the citizens of Saskatoon and Dalmeny. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition for the provincial government to develop and implement a suicide prevention strategy. Families and communities across the province, but particularly in the North, continue to be devastated by suicide in this province. Government's attempt at a plan has fallen short, and that has been well documented by folks across the province.

Today there's an opportunity to support the bill from the member from Cumberland, who has put forward a bill to develop a comprehensive suicide strategy. I would urge all members to join with me in supporting that bill.

I'd like to 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 develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to address suicide in Saskatchewan.

This petition is signed by individuals from all over the province, with a particular concentration in the North, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a

petition calling on the Sask Party government to end the underfunding of our children's classrooms. Those who've signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a number of points: that the Sask Party government's cuts and underfunding mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for those students who need a little extra help; that the Sask party government's cuts leave educators without the resources that they need to support student learning. And of course, Mr. Speaker, all of this was before the challenge of COVID-19. Mr. Speaker, and that the Sask Party government's failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences today and, of course, will continue to long into the future.

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 immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by funding the most important investment that we can make, and that is in our children.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition reside all over this province. We've had thousands of signatures. Those that I will table today reside in Regina, North Battleford, Potato Lake, Air Ronge, and La Ronge. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Communities Celebrate 2020 Graduates

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. When the class of 2020 dreamed of their senior year, I don't think anyone expected what the reality of that would be. Though communities may not be honouring their graduates in a traditional way, many have found new creative ways to let their grads know just how proud we are of them.

Mr. Speaker, the town of Gravelbourg decided to proudly hang banners along Main Street featuring the photos of their grade 12 students for everyone to see.

The town of Preeceville went in a different direction by creating a video of their graduating students which will be projected onto the town's grain elevator during a viewing party later this summer.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Catholic School Division also conducted virtual graduation ceremonies. All high school students will have their diplomas in a drive-through ceremony. It will allow the grads to dress up in their caps and gowns and be recognized by their teachers.

Mr. Speaker, there are many more stories of how Saskatchewan communities have come together to celebrate our graduates, to ensure students just know . . . They have to know that we are so proud of them and they are valued in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members to join me in thanking Saskatchewan communities for finding unique ways to celebrate their students. And, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to the class of

2020. Thank you very much.

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

Pen Pal Program Helps Seniors Stay Connected

Ms. Sarauer: — COVID-19 has physically distanced us as families and communities. No more is this felt than in our long-term care facilities. I'd like to highlight a care home in my constituency whose staff are going above and beyond to connect residents with their communities.

Qu'Appelle House is a small care home providing care for 34 level 2 residents and 19 suites dedicated to providing assisted living to independent residents. In addition to FaceTime chats with loved ones, staff at Qu'Appelle House saw a need for seniors to stay connected to the outside world. To facilitate this, Jillyan Clark, recreation coordinator, created a pen pal program which encourages children to write letters or draw pictures for the residents. Today Qu'Appelle House digitally received about 100 letters and 60 pieces of colourful artwork. They have successfully partnered with schools across the province and even one in Nova Scotia. One resident says, "I hope I get the chance to meet the young boy who wrote this letter to me after all this is done!"

This innovative program has benefited both seniors and the children alike, and I'm proud to represent these fine folks. I ask that all members congratulate the exceptional work of Jillyan Clark and the staff at Qu'Appelle House for keeping residents safe and connected in these difficult times.

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

Long-Serving Volunteer Firefighter Retires

Mr. Brkich: — Volunteer firefighters play an essential role in rural and remote communities across our province, and the people of Outlook know one volunteer firefighter remarkably well. Bob Reid is a community leader who recently announced his retirement after 47 years of serving with the Outlook volunteer fire department.

Bob first got involved with the Outlook fire department when he was just 16 years old. Over the past 47 years, Bob has been a part of many calls and has never shielded away from a challenge. He doesn't complain about the heavy equipment that keeps him safe, and he doesn't hesitate when rushing into an inferno to save a life.

The sacrifices made by volunteer firefighters are a vital part of any community, and it's this commitment that allows us to live in peace, safety, and security. Bob's dedication to serving his community makes him a model citizen of Saskatchewan. We should all strive to follow in his lead.

I'm proud to represent such a hero in this Chamber. I now invite all members to join me in thanking Bob for his 47 years of service, and wishing him all the best in his well-deserved retirement.

Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Investigation Into Student's Death and Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I asked the Premier about Samwel Uko. The Minister of Justice said, and I quote, "... I would urge the members opposite as well as the family of Mr. Uko to be patient and allow the process to play itself out as it should."

Just to recap the day of May 21st, Samwel visited the emergency room — not once, but twice. Mental health decided Samwel's condition was nothing to worry about. Police left him on his own in the ER [emergency room]. Security escorted him out of the hospital and several hours later Samwel was dead, having taken his own life in Wascana Lake.

On May 21st, Samwel Uko was more than patient, Mr. Speaker, in his attempts to find the support he needed. He twice sought professional help. His family patiently supported him throughout. We have been patient with this government for too long, Mr. Speaker. What has the Premier done to ensure, for Samwel Uko's family, that nothing like this happens again? And today, he has the opportunity. Will he be voting in support of a real suicide prevention strategy for Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the question on a very important ... the topic, the life of a young man that has gone just far too soon, Mr. Speaker. And there's reports around those last hours, that last day of Mr. Uko, of Samwel Uko, Mr. Speaker, that I think people are concerned with, we're all concerned with, Mr. Speaker. We have said in this House that we would allow the coroner to conduct his investigation and allow him the time to determine if there should be a coroner's inquest, Mr. Speaker.

And it's my understanding here as of this morning that the Minister of Justice has spoken with the Chief Coroner's office. And the Chief Coroner has informed our Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker, that he will be indicating later today that he will be conducting a coroner's inquest, Mr. Speaker, into the death of Mr. Samwel Uko.

So I would just say, Mr. Speaker, we fully support the coroner's decision in this matter, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Health Authority will be co-operating obviously fully with this inquest, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to the findings. And we're very hopeful that these findings will be able to bring some peace to the family and friends of Mr. Uko.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we'll be voting on a suicide prevention strategy for this province. The Premier talks of the importance of this issue. How will he be voting today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we've spoken with respect to the bill that has been introduced by the member from Cumberland. Maybe I'd just start with showing my appreciation to the member of Cumberland and saying thank you for raising a very important conversation and adding to the conversation with the introduction of this bill on suicide prevention.

Mr. Speaker, we have spoken to one of the challenges with the bill now that the Saskatchewan Health Authority has released their *Pillars for Life: The Saskatchewan Suicide Prevention Plan*, which admittedly is the very first steps, Mr. Speaker, on a journey that we need to travel. We need to travel together as individuals in communities right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the bill, there is a challenge with respect to the wording of the bill, Mr. Speaker. But I would just close again with showing our appreciation to the member from Cumberland, Mr. Speaker, for being part of and continuing to raise a very important conversation for all people in this province and this nation.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier knows, if there are details that are problematic with the bill, those can be amended in committee. The opportunity today is to show very clearly that he supports us moving towards a suicide prevention strategy, something that has not yet happened in this province.

I spoke last night, Mr. Speaker, with Samwel's uncle, Justin Nyee. We spoke by phone. He had reached out to my office because he heard that we were calling for an inquiry. As family of Samwel he said, "We really appreciate that, because what happened to Samwel should not happen to any person."

Patience doesn't cut it. We need action. Has this government changed anything — anything at all — in our health care system since May 21st so that people are no longer turned away when they're reaching out for help?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the work of both ministers of Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority, they continue to do good work, Mr. Speaker. I think by and large we'll allow the process of this inquest to proceed, Mr. Speaker, obviously as indicated that the Chief Coroner will be moving forward with announcing that later today, Mr. Speaker.

And this is part of the process that we have in government, is we have a coroner in place to precisely investigate and to look at incidents like this, to improve the care when needed across government, Mr. Speaker. And we look forward to and support the Chief Coroner's decision. We allow him his time to come to this conclusion, Mr. Speaker, and we'll allow him the time to most certainly conduct the inquest so that we can improve care, if needed, for all Saskatchewan residents.

[10:15]

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From the front steps of this building, we can see where Samwel Uko died. A memorial has been set up on the north side of the lake, a reminder of the pain and loss to his family and the families of all those who have lost loved ones to suicide. To know that nothing has changed in the month since his death is beyond disappointing.

But for the last two days in this Chamber, for the Premier and the minister to tell the family and the public to be patient, to sit and wait their turn — like Samwel did, like so many do every day in our emergency rooms as they're in situations of mental health crisis, Mr. Speaker — it's appalling. Can the Premier really not come up, Mr. Speaker, with one thing that has changed or will change to make sure that situations like Samwel Uko's never happen again? Surely he must be able to identify something of what's wrong in this system that is failing so many patients.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last number of weeks with respect to allowing some time for the Chief Coroner to do his work, Mr. Speaker, that is a process that we rely on and we rely on his opinion. And we're not going to jump in front of that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to allow the coroner to do his work. And we've indicated today that he has made a decision that he's indicated he's going to move . . . he's going to indicate that he's moving forward with a coroner's inquest, Mr. Speaker. And we're pleased with that decision because of some of the reports that we have all read over the course of the last while.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to what this government has done over not just the last few weeks, Mr. Speaker, but the last number of years, has made mental health and all too often subsequent addictions a priority, Mr. Speaker. We have invested and invested heavily, continue to this year with \$435 million, an addition of \$33 million this year. I believe we're up to 6.5 per cent of the Health budget, Mr. Speaker. All numbers and statistics I know, Mr. Speaker, but it does speak to the commitment and the effort that we need to continue with the conversation that the member from Cumberland has raised over the course of the last few years, Mr. Speaker. It's the conversation that needs to continue beyond the commitment to funding to actual outcomes, to actual outcomes.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Pillars for Life guidelines, the Pillars for Life framework that we have are the very initial steps of ensuring that we can get to those outcomes here in this province.

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

Public Safety and Mental Health

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Continuing on public safety and mental health, I want to quote from a letter posted last night from AIDS Saskatoon: "A person almost died today 50 feet from the front doors of the safe consumption site."

The letter goes on to say that new addiction treatment beds are welcome and needed but that, again quoting: "We want to give our clients a fighting chance to access these programs, and in order to do that we have to keep them alive."

Overdoses are skyrocketing. More people are dying from overdose. We have still, after years of inaction, the highest rates of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] in the entire country. People urgently need the services of a safe consumption site in Saskatoon and in other cities across this province. It's simply the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker. It saves money, it saves lives, and it gives people the chance to recover from the addictions they're struggling with.

The small amount asked for in this budget is so insignificant compared to the total budget, so insignificant compared to the money that would be saved and the lives that would be saved. To the Premier: how can his government find \$120 million for a new remand centre to warehouse people, how can they find money for a project for a for-profit company that has no proven method by which that project was chosen, but somehow they can't find a million dollars for a safe consumption site to save the lives of people struggling with addiction, at risk of overdose, at risk of HIV, in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the safe consumption site in Saskatoon, I'll start with that. There were several questions in the Leader of the Opposition's question. Mr. Speaker, to the question about safe consumption sites, Mr. Speaker, every budget process, there's an issue with having to decide on where priorities should be. Mr. Speaker, mental health and addictions is a priority for this government. You saw \$33 million more in resources go into this budget, followed by, I think it was about \$30 million last year.

Mr. Speaker, we felt it was important that we put the most emphasis right now on addictions treatment beds, on counselling, on medical supports for addictions treatment. Mr. Speaker, the AIDS Saskatoon does some very good work. Mr. Speaker, we've funded them for a number of years. We've increased funding this year for two more caseworkers because we see the workloads that they have, Mr. Speaker. I believe overall funding, I think, in this budget is over \$300,000 for AIDS Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Reporting on Conditions in Long-Term Care Facilities

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this minister claims to support a harm reduction strategy but I have yet to see that from him. This government continues to let our province's most vulnerable down. Despite their own reports describing chronic short-staffing in long-term care, we haven't heard a thing about what they plan to do about it. The last time we heard a promise on this front was the last election, where they promised \$7.5 million to the front lines of long-term care but failed to deliver.

In committee this week the minister provided further evidence of short-staffing in long-term care. Last year there were fewer care aids providing front-line care to our loved ones than there were in 2015. And the overall number of front-line health workers went down as well. To the minister: why are there fewer staff in our long-term care today than there were in 2015?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the specific question, I believe it was I think about 40 fewer care aids that the member opposite's referring to, Mr. Speaker. A large part of that reason is because of some changes that happened in Regina with the Regina Pioneer Village. As you know, Mr. Speaker, that situation is being looked at. That needs to be replaced. A number of the residents from there were moved into personal care homes so obviously there was less staff needed in that case.

But, Mr. Speaker, if the member would look at the same chart and look back, she would see that there's in the neighbourhood of I think it's approximately 700 more long-term care workers than there were when we were given the privilege of forming government, Mr. Speaker. We recognize how important this issue is, Mr. Speaker.

Long-term care is very important to this government. In fact just a few days ago my colleague, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health care, Mr. Speaker, announced two new long-term care facilities for the province in Grenfell and also in La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. We've built a number of long-term care facilities. There's one under way in Meadow Lake right now, Mr. Speaker. We recognize the importance and we're committed to our seniors in this province.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, who's going to staff these facilities and the facilities across the province who have had chronic understaffing in long-term care under this government's watch?

The government's choice to neglect seniors and to not address understaffing in long-term care in this budget tells us they are either unaware of the stories of ongoing tragedies in care homes, or they don't care. Stories like that of Dianne Morgan, a Regina woman who came forward after hearing the Premier say there weren't issues in Saskatchewan care homes. Both of Dianne's parents lived in long-term care here in Regina. Her mother was in a room with three other residents with nothing but a curtain on the bathroom door. Does the Premier think that four seniors to a room, with no bathroom door, is the dignified care that our seniors deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, we recognize that when we were given the privilege of forming government, there was a massive need for new capital injection into long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker. We've been doing that exact same thing — 13 long-term care facilities built. I mentioned two more announced just the other day, one under way in Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker. We have much more work to do in that regard.

But, Mr. Speaker, to the whole issue of long-term care, again there are hundreds of . . . I think approximately 700 more long-term care workers than there were a decade ago. Mr. Speaker, we recognize the absolute importance of long-term care. You've seen it be a priority in past budgets by this government, Mr. Speaker, and you'll see that continue in the future.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, you can't point fingers, recycle announcements. People are counting on this government to do what is right, right now for this situation that is dire in long-term care.

Dianne's mother suffered from bed sores because staff were run off their feet, well-meaning staff who are working very hard, but there aren't enough of them. They couldn't move her often enough.

There was rarely enough food at meal times. Residents were rolled out to the dining area an hour and a half before the meal time, often left weeping in their wheelchairs, crying because they were left there waiting so long and didn't get their food in good time. And even though her family went every day in her final year to help feed her, Dianne's mother lost 50 pounds by the time she passed away.

Hearing these stories, can the Premier honestly say he sees no issues with the state of seniors' care in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't know the specifics of that case, but I'll be happy to have staff look into it. Mr. Speaker, we take concerns with long-term care very seriously.

I think in one of the earlier questions the member opposite referenced the CEO [chief executive officer] tour report, I believe, Mr. Speaker. You know, we initiated that in 2013 to give residents and their family the opportunity to voice any concerns that they may have with the system, Mr. Speaker. We've continued with those even with the amalgamation of the health regions. Senior staff continue with those tours, Mr. Speaker. We have a biennial survey that's done with residents and their families. It's important, we think, we continue with that. Accreditation Canada weighs in on our long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think in the vast majority of cases our staff do exceptional jobs in our long-term care facilities. We certainly appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't mean we can't do better. I think in the biennial surveys it was in the neighbourhood of 83 or 85 per cent of people were showing satisfaction with the service they were receiving, Mr. Speaker. But we want to continue to do better, and we're going to work towards that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Resumption of In-Classroom Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, make no mistake. Parents, teachers, and kids were all very excited about the prospect of safely going back to our classrooms in September. We were all waiting to see clear guidelines for how that will be done, but yesterday's news release fell decidedly short of the mark. Somehow after weeks of preparation, the government presented recommendations for physical distancing that will be impossible in the crowded

classrooms that already exist in so many schools.

We have a minister saying that there will be "no material change" in the schools and in the classrooms. Mr. Speaker, this includes no additional funding for the extra work and supplies that will be required. How can the minister justify a plan that doesn't even recognize that the pre-COVID status quo was not acceptable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the guidelines that were released yesterday by the Government of Saskatchewan were worked on in close consultation with the chief medical health officer, Mr. Speaker, who recognizes the importance of ensuring that our children return to school safely, Mr. Speaker, in as normal a situation as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Now I reminded the member the other day that there is a \$200 million contingency in the budget, Mr. Speaker, to deal with the effects of COVID-19, Mr. Speaker. I'm also aware that school divisions across this province, Mr. Speaker, have realized some significant savings with respect to not having to provide in-class educational services to their kids, Mr. Speaker.

And so there will be, there will be resources available, Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure that our children can return to school safely, Mr. Speaker, and in as normal a situation as possible, Mr. Speaker. That's our goal, Mr. Speaker. It continues to be the North Star, Mr. Speaker, of this government. We want children to have the best educational opportunities they can in our classrooms, in as normal a situation as possible, Mr. Speaker. And we're very pleased with the support that we have received from the chief medical health officer in the preparation of these guidelines.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the safety of our children cannot be a contingency. There are very clearly going to be additional funds that will be required to maintain safe distancing and the supplies that will be needed for schools, but there is no plan for this government to actually present that funding. There was no change in operational funding, funding for the classrooms our kids will be going back to in September, from the time that they tabled the spending estimates in February before the pandemic to the most recent budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation says that the minister's guidelines yesterday leave a number of questions unanswered. I'm sure the minister is getting the same questions I am. That is an understatement to say the least. Can the Minister of Education please show his work? Where will the funding for this plan come from?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we made it very clear yesterday that these were guidelines, guidelines that came from Public Health that we worked with, with the chief medical health officer, Mr. Speaker, who has endorsed these guidelines, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

There are certainly some operational issues that need to be worked out, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Education will work with the response planning team and school divisions to make sure that those operational things are in place for the return to school in the fall, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the response planning team, which is made up of the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] and the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] and representatives from the Ministry of Education, are well positioned, Mr. Speaker, to help assist in preparing those educational opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

And so really if you listened to my last answer, Mr. Speaker, there's a \$200 million contingency in this budget, Mr. Speaker. We know school divisions saved in the millions of dollars. There was a report yesterday, Mr. Speaker, over \$3 million saved by Regina Public, Mr. Speaker. So there are resources available, Mr. Speaker, to be able to provide the resources to schools that they will need so that children can return to school safely.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister had listened to my question, he would also know that our children's safety cannot be a contingency. We are grateful for the guidance that the chief medical health officer provides here, Mr. Speaker, but he needs to know that his ministry has to fund the actual implementation of those guidelines. Mr. Speaker, that is the elephant in the room. Who is going to pay for these additional measures, given that this government has consistently underfunded our classrooms during the time that they have been in government?

No one wants to see our children go back, Mr. Speaker, to unsafe conditions. We need a plan now. In Alberta they have a plan in place for a scenario that would see a maximum 15 students in the classroom if conditions warrant, if the pandemic gets worse. We see no such plan from this government. Does the minister not think that Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan teachers deserve to see a plan that prepares for more than just the best-case scenario, Mr. Speaker? And does he understand that his ministry is going to have to fund it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we made it very clear yesterday when we released these guidelines that they are just that. They are guidelines, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to take the advice of the chief medical health officer. If things change between now and September, Mr. Speaker, we will react to those. And we will react to them, and we will react to them, Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with the very good advice that we receive from Public Health and then specifically, Mr. Speaker, the chief medical health officer.

Mr. Speaker, I will repeat again, there's a \$200 million contingency in this budget to deal with the effects of COVID-19. No one on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, can tell me what these additional costs are going to be. None of them, Mr. Speaker. That's why we provided a contingency, Mr. Speaker.

And in addition as I've mentioned, Mr. Speaker, significant savings, Mr. Speaker, by school divisions with respect to not having to provide in-class instruction over the last number of months, Mr. Speaker; savings on plant operations, Mr. Speaker;

savings on busing; savings on a number of different areas, Mr. Speaker. There will be resources, Mr. Speaker, and I'll repeat, a \$200 million contingency. Maybe the member should read the budget.

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

Police Oversight in Saskatchewan

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's changes to police oversight don't go nearly far enough. But the Minister of Corrections and Policing doesn't have to take my word for it. Brent Cotter, the Chair of the Public Complaints Commission, said, "It is not the enriched initiative that exists in most of the other jurisdictions, where the investigation itself is conducted by an agency that is independent of the police."

He also said, "We would be better off with an independent agency conducting investigations, a non-police agency that has the same kind of authority and resources as a police agency and that is completely independent."

Even the Chair of the Public Complaints Commission agrees that these changes are not the level of independence the public deserves in 2020. Will the Minister of Corrections and Policing come back to this Assembly with a bill that provides the real, independent civilian oversight Saskatchewan people deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. The Public Complaints Commission budget increased by \$350,000 to over \$1 million in 2021. Mr. Speaker, the Public Complaints Commission will now appoint an investigation observer who is not a police officer, may have had a police officer experience in the past, but is not an officer. It will require the appointment of two investigation observers: one must be of First Nations or Métis ancestry where the victim is of First Nations or Métis ancestry. They will publish the investigation reports online. They will bring in highway patrol officers and conservation officers as being under the jurisdiction of that Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Act is intended to be open, transparent, and accountable to ensure that the citizens of this province . . . In spite of what the members opposite want to say. The process can and should be and must be independent, and not conducted by police officers investigating police officers, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 618

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Vermette that **Bill No. 618 — *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — It is my duty, pursuant to rule no. 25, to advise the Assembly that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and cannot be further adjourned. At the conclusion of the debate or at the normal time of adjournment, whichever is reached first, every question necessary to dispose of the motion shall be put.

I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member from Cumberland for his advocacy in this very important issue. I believe he, like so many others in this province, has been affected by suicide directly. Through the community and as well throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, suicide is a very serious issue.

Legislation, however, is not necessary to establish or implement a plan. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate — we appreciate — the advocacy of the member from Cumberland. But I think we can all agree that there's more work that needs to be done on this very important issue. We need to reduce the rate of suicide in this province. This private member's bill calls on the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to undertake work related to jurisdictional scans that the Ministry of Health has already undertaken, Mr. Speaker.

What is important is that we need to take actions. We need to take actions to reduce the rate of suicide in this province and we need to do that now. The Pillars for Life, Saskatchewan's suicide prevention plan, is going to guide those actions, Mr. Speaker. If even one suicide is prevented as a result of this plan, then this plan is a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It is my duty, pursuant to rule 54(3), to warn the Assembly that the member is about to exercise his right to close the debate, and afterwards all members will be precluded from speaking to this question. Therefore if there are any other members who wish to speak, let them do so now.

I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To, I guess, conclude some comments about this bill, today we'll be voting on it. And before I start I want to . . . I'm thinking of so many families in our Indigenous communities, our northern communities, our rural, our urban, and those that have lost loved ones. But I know our Indigenous people have been hit so hard by suicides, by burying loved ones. Our northern people have been hit so hard by burying so many of our young children, our community members.

I've talked many times in this Chamber. I've tried to plead with the government. You know, Bill 613 died on the order paper. I understand it didn't get through a process. But today I can tell you I'm pleased. At least we're going to vote on it today. And I know both sides of the House will make comments and have their own . . . Many of us have been impacted, Mr. Speaker, by suicide, by mental health, by the addictions.

But I want to thank the front-line workers in our schools, our social workers, those schools that are fortunate to have them, the mental health workers, the front-line workers. I want to thank them, the families, the friends that have supported their friends

when their friends are talking about ending suicide. I think about it with my own family and my own grandchildren who just lose hope. And you try all you can. You do not want to bury any of your grandchildren. You do not. For those families that have had to bury their loved ones, I've been to funerals, and my colleague from Athabasca, we have been to too many funerals. We've said that.

Here's an opportunity for a government, Mr. Speaker, for the government to say this is the right thing to do. And they can talk about a plan that they have and they can talk about pillars. That's fine. But you have experts that's saying that is not going to do it, we need serious action. We need a government who says, recognizes it, that we have a problem with addictions, mental health.

We look at COVID-19. I think it's worse; I've seen more troubles with families with young people. I've seen more damage being done by the alcohol consumption that leads to death, that leads to people with addictions and mental health to want to end their life. And it's sad when people reach out for treatment, whether it's addictions, if they don't get the treatment that they reach out for mental health. If it's not there, if a government will not provide that, if the health system cannot provide it, then some people unfortunately . . . And my heart goes out to those that lose loved ones because they feel like there's no hope.

And we've seen that in Regina recently. We've been hit. So many of our communities have been hit. The government talks about showing dignity and respect. I've seen quotes where the Premier talks about that. We need to be kinder to people. I'll agree we do. We need to be kinder. We need to show respect.

But we have a serious problem with suicide amongst Indigenous people — the children, our youth. You have an opportunity to truly show that actions speak louder than words, and that's what I've been hearing by leaders. Our First Nation, our Métis leaders, our municipal leaders, our school divisions, everyone, families who've lost loved ones have been asking, please do something. Time for serious action. We can work together. We have to.

You know, talk about a great province of many people, many cultures, colours come together, and we work together. Our province is very strong on that. Here you have an opportunity. The government has the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to do that. Truly. I'm not asking for me. I'm asking for those families who have lost loved ones, who've come to this Assembly — and I thank them for that — who have signed the petition, who have reached out to the minister. Leaders who have said please, we have a crisis: FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], PACG [Prince Albert Grand Council]. Everybody trying to do what they can, what we ask for.

You know, there's comments about maybe if the legislation or the bill would have said this and that. I have reached out in letters. I've reached out to the ministers, both of them. We'll work with you. We'll amend it. We'll do whatever we need to make this work so that the government can say, we'll work with you. I've met with the ministers. We've offered that to them. Obviously that didn't happen, for whatever reason. Mr. Speaker, the government has an opportunity today for those families that have lost loved ones.

And I think about our Indigenous community and I think about our leader. He talked and I listened to what he said. And the Leader of the Opposition said this: if this happened in a community of 40,000 — in northern Saskatchewan we have 40,000 residents roughly — if you had a community like his hometown of Moose Jaw, if you had youth with the rates of suicide in that community of 40,000 in Moose Jaw, you would see action. You would see your supports and resources like you've never seen before. I believe you would.

We talk about dealing with it once and for all, about showing respect and dignity. There's an opportunity for the government to reach out and say enough's enough. Our Indigenous communities have been impacted, our youth. And it's time. And I'm hoping when I'm done and I conclude my remarks that the government will support this motion and vote in favour of it.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, the last thing I want to say — because I don't want to go on, because I've said it before in this Chamber — the families have come here and asked the government, and I know that. And on their behalf, the people of this good province, I ask the government to consider in your hearts, do the right thing. This is the right thing to do. Support this bill. We can move forward. Actions will speak louder than words.

The last thing I say to the parents who have lost loved ones, and those young people who are out there thinking about suicide, those people who are dealing with addictions, mental health: reach out for help. Reach out to our elders. Reach out to our leaders, our municipal leaders, our mayors, our chiefs, our band councillors. Reach out to our Métis leaders. Talk to somebody. Reach out to counsellors. Talk with them. I beg of you to please, please reach out. Contact me. I don't care, reach out to anyone to say there is hope.

And to our young kids and my grandkids, I want to tell you I love you and I hope you never, never have to face looking at ending your life because you feel as an Indigenous person you are lesser because of your colour, because of where you come from, your background. I just want to say to the people that have signed the petition, I thank you for your commitment to the families who have lost loved ones and to those who need your help.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that this bill passes. And again, thank my colleagues on this side of the House for supporting me every time they have when it's been emotional for myself and my colleague from Athabasca. It's been trying sometimes to come here. I just want to say to them, thank you for always being there supporting me, backing me. With that I conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, and I hope this bill will pass today.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member from Cumberland that Bill No. 618, *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act, 2019* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour, say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — A recorded division has been requested.

[The division bells rang from 10:48 until 11:03.]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member from Cumberland that Bill No. 618, *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act, 2019* be now read a second time. Those in favour of the motion? I recognize the Opposition Whip.

[Yeas — 13]

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to report that the following members are in favour of the motion. Members:

Meili	Beck	Belanger
Chartier	Forbes	McCall
Mowat	Pedersen	Rancourt
Sarauer	Sproule	Vermette
Wotherspoon		

The number of members in favour of the motion are 13.

The Deputy Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion? I recognize the Government Whip.

[Nays — 44]

Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the following members are opposed to the motion:

Moe	Beaudry-Mellor	Bonk
Bradshaw	Brkich	Buckingham
Carr	Cheveldayoff	Cox
D'Autremont	Dennis	Doke
Duncan	Eyre	Fiaz
Francis	Goudy	Hargrave
Harpauer	Harrison	Heppner
Hindley	Kaeding	Kirsch
Lambert	Lawrence	Makowsky
Marit	McMorris	Merriman
Michelson	Morgan	Nerlien
Olauson	Ottenbreit	Reiter
Ross	Steele	Stewart
Tell	Weekes	Wilson
Wyant	Young	

The number of members opposed to the motion are 44.

The Deputy Speaker: — I declare the motion lost. I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The Deputy House Leader has moved that this House does now adjourn. Before I put the question, I would just ask the members' leave to make a few comments.

This is my last day presiding over private members' day. I have been doing this for a lot of years. Actually I forgot and I had to start counting up, and I almost ran out of fingers. So it's been a long time. And I simply would like to thank all the Speakers that I've worked with over the years who have given me the opportunity to sit in this Chair during private members' day. And I would also like to thank you, the members, for obliging me and putting up with some of my antics. And it's been a real honour to be doing this on your behalf, and I thank you for that.

So with those comments, I would ask, are the members in favour of the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:07.]

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GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe

Premier

President of the Executive Council

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

Minister of Advanced Education

Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr

Minister of Government Relations

Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Central Services

Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan

Minister of Environment

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre

Minister of Energy and Resources

Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Joe Hargrave

Minister of Crown Investments

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Government Insurance

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Hon. Donna Harpauer

Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison

Minister of Trade and Export Development

Minister of Immigration and Career Training

Hon. Warren Kaeding

Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Minister Responsible for Seniors

Hon. Gene Makowsky

Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor
and Gaming Authority

Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. David Marit

Minister of Agriculture

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Paul Merriman

Minister of Social Services

Hon. Don Morgan

Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan

Workers' Compensation Board

Minister Responsible for The Global

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Minister of Highways and Infrastructure

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Hon. Christine Tell

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Hon. Gordon Wyant

Deputy Premier

Minister of Education

Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds and
Priority Saskatchewan