



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

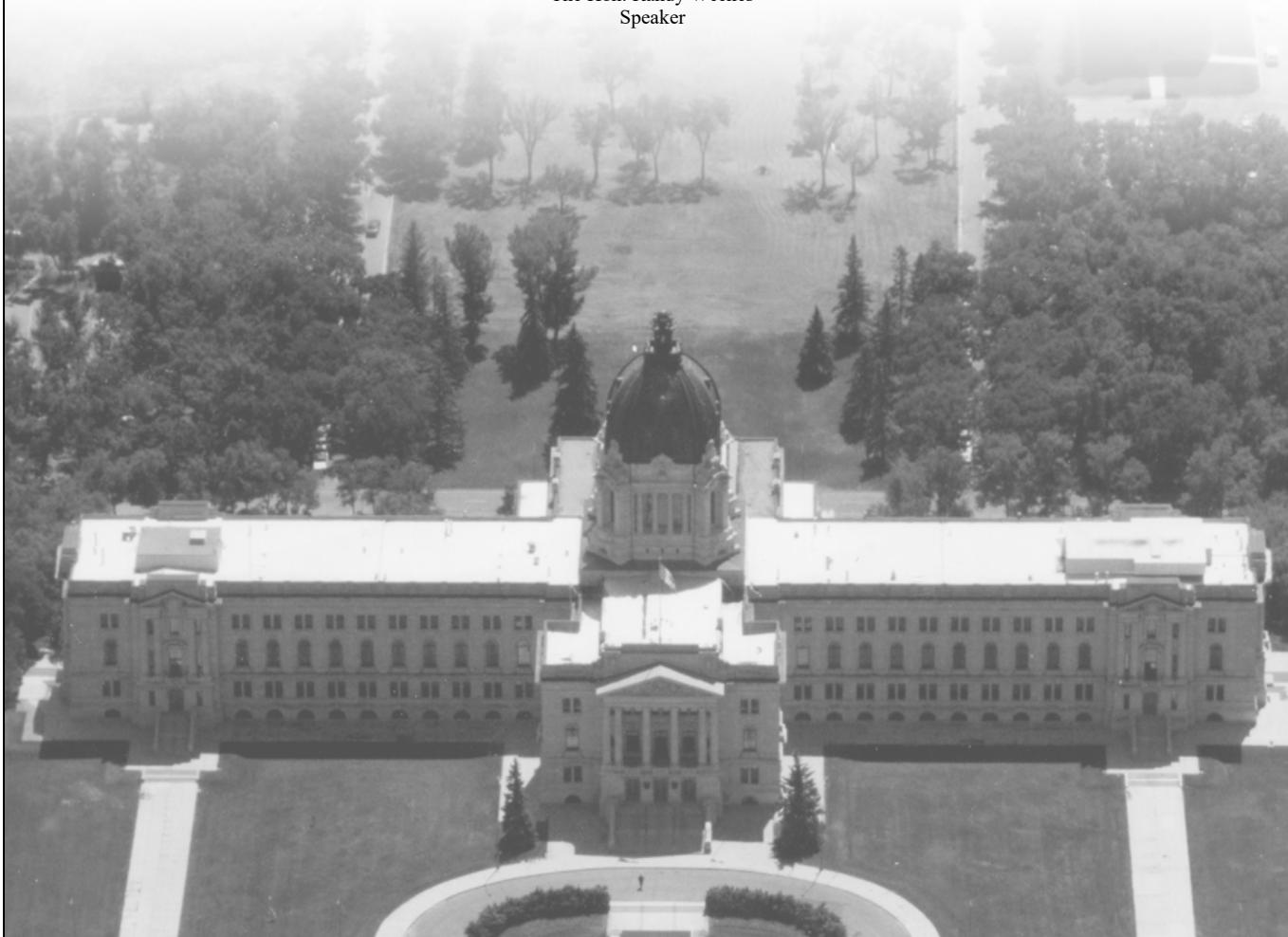
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st Session — 29th Legislature

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

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I, like many Saskatchewan women, once found myself working in a position where I did the same job as my male counterpart but was paid less. That is why I'm happy to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling on pay equity legislation. Many women, many who are often single parents, struggle to make ends meet in this province. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan women deserve equal pay for equally valuable work.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender-wage gaps in Canada, which is the result of systemic gender discrimination in compensation for work that must be corrected with pay equity legislation.

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation, which has not been pursued by the Government of Saskatchewan. While *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* prohibits gender-based compensation discrimination, the complaint-driven process puts no positive obligation on employers. While that pay equity advocacy primarily seeks to address gender-based wage discrimination, it must also be mindful of the ability-, age-, identity-, and race-based wage discrimination:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce pay equity legislation.

miigwech.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise in the House to present a petition. Nav Canada is currently reviewing the air traffic control tower at the Regina airport. Though it's a private company, the federal government has three elected members on the board of directors, and the Minister of Transport will have oversight to the fate of this tower. The aviation industry has been one of the hardest hit during COVID but will play an important role in the economic recovery of the province.

Here's the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request

that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the federal government to advise Nav Canada to reconsider its position on closing the airport traffic control tower at the Regina International Airport, and to halt any final decisions until the global pandemic has subsided.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition to save the Lighthouse and provide core funding to emergency homeless shelters. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this House was a historical day. You ruled on whether the parties could submit the same petition. I understand that was the first time that both sides presented the same petition, and it seems like a shame that that was the first time, Mr. Speaker. Surely there's lots we can agree on. And so if the member of The Battlefords is interested in presenting this petition here, we do have a stack of them in our office.

I know that The Battlefords have been struggling like so many communities across this province, and surely we can all agree that shelter should be funded. And this petition is for just that: to return to a core-funding model for shelters and to make sure that this shelter in The Battlefords, which is the only general shelter in that community, remains open. I will read the prayer. The signatories of this petition are from The Battlefords.

And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately provide stable, guaranteed core funding to the Lighthouse serving The Battlefords and to expand supports for emergency shelters across Saskatchewan by moving to a core-funding model.

I do so present, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Beekeeper Celebrated on International Women's Day

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to speak about a constituent of mine, Mrs. Julie Shirley of Cudworth. Julie and her husband, Jeff, decided to leave the city and they moved to a quarter section of land near Cudworth. Jeff runs his own tech company there. After they built their new home, Julie started with two hives of honey bees. This worked well, and soon it grew to 12 hives. Twelve hives turned into 20 hives. Twenty hives soon became 60 hives. Now Julie is the proud owner of 265 hives producing over 50,000 pounds of honey each year.

Mr. Speaker, the story didn't stop there. You've probably heard the term, "mind your own beeswax." Well Julie does that too,

and markets all of the wax for hobbyists and craft makers. Honeybees will travel about two miles from the hive to collect honey. This means any canola crop, fruit tree, and flowers within two miles get pollinated and farmers get a higher yield.

Mr. Speaker, Julie was celebrated on International Women's Day on March 8th. Even though the date has passed, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Julie Shirley on her sweet accomplishments. Thank you.

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

International Day of Pink

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize International Day of Pink to remind all Saskatchewan people that diversity and inclusion is a strength. International Day of Pink is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the work we have ahead of us to combat all forms of bullying that leads to further discrimination and eventually violence.

In Saskatchewan we are not immune to bullying, but sometimes we use the word "bullying" instead of other words that tend to make us uncomfortable, words like "racism," "sexism," "ableism," and "homophobia." LGBTQ2S+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, or two-spirit plus] folks of all ages continue to face bullying and violence in our province. Racialized youth continue to face bullying and violence, and we remember the life of Kaleb Schmidt from Balgonie.

As leaders in this province, we need to ensure that we stand in solidarity with the victims, but we also take our solidarity into action. While many continue to feel forgotten under this government, I stand here to remind the people of Saskatchewan that your official Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party] opposition is committed to fighting for an equitable province where each person is free to be their true, authentic self.

I ask all members to recognize the strength and resilience of groups and individuals who experience oppression. I remind the Assembly that we cannot be neutral, for if we do we are choosing the side of the oppressor. We must commit to ending violence, bullying, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and racism in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Legends Award Honours Trucking Company

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Show is held every second year in Weyburn. While it may look different this year, organizers are doing their best to make it happen on June 2nd and 3rd.

Mr. Speaker, the group has announced their Legends Award recipients of this year. One of these well-deserved individuals is Vi Day. Vi and her husband, Tony, started their family-owned and -operated company, Fast Trucking Services Ltd., 64 years ago. This is quite an accomplishment, one that few companies in the oil patch achieve, and even fewer still do so under the same ownership.

Fast Trucking came from very humble beginnings. The word "humble" is one that can be very easily extended to Vi herself. From the kitchen table in their house across the road from the main shop and yard, the kitchen table was Fast Trucking's main office for decades. Vi didn't need anything fancy, just something functional.

Over the years, the Days' family business grew beyond Fast Trucking. It became a substantial group of companies, to the point where their children have all been involved. A third generation — Vi's grandchildren — have also joined the company.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask other members in the Assembly to join me, congratulating Vi on her award and her continued success. Thank you.

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

George Gordon First Nation Elder Celebrates 100th Birthday

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Saulteaux.]

I am honoured to stand here today to recognize an incredible woman who has had an impact on my life and the lives of hundreds of others in our province. Mrs. Nancy Bitternose, née Pratt, was born in 1921 and celebrated her 100th birthday on January 25th.

I first met Nancy when I was six years old, attending the residential school. During my time at the residential school, Nancy was a ray of light in what was a dark and difficult time for myself and many of my fellow residential school survivors. Her kind and gentle presence made days better, and I couldn't be more proud to be here today to wish her a happy birthday.

Born in 1921 on George Gordon First Nation, Nancy has lived through a difficult century for First Nations people in Canada. When Nancy was born in her First Nation, First Nations people like her were not even considered people until 1960. Status Indians could not vote without losing their right to live on reserve.

World War II, White Paper of 1969, Oka Crisis, the Canadian Constitution, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Nancy Bitternose has lived through all of these and, for better or for worse, was able to overcome institutional oppression and racism to make it to this historic centennial birthday.

Nancy enjoys playing 5,000 rummy, Yahtzee, card bingo, and word search books. When she is out and about in the community, she only walks with a cane. On behalf of myself as a proud First Nations woman and the entire NDP caucus, it's my pleasure to stand in this House and send my love and wish Nancy the happiest of birthdays. May you continue to enjoy the journey of life. I love you, Nancy. miigwech.

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

Appreciation for Plow Operators

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to show my appreciation for a team that sometimes goes unnoticed. As the last several days will attest, just when we think another winter is in the books, we are confronted with one more go-round with the white stuff. And, Mr. Speaker, as we're well aware, while snow is ideal for some sports, driving is certainly not one of them. Be it December, February, or even April, the tireless team of plow operators from our Ministry of Highways is on the job.

Not unlike many other constituencies in the province, my constituency of Arm River is home to a web of roads. These dedicated Highways staff endeavour to keep Saskatchewan's more than 26 000 kilometres of highways safe all year round, keeping our people and our economy moving.

Our plow operators are unsung heroes of winter. These folks take to the roads when the rest of us dare not. Further, I'm sure that we can all recall many times when we have exhaled in relief and gratitude at the sight of our Highways cavalry's blue and amber lights coming to the rescue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to help me recognize and show our appreciation to our winter warriors — that is, Highways crews that ensure we arrive home safely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Real Estate Numbers Show Recovery Is Under Way

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As our province emerges from the devastating economic and social impacts of COVID-19, a report from the Saskatchewan Realtors Association shows that Saskatchewan's recovery is well under way.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, March saw over 1,700 homes sold in our province, up over 85 per cent from March of last year. Home sales were up 70 per cent in Regina, 93 per cent in Moose Jaw, 108 per cent in Saskatoon, and 240 per cent in Humboldt. In fact housing sales were up in 22 of Saskatchewan's 24 housing markets.

According to the Saskatchewan Realtors Association, the activity of real estate in Saskatchewan has led to some homes being sold just hours after being listed. Some homes and recreational properties are seeing multiple bids being offered. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan doesn't usually see this level of activity in the real estate market until at least May, showing that our economy is ready for a strong recovery.

With demand outpacing supply, Saskatchewan's construction industry is prepared for a busy year of home construction, further growing our province's economy in the wake of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, these statistics show that more and more people are optimistic about our province's recovery and excited to call

Saskatchewan home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Anti-Crime Initiatives

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday night the members opposite made some interesting comments about where the party stands on law and order. The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre stated that our government "... cut funding to, for example, gang reduction strategies which have been demonstrated to address human trafficking."

To be clear, in this year's budget our government actually increased funding for gang-violence reduction strategy. Our government is providing \$3.2 million for our gang-violence reduction strategy, an increase of \$168,000 to expand specialized addictions programming to Saskatoon and Prince Albert correctional facilities, for our crime reduction team, Saskatchewan integrated intelligence group, and the community intervention model. The community intervention model partners with Str8 Up and Regina Treaty/Status Indian Services to provide intensive outreach for at-risk individuals.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to addressing gangs in our province through a combination of prevention, intervention, and suppression programming. The programming our government currently provides does just that by helping individuals leave gangs, stop them from getting involved in the first place, and supporting our police agencies to go after these dangerous organizations.

I'm not sure if the member either misread or misunderstood our budget, but she still voted against more money for anti-crime initiatives. Our government will continue to support measures to keep all of our Saskatchewan communities safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Health minister was asked about his newly expanded COVID-19 restrictions. He was asked by a reporter if it was a mistake to relax restrictions just before Easter. His answer:

We made that decision with what we had at that moment and we were confident with the compliance in that. The variant throws everybody in the country and around the world a bit of a curveball. It does change things up.

Mr. Speaker, what he had at the moment was doctors in the province saying not to do this. Simple question to the Health minister: why won't he admit it was a mistake to relax restrictions, given that the modelling showed how dangerous it would be?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And we were actually very surgical with the restrictions. We always have been and we will continue to be to make sure that we always find that balance, Mr. Speaker, with people's livelihood, their mental health, and also lives and bending the curve within our health care system.

But, Mr. Speaker, they forgot the other side of that quote, when I was talking in the scrum about how robust our vaccine plan is. Again, Mr. Speaker, I stand in this House day in and day out telling them that we are leading the country. They call it ad hoc. They call it confusing. But everybody else, outside of the members over there, are able to understand what's going on.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to report to the House that we have now surpassed over 300,000 vaccines in the province of Saskatchewan. And I can tell you, we are . . . very much have more capacity. It took us 89 days to be able to get the first 100,000 out in Saskatchewan because of very slow delivery times by the federal government; 19 days to get the next 100,000 out; 13 days to get that last 100,000 out that we just accomplished, Mr. Speaker. Could you imagine what we could get if we had a full slate of vaccines to be able to get to the people in Saskatchewan? We'd probably be able to do that in half the amount of time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — No contrition at all from that Health minister, even though under his watch too many people are dying from COVID-19. This is the same minister who told reporters that the number one measure of his government's success was their great lead in the polls, the same minister whose Premier, when asked what he would do differently, said he wouldn't change a thing.

There are 457 families in this province who have lost loved ones, who wish this Premier would have done things differently. And since this government relaxed restrictions on March 9th, almost 7,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19. This government's plan hasn't worked. But fixing that starts with admitting you've made a mistake. Why is that so hard for this Sask Party government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to express, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, my condolences for those that have been impacted and certainly lost a family member due to COVID-19 and those that are still fighting the illness in our hospitals, Mr. Speaker. But what I am very confident in is the treatment that they are getting from our professional front-line health care workers, who continue to work day and night.

Mr. Speaker, I was just able to participate in the great vaccine program that we are rolling out across our province. I was notified late last night, watching social media, that my age group came up. I jumped in the car and drove right down and waited for an hour to be able to get my shot. It was a very exhilarating experience to be able to do that, Mr. Speaker.

But the front-line health care workers that were there — the same

ones that are working in our hospitals, Mr. Speaker, to take care of those that have fallen ill to COVID — are there to be able to protect the rest of us from getting this very tragic disease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, it's those front-line health care workers that they should be listening to. What we're seeing from this government is a pattern, a pattern of refusing to take any responsibility for their failures to control COVID-19 and a pattern of refusing to take action until it's far too late.

Before the Sask Party loosened restrictions in March, their own doctors in the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] were warning them not to relax restrictions, that it was too big of a risk with the rise of the variants. And what are those doctors saying now? "We are in exponential growth provincially. Severity is increasing. Testing rates are low and variants of concern are increasing." Nothing announced yesterday is going to work to get this under control. When is this government going to stop ignoring the signs and finally act to get COVID-19 under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thanks again, Mr. Speaker, and we are working on getting COVID under control and getting it under control is those trips to the vaccine clinics that we have across our province. And again, Mr. Speaker, I know that they don't like to hear this. I know they want us to fail at this. But we are leading the country. And I don't know why, for the life of me, they cannot understand that this is something good that's happening in Saskatchewan.

We have 300,000 of our constituents, our neighbours, our family members, our friends that have now got their first shot. Some of them have got their second shot that are in long-term care, Mr. Speaker. We're averaging in and around 10,000 people a day to get vaccination.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to continue as long as we can get the vaccine supply from the federal government, which has been a little inconsistent lately. As long as we can get those vaccines, we can continue to get them into people's arms and make sure that we can get past this, and we could put COVID in the rear-view mirror. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government Response to COVID-19 in Long-Term Care Homes

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, this Premier made a decision, a decision to break his campaign promise to hire more front-line long-term care workers. This broken promise not only speaks to this government's misguided priorities but also to a betrayal of seniors who have endured so much over the last year.

This government chose to ignore the risks to residents and staff

in this pandemic. This government sat on its hands and watched as provinces across the country saw their long-term care homes ravaged by the first wave, and we did nothing to prevent the same thing from happening here. Why didn't this government act on calls last spring, a year ago, to get ready to do everything it could to protect seniors and to save their lives?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has taken this issue very seriously, and all of the lives that have been lost in the long-term care facilities as a result of COVID-19 have been tragic. And we've extended our condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives.

Mr. Speaker, it's why, you know, this government has taken the steps it has to try to protect the senior citizens of Saskatchewan in our long-term care homes, our personal care homes. It's why we've implemented the restrictions that we have in this province, and did so very seriously back a year ago to try to protect the residents of those facilities. And, Mr. Speaker, that included limiting visitation, increasing PPE [personal protective equipment] usage in our facilities, and making sure that we do as much as we can to protect the residents of long-term care homes in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I think that by and large, we've done a good job of doing that, recognizing of course again, that any life lost is one life too many. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, respectfully, they have not done a good job. Mr. Speaker, a year ago, let's go back to a year ago. We called on the province to get ready and to invest in staffing and other protections to keep seniors safe and to keep the long-term care staff safe. The Premier patted himself on the back, and he said that what the province was doing was "working." Because the virus had not yet invaded Saskatchewan care homes, he said everything was fine.

Instead of stepping up, he sat on the sidelines. He ignored every warning sign available that Saskatchewan was set to be next. Considering the lives lost to predictable and preventable COVID outbreaks in our care homes, does the Premier stick to his position that he regrets nothing?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to my previous comments, there was a number of steps taken by the government both in our long-term and personal care homes in this province. In addition to the restrictions with respect to visitation, there was over 17.5 million provided to affiliate long-term care facilities to help with pandemic pressures, Mr. Speaker.

There's been a great amount of work put into preparation with respect to making sure that our long-term care facilities are protected and that seniors in this province are protected throughout this pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, we've been trying our very best to manage the outbreaks — and we've had them in long-term care facilities — and doing our part with that regard, undergoing site visits in many of our long-term care facilities when we've had these concerns raised and when there has been outbreaks. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's why the vaccine rollout has been so important, going through the age-based program here, starting with our most vulnerable people, the seniors in our long-term care homes, to protect their lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the evidence does not support that minister's response. Let's go back again to a year ago. Last May when we called on this government to get ready for what was coming, the second wave, we were joined by the daughter of two residents who had lost their lives in Extendicare Sunset in Regina.

This individual was infuriated by the Premier's lines that everything was fine. She was infuriated that this Premier said that guidelines were enough to keep seniors safe. Before her mother passed away, her mother had developed acute bedsores; she had lost 50 pounds during her short stay in Extendicare — both problems that she attributes to short-staffing. Her parents were frequently trapped in tiny rooms because of viral outbreaks before the pandemic arrived. She was horrified that four residents were piled into a single, tiny room with nothing but a curtain as a bathroom door.

This tragic care should not shock this government. Year after year they receive CEO [chief executive officer] tour reports saying the same thing. What is shocking is their failure to act. What is this government going to do now to ensure that this never happens again?

[14:00]

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I extend my condolences to the family who lost their loved one in that care home. With respect to investments by this government, what the government is going to do going forward, this is why, Mr. Speaker, we've made some significant investments into long-term care.

The government invests on an annual basis \$752 million into its long-term care. Since 2009 there's been \$340 million invested into 14 long-term care facilities in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And in this budget year, Mr. Speaker, there is continued investment as we continue to build upon those previous investments into long-term care capital in Saskatchewan. There's more funding for the La Ronge long-term care facility; \$3.6 million in funding for the Grenfell long-term care facility; \$550,000, Mr. Speaker, in funding for the Watson and Estevan long-term care facility replacement projects. I spoke to community leaders in both of those communities, and they're very excited about the investment that's going to take place into long-term care in their two communities. And finally, Mr.

Speaker, there's also \$500,000 to expand the scope of the replacement of long-term care beds here in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

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

Rental Agreements and the Office of Residential Tenancies

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in the summer, our NDP opposition called for an extension of the rental eviction moratorium. However, ignoring our calls, we saw a return to business as usual in August and the ORT [Office of Residential Tenancies] again began issuing evictions for non-payment of rent. The reason, to quote the minister's news release: "With the success of flattening the curve in Saskatchewan, we believe it is appropriate to lift the moratorium on non-urgent evictions."

We've all seen the curve now, Mr. Speaker. The last word I would use to describe it is "flat." So what's the deal? Things are grim and it's not getting any better. Mr. Speaker, what's the plan to keep people at home, just when they're being told to stay home, as the pandemic rages like never before?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. The Office of Residential Tenancies office worked through the first part of the pandemic and worked carefully and diligently to make sure that people weren't unnecessarily put out, or dealt through issues with landlords to try and make sure that the restrictions that we proposed were dealt with fairly and with a degree of care and compassion.

When that was lifted, it was not simply a matter of return to business as normal because people, some of them had accumulated some arrears. They worked with those people to try and set up payment programs, to work with landlords, etc., and I understand that was quite successful.

Mr. Speaker, as we go forward we know that the Office of Residential Tenancies will continue to make similar accommodations, work with landlords. They've got considerable discretion as to how they handle things. Government has not chosen to weigh in at this point in time, and it's certainly the preference of government to allow these things to be worked out between the landlord, between the tenant, and with the assistance of the Office of Residential Tenancies. Mr. Speaker, we're not inundated with requests at this time, but we'll certainly watch it.

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

Ms. Conway: — Contrary to the member's statements, that was not successful. We're seeing stories in the newspaper about mothers with 11-day-old newborns being evicted, Mr. Speaker. This government has done nothing to adapt to the third wave and ensure that vulnerable renters are safe.

And now they're proposing new legislation that actually makes it easier to evict people. That takes me to Bill 15, Mr. Speaker.

While the Sask Party says this bill is introduced to support victims of sexual violence, it includes changes that will hurt struggling tenants — who, I should add, are disproportionately women — by making it easier to evict them, swinging the pendulum even further in favour of landlords, Mr. Speaker. It shortens the notice landlords must give for non-payment of rent before giving someone the boot, from 15 to 7 days. Seven days, Mr. Speaker.

Social Services rental supports are often delayed by more than a week. It's a pandemic, Mr. Speaker. Tenants just want some balance in an already onerous system, yet this puts yet another tool in the overflowing tool box of a handful of landlords. So with that, will the minister commit to scrapping this amendment now?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to urge the member opposite to look at the bill and look at the bill in its entirety. The focus of this bill is to try and assist people that are victims of assault, victims of sexual assault, and people who've gone through major traumas in their life. It allows them to be able to break a lease or cancel a lease without having to go through a formal process or without ending up in court or without ending up getting goods seized or whatever else, other remedies that might take place.

Mr. Speaker, there is a process in the Act that allows for people to go to the Office of Residential Tenancies to allow them to apply for relief, to apply for assistance. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what has taken place for the last year and that's what will take place and continue to take place.

Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite don't have support or understanding of what the people at the Office of Residential Tenancies do, I would urge them to spend some time over there, meet with those people, and get an understanding what the process is because they're competent professional civil servants, and we should all have confidence and respect in the work that they do and continue to do.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I believe that a judge of the Court of Queen's Bench had something recent to say about what goes on at the ORT, and I would urge my friend to take a look at that decision. Mr. Speaker, this government is trying to pull the wool over our eyes, hiding unfair changes in a bill intended to support victims of sexual violence. That's what this is, Mr. Speaker.

We have the worst jobs record in the country, nearly 25,000 people out of work. Of those unemployed, thousands are renters. Thousands more are working, but for not enough hours and for not enough pay, or both. There's nothing from this government to protect renters, no thought for a fair minimum wage, and not a sniff of a jobs plan, Mr. Speaker.

As for shortening eviction notices, the minister sent out a message Monday that tenants and landlords should just work it out. Give me a break, Mr. Speaker. What will the government do to ensure that underpaid and out-of-work Saskatchewan people

keep a roof over their heads during this third wave?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm disappointed to see that the members opposite have no confidence in landlords, no confidence in businesses, and no confidence in the public officials that hear these matters and provide relief for tenants. Mr. Speaker, it's not simply a matter that a tenant can be evicted after seven days. They may have a right to make an application to the Office of Residential Tenancies. Those applications are made in due course. Parties have to be given notice; a hearing date has to be set. And the Office of Residential Tenancies will weigh the equities between the parties and will look at providing relief, so the tenant is allowed to stay in the property as they work things out.

Mr. Speaker, that's what they do. That's their role. And, Mr. Speaker, we should have confidence in the work that they do and support them in the work that they do and have some respect for the landlords in this province. One of the largest landlords in the province is the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, a government entity that's got tenants all over the province, Mr. Speaker. We should work with those entities.

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

Support for Saskatchewan Construction Companies and Job Creation

Ms. A. Young: — Why thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hope and capital spending, and as we know hope is not a plan. So I think that the members opposite would remember that Saskatchewan construction companies are an essential part of our economy and that they help create good-paying jobs all over this province. But for far too long they've been shut out from having a chance to help build.

Instead of coming up with a jobs plan that would fix this, the Sask Party's instead plowing ahead with worst-in-the-nation status quo and no one to listen to here at home. Things have gotten so bad that the construction association is asking their members to get on the phone, call their MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and end this damaging race to the bottom.

So now, Mr. Speaker, we know this government doesn't have a jobs plan. But what's their plan to listen to the sector and ensure that we have a Sask-first procurement plan that gets Saskatchewan people back to work?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would note that the construction industry has seen a job growth of 3,000 over the last year. We had a member's statement earlier in the day from the member from Saskatoon talking about the health of the residential retail market and also the residential construction market, Mr. Speaker, which we believe is a very positive thing.

But I have more good news, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite. Those that have lived here in Saskatchewan for the past 14 years know of the transformational change that has occurred in our economy, GDP [gross domestic product] growth over the course of that 14-year period being up well over 20 per cent. A remarkable 57 per cent increase in the value of our exports over that same period of time. Population growth of 170,000 people, including new Canadians, nearly 150,000 people. A change that has really been transformational has been the most significant that has occurred in, I think, any of our lifetimes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A transformational change. Ears just perked up across the education sector in Saskatchewan. But you know, Mr. Speaker, if their Priority Saskatchewan plan was working, the construction association would not be organizing a campaign to fix public procurement in this province.

And I think it's clear that the Sask Party's record speaks for itself. Every major project in the last 10 years has been handed to an out-of-province company, or even more, out-of-country. Their plan has worked to create jobs for people in Kansas City, Paris, Montreal. But it's not working for Saskatchewan, and it certainly isn't working for the 23,000 people who have lost their jobs over the course of this pandemic.

So when we're building and maintaining our infrastructure, we should be doing that with companies and our people, full stop. So what is this government's plan to ensure that our people are included in restarting our economy?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to put this into a bit of perspective and give a bit of context. Eighty-four per cent of all Crown procurements were awarded to Saskatchewan suppliers in the quarter ending December 31st, 2020. Last year 91 per cent of Highways procurements went to Saskatchewan companies. As of December 31st, 2020, 95 per cent of the 170 procurements for stimulus projects have been awarded to Saskatchewan companies. This has resulted in over \$115 million being awarded to Saskatchewan contractors.

Naturally the Saskatchewan businesses will want to lobby and actively put forward, as part of their advertising, how well they do and what great service they provide. And we're pleased that they're lobbying the government. We're pleased that they're lobbying the public and letting people know what great business entrepreneurs they are, how they're hiring people, how they're paying taxes in province, and hiring more and more people all the time and bringing things forward, Mr. Speaker. We have a great province and we should be proud of it.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So you know I love numbers, so let's dance on numbers, Mr. Speaker. How is this government failing on jobs? Let me just count the ways. Billions of dollars worth of public projects sent to out-of-province and

out-of-country companies, thousands of Saskatchewan people leaving this province never to return, the lowest minimum wage in the Dominion of Canada, and the worst jobs numbers in the country. No plan for jobs, no plan for COVID, and quite frankly, Saskatchewan people deserve so, so much better.

So when is this government going to do something — honestly anything — create jobs, and get our economy back on track?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we're not going to do is take lessons from the people over there on job creation, economic development, or the future growth of this province, because if those people ever came over here and sat on this side of the House, they would run it into the disaster that they did in the 1990s, Mr. Speaker. I hope that this province never goes back to those days ahead. Those are new and rookie people over there, Mr. Speaker. It would do them well to look back at what they did when they were in government before.

Mr. Speaker, we will have a strong and active economic recovery plan. It will go ahead to try and work our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be committed to giving jobs to Saskatchewan people. It will also depend on free trade between the provinces because there are some things that we do not have Saskatchewan contractors that do, and our contractors want to bid in other provinces as well. Mr. Speaker, we've got great Saskatchewan companies, and we will work with them and promote them all the way.

[14:15]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 29 — *The Supporting Saskatchewan Restaurants Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 29, *The Supporting Saskatchewan Restaurants Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Trade and Export Development that Bill No. 29 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt this motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 30 — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 30, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Amendment Act, 2021* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Trade and Export Development that Bill No. 30 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order question no. 18.

The Speaker: — Question no. 18 is tabled . . . ordered, sorry. Ordered.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 3 — *The Massage Therapy Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to move second reading of Bill No. 3, *The Massage Therapy Act, 2020*. This legislation will establish the Saskatchewan College of Massage Therapy as a regulator of massage therapists in this province. This will be a stand-alone regulatory body separate from any of the three existing associations.

Mr. Speaker, the primary purpose for regulating of health professionals is to protect the public from potential harm resulting in the actions of incompetent or unethical practitioners. Although these instances are rare, it is important to have measures in place to protect the public and ensure that they have access to safe, high-quality services.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to protecting the public from unethical or unqualified practitioners, this new bill will provide title

protection for massage therapists. It will also align with the requirements of the Canadian Free Trade Agreement for provinces where massage therapy is a self-regulating health profession.

Similar to other health profession regulators, such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan College of Massage Therapists will have competency and practice standards, a code of ethics, and a process for misconduct. This will give greater assurance to the public that the practitioners that they see meets established competency standards. Further, if there is any concerns regarding the practitioner's competence or conduct, there will be a mechanism in place to address them.

Mr. Speaker, when the original proposal to regulate massage therapists was put forward in 2015, some stakeholders raised concerns about how the regulation of the profession would be implemented. They were specifically concerned about grandparenting of current practitioners into a regulatory college, how practitioners would be eligible to be licensed within a new regulatory college. As a result, the Ministry of Health encouraged stakeholders to continue collaborating on a revised proposal that would address this issue.

These three massage therapy associations, the Massage Therapist Association of Saskatchewan, Natural Health Practitioners of Canada, and the Canadian Massage & Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association represent about 1,600 massage therapists in the province. In 2019 they reached a consensus on both regulation and a path forward for the grandparenting issue. These associations provide a plan to the ministry on how existing practitioners will be transitioned into the new regulatory college.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed revised Act receives strong support from individual massage therapy practitioners, as well as the three massage therapy associations. Mr. Speaker, self-regulation for this profession will help ensure that services people receive are safe and appropriate. Also it will benefit practitioners by putting in place competency and practice standards and consistent training for massage therapists.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the individual practitioners and the massage therapy association for supporting regulation of the profession in Saskatchewan. It speaks volumes to their commitment to serve the public and their ability to work together. I look forward to the establishment of Saskatchewan's new College of Massage Therapy.

Mr. Speaker, I'm now pleased to move second reading of Bill No. 3, *The Massage Therapy Act*, 2020.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 3 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join in on responding to *The Massage Therapy Act*, before I get into some of the comments, I listened to what the minister had to say. I know that I've had individuals that are in the profession of massage therapy, and you know, I hurt my back here and there, and you know, a little bit of heavier weight, you have to sometimes have, you know, a treatment to make you feel better.

And they do a great job. And the ones that I have attended to and whether it's male or female, they're very professional. They do a great job. But also I've heard some of them talk concerns, and they want to make sure.

So I see what the minister has talked about is making sure that when individuals in the public goes and has a treatment, that they have a body, and this is what this college of massage therapists will do. It will police itself. It will make sure that they have a certain standard. My understanding, what I got from the minister, there's certain things that will make sure that when you go to them, you have somebody who has the training, I guess, certification. Making sure they're doing what's best for the public and making sure you're getting the proper treatment that an individual needs. So this body will have that opportunity to police them if there's complaints.

And from I got from the minister, you know, looking at the organization, there was three . . . There was individuals, and they've come together. And there were some issues, I guess, and concerns. And what I'm hearing from the minister's comments today is they've worked through that, and hopefully . . . We'll take the time with our critic to consult individuals, and I know she'll do her work to make sure. And I remind anyone out there, if they have concerns, you know, raise them with the opposition, the minister as well. Raise them with the critic if there are any issues that you want to, you know, bring up to the attention . . . If you have concerns, you have the right to do that.

So there's a lot, you know, that I could say about this. And I know, like I've said, I've heard some saying they're happy that this is going forward. It was time. It's been a long process for them. But I think at the end of the day, if we, you know, making sure they get it as best they can and get it right would be good.

So at this point I don't have a lot more comments on this bill. And I'll wait for my colleagues and my, you know, to make comments on it and do a little bit more checking into it, consulting with individuals. And as I said, the critic will do that. And, you know, we want to make sure our public is always taken care of and you have the best organization.

So this will give the College of Massage Therapists the ability to govern themselves, police themselves I guess if you want to say that. So at this point I have no further comments on Bill No. 3, *The Massage Therapy Act*, and I adjourn debate on that bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 20 — The Publicly-funded Health Entity Public Interest Disclosure Act

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 20, *The Publicly-funded Health Entity Public Interest Disclosure Act*. Mr. Speaker, providing high-quality health services to Saskatchewan people is

a priority for our government that requires exceptional health care providers working in supportive, collaborative environment.

We expect high standards around professional values and ethics from our health care professionals, and we want the public to have full confidence in our health care system. That is why we are introducing new legislation to protect the health system employees who suspect wrongdoing in their workplace. It allows whistle-blowers to report concerns without fear of losing their job or other reprisal.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, *The Public Disclosure Act*, or PDA, already provides these protections to employees of executive government. We previously extended this Act through regulations to apply to the Saskatchewan Health Authority and the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. This was a temporary measure until we completed our work on similar legislation more applicable to the health sector.

This new Act creates legislation that is specific to the publicly funded health system. It will apply to the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, and provides the ability to add other health care organizations through the creation of regulations.

Mr. Speaker, it is extremely important that we have an open and transparent health system, one which people are confident that they can raise concerns in good faith and that action will be taken to investigate. Our commitment to this principle is clear, Mr. Speaker. My hon. colleague the previous minister of Health made a commitment to extend whistle-blower protection more broadly across the publicly funded health sector. We are following up on that commitment today.

The Act's protections will apply to various situations including mismanagement of public funds; contravention of federal or provincial Acts or regulations; and circumstances that endanger lives, health, or the safety of the environment. Mr. Speaker, this legislation will provide reassurance to valued health care professionals across the province who serve our residents with dedication and compassion. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of the publicly funded entity public interest disclosure Act. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 20 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise on second reading with respect to Bill No. 20, *The Publicly-funded Health Entity Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

This is a long time coming, Mr. Speaker. We've been pushing for and fighting for whistle-blower protection year after year after year, Mr. Speaker. We do so because, time and time again, we see the actions of this government that are vindictive and that work to silence workers in health care, Mr. Speaker, workers from the front lines of long-term care, Mr. Speaker, a discussion that is incredibly relevant with the crisis and the damage and the tragic losses that we've seen this past year.

This is a government that has sent a chill, sent a chill out to workers in this province, being very clear that if they speak out

to address injustice and deplorable conditions in things like long-term care — I think of Peter Bowden, Mr. Speaker — that this government will come after them. In that case, Peter Bowden, who spoke out against deplorable conditions that should've been acted upon many years ago in long-term care, not only did the government ignore the call that he laid forward, the deplorable conditions, but they canned him, Mr. Speaker. They fired him. They stole his livelihood, Mr. Speaker. He was standing up for the people that he served and the people he protected and giving voice, Mr. Speaker, to the deplorable conditions in long-term care.

Had this government instead chose a different course, chose to listen to people like Peter, chose to listen to people on the front lines, chose to listen to their own reports into things like long-term care and the crisis conditions that existed, Mr. Speaker, we would have been in one heck of a better position to protect those seniors during this crisis, Mr. Speaker. The actions on this front by this government are inexcusable, Mr. Speaker.

This legislation, with the intent to protect whistle-blowers, is long overdue. In many ways it shouldn't have been needed, Mr. Speaker. If you had a government acting with decency, Mr. Speaker, and listening to the people who are entrusted to serve the people of this province, legislation like this may not even be needed, but it certainly is in this province. We need to make sure whistle-blowers are protected.

I think of a nurse like Carolyn Brost Strom, who in her case, had to take her case all the way to the Supreme Court, Mr. Speaker, somebody who continues to serve and fight for those in health care, to fight for the public's interest, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

I think of this government when they sent out hush memos, Mr. Speaker, to control the message coming from public workers in health care, Mr. Speaker — medical professionals, Mr. Speaker — threatening them to keep quiet while they were witness to injustice and deplorable conditions that they just simply couldn't accept.

We need to make sure we get this legislation right. We need to make sure that this legislation is as strong and robust as it can be. We need to make sure that it protects the whistle-blower, that it protects the victim and not the perpetrator, Mr. Speaker. I've heard some concerns from folks that this legislation may have missed the mark on a couple fronts and may protect the perpetrator, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure it's very clear and that this legislation is going to be effective in protecting whistle-blowers in Saskatchewan.

You know, I could go on at great length, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the need for protections of whistle-blowers. I could go on at great length with respect to the history of vindictive, small-minded, damaging actions of this Sask Party government with respect to those that have been giving voice to concerns in long-term care and in our health care system, Mr. Speaker. But there'll be ample time for that throughout the debate in this Assembly and throughout the committee process as well.

So at this point in time I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 20, *The Publicly-funded Health Entity Public Interest Disclosure*

Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 28 — *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*

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

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*. *The Active Families Benefit Act* helps Saskatchewan families by offsetting registration costs for their children's participation in sports, culture, and recreational activities, therefore reducing financial barriers to participation. This Act will include children 18 years of age and under, which will be prescribed in regulation, to claim up to \$150 eligible expense for each child per taxation year.

The age range of the program is extended to encourage parents to enrol their children at a younger age, introducing them to positive activities when they could provide the greatest long-term benefits. It also helps encourage teenagers to stay involved in sports, culture, and recreation at a critical age in which participation in these activities tends to drop off considerably.

Mr. Speaker, the active family benefit in Saskatchewan will also provide families of children with disabilities an additional \$50, for a benefit of \$200 per child. This recognizes the expense of sports, culture, and recreation activities for children with disabilities, so often more expensive due to special transportation needs, specialized equipment, and requirements for personal care support.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that we have been working closely with colleagues in the treasury board branch and taxation and intergovernmental affairs branch of the Ministry of Finance to ensure the federal and provincial income tax Acts are all aligned. This legislation will come into force upon proclamation, allowing regulations to be retroactive to January 1st, 2021, helping more Saskatchewan families this year.

To conclude, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 28 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on debate on Bill 28, *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*. You know, I was doing some thinking about this and I was kind of giving the Health minister a little bit of heckling where I should, you know, be careful how I heckle. But I had to because I kept saying, you see the Sask Party government's good at doing: I'll give it to you with this hand; I'll take it away with this hand; and I'm going to give it back to you with this hand.

And I've watched that cycle happen. I've seen that in education where they promised something. They took it back, then they gave it back. Now I see something like that again and I do believe . . . What is it, 2011? Maybe the minister or one of the members opposite can remember . . . 2011 was it, 2012, you came out with a benefit like this as well? And then in 2016, I look at this and I believe you removed it in 2016, '17, something about that. And maybe some of you can help me with this and maybe my colleagues can do a little bit of checking into it and see. And now we want to announce again, guess what? We want to give it back to you.

Well I have a story for you, just a little story. I was out walking and someone pickpocketed me. And you know, I didn't notice they pickpocketed me. But then when I got home I noticed, hey my money's gone. But it was awhile before and I thought, well that money's gone. Lo and behold, it must have been a guilty pickpocket because he came back to me. He said, look guy, I needed to take, to borrow some of this. I'll give you a little bit of it back but I have to keep some of the other. I spent it.

It's the same thing. It's kind of the same thing what I've watched going on here. This is the money that went into families to help them. And here you go; you go back; you give it back again. And then you want to pat yourselves on the back, and that's fine. Go ahead. Again I'm going to say it: you give it with one hand; you take it away with the other hand; then you give it back. And you want people to be happy and excited, actually just like that pickpocket. He wanted me to say thank you. I didn't.

But anyway, having said that, I'm hoping at the end of the day the families will utilize any supports they can get. Families are going through tough times in this province. We know that. Affordability — many cannot afford to put their kids in certain sports and the cost of it is high. So you know what? Any time you're going to give families a benefit, I think it's important, whether it's our grandchildren, you know, our kids. It's important to try to support them in the positive role models. We need that.

So you know, sometimes governments like to say, well you know, you never give any, you never say anything positive. There's some positive stuff in there. It's going to help families to make sure their kids are enrolled, and if it benefits them and we have some kids who can take part in some healthy activity, I think really great for them. And if it's a policy that comes from government, well you know what? But just remember, you gave it; you take it away; and you gave it again. So I'm not too excited about that part of it but maybe you'll make a new announcement next week and it'll be something even greater that will help families who can't afford to pay rent, power, phone, internet, and all that. Maybe you'll do something there to help them as well.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I don't have a lot to say on this bill and I'm actually . . . Well okay. Okay, I do have some more I want to add to it. The member here is hoping that, you know, you guys will come up with a new program, a new bill, legislation, that will help people again, with the cost of affordability, because they are suffering — so many families suffering. He sees it all the time, constituents coming to see him. We see it all the time. We hear it. Our seniors are struggling. If you guys could find it in your heart to try to find some money to help them, it would be much appreciated.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't have much more to say on this bill, and I'm prepared to adjourn on Bill 28, *The Active Families Benefit Act, 2021*. I adjourn debate. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 4

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 4 — The Construction Codes Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to give initial comments on Bill No. 19, *The Human Resources Profession Act*. I understand that this is new legislation, the goal of which is to regulate the profession of human resources across the province. I myself have had the pleasure of representing staff and being in close contact with human resources opposite and I can certainly appreciate the need for professional and regulated human resources personnel . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize. I jumped to the wrong bill. So I'm going to return here to Bill 4, *The Construction Codes Act* and provide initial comments on that bill, *The Construction Codes Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that this bill is being introduced to standardize some accessibility standards with respect to the construction industry. I myself have had the pleasure of serving as the official opposition critic for disability issues, and I brought together key members and organizations from that community. Just last month I held a town hall. We had over 60 groups in attendance. And this was really on the heels of the government's announcement that they were going to solicit feedback for new accessibility legislation.

There was certainly spirited discussion and debate at that town hall. Some of the concerns really revolved around the accessibility of physical space, both public and private space. And one of the things that we spoke about is how making spaces more accessible to folks not just benefits the accessibility community. This is really an opportunity for the business community, private enterprise, public services in terms of creating new customer bases, customer loyalty. And of course we all share a common interest in making sure that the barriers that exist in our physical world for folks living with disability are addressed.

Now I did also hear some concerns around the government process. I would note that there was a 2015 report which undertook to look at accessibility issues across Saskatchewan. And of course that was under the guiding commitment from this

Sask Party government to make Saskatchewan the best place to live for persons living with disability.

Now we do find ourselves rather late to the game in terms of bringing about legislation on accessibility. I am heartened to see that the government is undergoing these consultations, although I wonder why it hasn't happened sooner. And I hope it happens with the urgency that is really needed in this area because we are quite far behind as a province.

The goal of ensuring that *The Construction Codes Act* articulates some key accessibility standards that will speak to the challenges of this community of course are front of mind for this opposition as we see this bill develop. We want to ensure of course that key stakeholders are being consulted, that that consultation is transparent and meaningful, and that we see any of those key changes being implemented in such a way that really speak to the challenges of the disability community.

So I know that many of my colleagues have spoken to other aspects of this bill, but I did want to just make those comments as critic for accessibility issues. There are some concerns that, you know, that were focused on outdoor spaces. But we, this opposition really wants to ensure that all facets of life are available and accessible to folks living with disability. And again I'll reiterate that that is not just for the benefit of folks with disability, but it offers all kinds of benefits to service providers, be they public or private, throughout the province.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I do apologize for speaking to a different bill earlier, and I appreciate your patience with me. As I said, or as I believe the member opposite called me today, a rookie MLA. But I hope that these comments are well taken, and it is my pleasure to adjourn debate on Bill No. 4, *The Construction Codes Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 12

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. L. Ross that **Bill No. 12 — The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Amendment Act, 2020** be now read a second time.]

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

[14:45]

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to offer my initial comments on behalf of the official opposition. Wanuskewin Heritage Park, you know, I have a lot of memories there. I remember when it was first created and how my people, you know, talked about the park and the buffalo. And when my mother was alive, we took her out there and she talked about when she was a little girl and how her family . . . the stories that my great-grandfather shared with her. And she talked about, as

we toured Wanuskewin, she talked, had stories about that park and what the buffalo and the bison mean to us here in Saskatchewan.

And I was so honoured to have my mother at that time, and she was probably in her late 70s and she was able to walk and share the stories while we were walking around. And when we came across big boulders, rocks . . . and for me, I'm named after the rock, assiniobekwé. That's my name. That's my Indian name I was given when I was a month old. And she told me, my girl, go and put tobacco down; go and give thanks. And that's what I did. I was able to do that with my mother. You know, she's since been passed but that's a story that I can keep today.

And I remember when that was opened, my brother was a hoop dancer and he would go and dance for the people that came to that area. I also attended weddings there. I attended a wedding for one of my brothers. And I also have had an opportunity just walking around there and how peaceful that area is. And it's right next to one of the First Nations that I was connected to, and that's Yellow Quill First Nation. It's in that area.

So to me, Wanuskewin brings great peace to me. And to have more inclusivity in that area, and bringing our culture together and bringing diversity at that table, is wonderful. You know, to have ceremonialists sit on that board, that's wonderful. You know, I have a brother who's a ceremonialist that is part of that Wanuskewin. So we have Cree, we have Dene elders, we have Saulteaux elders that are part of that group. And when we talk about engagement, that, for me, when I heard that I thought, wow. That is great. You know, that is a good opportunity.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues probably would have more to say about this, and for me it is a pleasure to be able to give my thoughts and share a little bit of what Wanuskewin Heritage Park means to me. So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 12, *The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Amendment Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 13

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. L. Ross that **Bill No. 13 — The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, I am happy to offer initial comments on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 13, *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020*.

The Doukhobor people have made their home in Saskatchewan for over 120 years. In 1899, 7,500 Doukhobors came to Canada

from Russia with the hope of practising their religion freely. As a religious minority, they had been persecuted in Russia. Upon their arrival in Canada, they were granted land by the government in what is now Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

The Doukhobor people are pacifists who reject materialism, and I'm sure we could all benefit from taking a page out of their book on these fronts, Mr. Speaker. My colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre noted as well yesterday that the Doukhobors also value communal living.

Saskatchewan is home to several national heritage sites that highlight Doukhobor heritage, including the Doukhobor National Heritage Village in Verigin and the Doukhobor Dugout House near Blaine Lake, which is not so far from where I grew up in Waldheim, Mr. Speaker.

I want to express the importance of continuing to value our Doukhobor communities in Saskatchewan. And I'm happy to see that the funds from the C.C.U.B. [Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood] Trust will be disbursed in full. And so, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 13, *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Amendment and Repeal Act, 2020*. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 14

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 14 — The Protection From Human Trafficking Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 14, *The Protection From Human Trafficking Act*. Certainly the intent expressed by the minister is an important aim, and that's to reduce human trafficking and to make sure that we're addressing the challenges and the damage caused by human trafficking for those who fall victim, Mr. Speaker. And that's an aim that certainly we support, Mr. Speaker.

There's questions though around how exactly this legislation will be effective in doing that, Mr. Speaker, because ultimately reducing . . . and effectively supporting those victims that are involved in human trafficking is what's critical. There's important questions around who's been consulted with respect to this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, whether or not that's involved people that are involved in sex work specifically, Mr. Speaker, which is critical when looking at making changes that we need to make sure are effective, Mr. Speaker.

The government just has had an inconsistent record, a poor record on acting to reduce gangs within Saskatchewan. And I believe it was identified, quite rightly, by the member from

Regina Elphinstone-Centre that this is a government that walked away from key partnerships and funding to reduce gangs in Saskatchewan.

I think of the cut to funding here in Regina back in 2011 that eliminated the Regina Anti-Gang Services run through the North Central Family Centre, Mr. Speaker, as a cut that was just so backwards. And that caused so much hurt for people, for a community, that victimized many, Mr. Speaker, and ended some very effective partnerships that were working towards some very important aims.

I know our critic has a lot of thoughtful questions. I know our aim is to work to make sure a piece of legislation like this is effective in its aims and, wherever possible, to improve legislation, Mr. Speaker. And that'll be our intent throughout this process. At this point in time, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 14, *The Protection From Human Trafficking Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 15

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 15 — The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to offer my comments on behalf of the opposition. You know, I was thinking and reflecting. When I moved here when I was a young mom with my baby's father, we moved to an apartment, actually in a house that had multiple units in it. And we were so proud to have our own house with our little baby. Well, that apartment had this big hole in the door. But you know what? My partner and I were so happy. You know, we had this home and we were in the 'hood. We lived in the 'hood because that's all we could afford, and we were proud of that home, you know.

But one of the things that kept me up at night was, who's peeking through that hole? You know, we had other people in that building that were street people. And when my partner was out of town working, I used to stay up and be worried because it was just me and my little baby.

And then I was interviewed by CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] about the conditions of the homes that were being rented out. And I was just a teenager. I was just a young girl — didn't have a clue what was going on. But somehow CBC thought it was a great story. And here I am talking about this big hole in the door and how vulnerable I felt as a young person.

I also have had the opportunity to work in the health sector for a long time and volunteer in the community. I volunteered at the sexual assault centre because I believe, and I've been taught, you

give away what you've been freely given. So I thought, as a survivor of sexual assault, I thought, I am going to go and help people. So I did that for a number of years. And many women that I helped at the sexual assault centre were terrified to be in their homes because they were victimized and assaulted in their homes. And there was nothing we could do, other than be there for them.

I've have constituents that have had to flee from domestic violence. One young lady who had left her partner that was physically abusing her, mentally abusing her, locking her out of her home after she worked a long day — that young lady was so terrified and traumatized that at the end of the day she would put her couch and block the doorway to her home. Her babies were traumatized. She was traumatized. And she had no way of breaking out of that lease. And that, Mr. Speaker, is heartbreaking to have vulnerable people to be in a situation that cannot flee.

So when I think about *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act*, I think, who's been consulted? I remember as a young person, we used to have in Saskatoon, and it was kind of like the Rentalsman that we would go to when we were having problems. That was volunteer-run Equal Justice for All is what it was called, when tenants had issues around being evicted around issues about landlords.

So when I think about this I think there needs to be that meaningful engagement. As a community developer in the health sector for over 20 years, my job was really about engaging in a meaningful way those that are being affected by the policies that we make. So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 15, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2020*. miigwech.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 17

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 17 — The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2020** be now read a second time.]

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

[15:00]

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to enter adjourned debate on Bill 17, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*. You know, this is my first time entering adjourned debates. I just want to make a comment before I look at this specific piece of legislation, just a little bit on some current thoughts I have on the role of our opposition, or really any opposition in a democracy that works like ours in the parliamentary system.

Earlier today during question period, Mr. Speaker, I heard a member opposite — in fact it's the member who presented this

piece of legislation — disparage a colleague for looking at the fine details of a different bill. And you know, I would maybe suggest that we reconsider comments like that, as I think that it is our job to pay attention to the fine details, to look at, you know, the little things in there that will have an impact on the people of Saskatchewan.

We are fully aware that there are 13 of us on this side. We're fully aware that we are small in numbers. But we're mighty in voice, and I think that's what Saskatchewan people expect from a strong opposition. They expect us to look at the fine details, to ask important questions, to ask who will benefit and who will be hurt by everything that this government puts forward. That is our job. That's what we're here to do, and we're going to do that job as best we can. So I commend my colleague for looking at a very small detail in a big piece of legislation. And that's what we're here to do, and we're going to keep doing that.

Now with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments in this debate on *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*. You know, I think that by and large, as we look at this very, very hefty piece of legislation, there's a lot in here. And again, by and large, I think it's all very positive. You know, I am interested in hearing the comments from my colleagues on this. It's why we debate. We can have many eyes looking at this and sharing our thoughts as we think about our constituents who elected us here and, you know, who we serve as best we can as opposition members of this Chamber.

I do want to take just a minute and maybe review some of the statements made by the minister, you know, who did speak to this bill. And I think there's some really positive things in here. And I want to maybe just take a minute to look at some of those and share my thoughts on the minister's comments on the contents of this bill.

First of all, the change to this Act will allow vehicle owners to recover impoundment costs. So if they loan a vehicle — maybe it's an employer, friend. You loan your vehicle to somebody. They do something naughty and your vehicle gets impounded, that they can recover the cost of that. You know, certainly on the surface I think this is a very positive amendment to make to the Act, and one that I think will make sure that people can, you know, recoup costs when something happens to their vehicle.

Looking further into the legislation here, you know, there's a lot of changes that I think are positive as times change. Some of that has to do also with the radar, the photo radar, you know. And I think we've all been through that situation where you're driving on the road — I'm not somebody who speeds, Mr. Speaker — but you go by a camera and you see it flash and you think, I hope that's not for me. And so it's nice to see that we're updating. These things have been around for quite a while now, but it's nice to see that our legislation is keeping up to date as changes continue to evolve with how we administer traffic offences in the province.

Some of the language in here, we see that this bill will . . . It modernizes and harmonizes the processes and procedures applicable to garage keepers who store and dispose of impounded motor vehicles. Obviously again a positive change. Some of the questions that I have would be things like, who initiated this change? Was there proper consultation with garage owners, those

who make a living? Was this something that they requested? Have they been consulted in a meaningful way? And do these changes represent their concerns?

You know, looking deeper into the Act here . . . Oh, I already talked about the red light camera tickets. I thought that was important. There's a few other things here. I see that there's some thoughtfulness put towards updating the Act in terms of digital privacy. And you know, and I really hope that this Act will stand the test of time as our digital landscape continues to change. You know, I'm very hopeful that this legislation will be able to stand and that there's been some forward thinking put into this to not just represent what the digital world is like right now, but what it will be like for years to come into the future.

You know, maybe my last comment here is also something I'm curious just to see, what exactly are . . . The legislation includes changes to a standardized bill of sale. I think it's really positive. I know that there's hopefully some thought put in here about other, you know, things that can be done to reduce vehicle crime. I know in my neighbourhood in Saskatoon Eastview we have had vehicle theft. We've had lots of break-ins and things like that. And I think that there's some really positive thinking in here as far as proactive steps that can be taken to reduce those crimes, and for our law enforcement to be able to address them more effectively. So those are positive things.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to hearing from the rest of my colleagues as well as our critic on this bill so we can, you know, do our job as an opposition and pay very close attention to the fine details to ensure that everything this government puts forward supports our communities and the people of Saskatchewan. With that, I am prepared to move to adjourn debate on Bill 17, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 18

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 18 — *The All Terrain Vehicles Amendment Act, 2020*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to offering initial comments on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 18, *The All Terrain Vehicles Amendment Act, 2020*.

Riding all-terrain vehicles is a pastime many Saskatchewan people enjoy very much. My twin brother, Jeff, is one of these people. While I've never myself driven an ATV [all-terrain vehicle], I have been a passenger on my brother Jeff's ATV while in Saskatchewan lake country from time to time. It was, in fact, as a passenger on an ATV that I discovered one of my favourite

lakes in Saskatchewan, Ted's Lake. Ted's Lake is a small, unmarked trout lake some ways past Delaronde. I won't be any more specific than that, Mr. Speaker, as part of the reason I love this lake is that it is isolated and unknown to most. I'd certainly be loath to tip the members opposite off to the whereabouts of this hidden gem . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay.

Mr. Speaker, ATVs can open up parts of this beautiful province to people that would otherwise be inaccessible by regular vehicles. It is of course very important that ATVs are operated responsibly, and having a regulatory framework in place is imperative for everyone's safety.

Overall these amendments seem quite straightforward to me, Mr. Speaker, but our SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] critic will have more detailed questions to ask the minister when this bill is reviewed in committee. And so, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 18, *The All Terrain Vehicles Amendment Act, 2020*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 19

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 19 — The Human Resources Profession Act** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to offer initial comments on Bill 19, *The Human Resources Profession Act*. I was eager to address this bill earlier. And I was saying that I had the pleasure of, when I was at Legal Aid Saskatchewan, representing all staff there and sitting across the table from human resources professionals. And I was literally often on the phone with them every day, and we would deal with everything that came our way, from individual issues to systemic issues. And so I have a deep appreciation for the human resources profession and those who approach it with fairness and balance, who are aware of the guiding legislation and are very professional about it.

This is a new piece of legislation. It's a bill that will essentially regulate the profession, is my understanding. And I understand that our critic on this bill has been eagerly seeking out feedback from the affected parties on this. And she has been receiving a lot of feedback, and she will continue to be very attentive to that feedback, Mr. Speaker. I will say that the conversations are ongoing with stakeholders from this side of the House. We want to make sure that if this legislation is going to proceed, that the government gets it right. And we will continue to speak with organizations to ensure that there's no unintended, or intended and unreasonable, or intended negative consequences from this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I will put an end to my comments. I know that the

critic will have some questions for committee again if this piece of legislation is pursued by the government, and the opposition will continue to engage meaningfully with stakeholders on it. With that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 19, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 21

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 21 — The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again an honour to enter into debate on Bill 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*.

I want to just start my comments here with a bit of a story, Mr. Speaker. I understand that this new piece of legislation is replacing an old one from about the era of 2004, 2005. And I just want to start my comments there because, Mr. Speaker, that was the year that I moved to a smaller community than the one I was used to. I moved to Rosthern, Saskatchewan. What an amazing town. I want to just share a couple of stories about moving there.

You know, coming from a larger centre, and I know lots of folks in the room have grown up in towns much like Rosthern in Saskatchewan, but I did not. You know, I came from a city of over a million people to a town of about 1,500 and I fell in love with that community aspect of the small-town experience.

You know, Rosthern is a place that I called home for six years. It's a phenomenal town. If anybody hasn't been there, I highly recommend the Station tea house. It's a gem in this province. And you know, something happened. I had been there for a few weeks and I went to the post office, Mr. Speaker, and I was looking to get a mail box at the post office. When I walked in, the staff of the post office . . . I went to introduce myself, and before I could say my name they said, you're Matt Love. I'd never met these people. I said, yes I am. And I said, and I live . . . And they interrupted me. And they could name my address. You live over there. And it scared me a little bit. It freaked me out a little bit.

But I came to appreciate that close-knit aspect of the small town. And I think that, you know, even as a young man my values of community were instantly changed as I realized the value of these close-knit communities and the value of events, you know, buying a house in that community, getting married in that community, raising a family in that community. It was hard to leave.

Eventually I moved to Saskatoon where I live now, and I would

say that my experience in Saskatoon is that it operates like one of those small communities. So I value, you know, when our government wants to look at what we can do to make our communities safer and stronger and to improve our communities and our neighbourhoods. And so it's through that lens that I have been able to have a look at this bill, and you know, I understand that this bill changes language around some things like cannabis use to reflect federal and provincial legislation.

Again I think the difference in the province that I experienced in 2004 to 2021 is stark, and so obviously we've got to update pieces of legislation to reflect that. I understand that there's some changes in this bill around timing and process required for notice of safety orders. I understand it updates the powers and obligations of the director, and you know, some other changes in the language about gangs and other fines. So again, as the province changes, obviously I think it's the duty of the government to update older legislation to reflect the new realities.

[15:15]

You know, maybe a few questions that I have is, I wonder if this bill finds a balance between the safety of the neighbourhood with the rights of tenants and owners. You know, I think that that balance is sometimes a hard one to find, but it comes through consultation, through thoughtfulness, through thinking about the other, often thinking about somebody whose, maybe, life circumstance and experience is different than my own and especially different than those who share this Chamber with me. We're very lucky in most of our lives to be here.

Other questions that I have is about the disclosure of information that this bill outlines. Is that being done in a way that keeps people safe while making sure that it's on a need-to-know basis, not a want-to-know basis? You know, and also something that comes up in this bill that I have questions about, Mr. Speaker, is if this government, if the Sask Party government has done enough to address the needs of suitable housing, affordable housing, safe housing, because I think that those decisions have implications on the content of this bill.

I know that the critic will have questions for the minister and officials at committee, and so I am prepared to move that we adjourn debate on Bill 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 23

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 23 — The Emergency Planning Amendment Act, 2020** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate with respect to Bill No. 23, *The Emergency Planning Amendment Act*. This Act, of course, was brought forward by the government back in the fall, Mr. Speaker, and they suggested that it was needed to fight this pandemic, Mr. Speaker. Certainly it seems to include important measures that would demonstrate some leadership, Mr. Speaker.

But it was introduced and its intent was to respond to the battle that we're in, Mr. Speaker, in the battle right now that we're sadly currently losing on too many fronts here in this province. And then the Sask Party sat on their hands, Mr. Speaker, of course with respect to this legislation, moving it nowhere. Here we are talking in second readings still here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and they sat on their hands in effectively controlling COVID. Mr. Speaker, they sat on their hands in providing the leadership and the kind of message that's needed to the people of the province.

This bill brings forward measures that could be . . . or supporting the measures that could be enforced, Mr. Speaker. I guess I'd just say, Mr. Speaker, that the absence of leadership from the Sask Party has been noted. There's a cost to it, Mr. Speaker. But that void has been filled by Saskatchewan people, who have been willing and able to sacrifice and to step up and to provide that leadership, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm not sure what the Sask Party's afraid of on this front, Mr. Speaker. I'd suspect they're nervous with maybe the few that are involved in the anti-mask movement or something, Mr. Speaker. But I would say to them, Mr. Speaker, have some backbone, have some courage, show some leadership, and be clear about the kinds of measures right now that can protect one another.

I'd say to the Sask Party, don't be afraid of being clear to those few, Mr. Speaker, and laying out to all of us why these measures are important. Because it's about supporting lives, and the failure to provide leadership has consequences, Mr. Speaker. Public trust wanes around the importance of measures. There's questions that people have. There should be no question on these fronts. It should be a united battle that we're all involved in in this Assembly and that we are as a province, Mr. Speaker.

I think of courageous leaders, Mr. Speaker, like Dr. Shahab, our chief medical health officer, who has worked tirelessly throughout this entire period of time and who has been subjected to abuse, Mr. Speaker, and racism and attacks on him and his family. And it's disgraceful. And those sorts of attacks need to be denounced and Dr. Shahab and those working in health care need to be supported.

But it starts with the leadership from the top, Mr. Speaker. It starts with the Premier and this cabinet, Mr. Speaker. And all too often they've been unwilling to provide the kind of voice and clear leadership that we need at this challenging time.

So here we are a year into the battle with COVID-19, the battle of our lives, Mr. Speaker. It's a historic challenge, Mr. Speaker. We have a piece of legislation that was intended to be a tool to defeat COVID, an emergency planning amendment Act that doesn't seem to be treated as much of an emergency at all being discussed still in readings here on the floor of the Assembly at

this stage of the year here in April, a year on within this battle, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Saskatchewan has risen to the challenge before and Canada has with respect to big battles. I think of the Second World War, Mr. Speaker, and how people across this province and across political divides rallied, Mr. Speaker, to battle. What we didn't see at that time were measures, you know, like this, that a year into the battle that said . . . that were sort of half-measures, Mr. Speaker, or half-hearted in that effort. It was an all-in approach that allowed us as a world to have that victory, Mr. Speaker, a victory that Saskatchewan people were a critical part of.

I see this challenge as something similar — different context — but it should be the same sort of united front that we have against this common enemy, COVID-19. It should be a constructive effort whenever possible in this Assembly across political divides and across communities. All too often though we haven't seen this government step up and treat this crisis with the kind of respect it deserves. They've failed to rise to the occasion. They've failed to have the backbone and leadership and courage to be clear with Saskatchewan people and to act to contain COVID to get it under control, to save lives, and to protect our economy, Mr. Speaker.

We see the consequences of that now as we speak, as we see the report daily on the infections with variants of concern, as we see the reports of loss of life, Mr. Speaker. It's past time for all of us, and while I know the Official Opposition takes this deadly serious and our offer is sincere to the government, but it's past time for the Sask Party government to step up to the challenge that's presented to provide clear leadership in this province, to stop kowtowing, Mr. Speaker, to folks like the anti-maskers, and to be able to protect Saskatchewan people and defeat COVID.

With all that being said, Mr. Speaker, I will now adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 23, *The Emergency Planning Amendment Act*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened with interest to the member opposite's remarks in the remarks on second reading, offering to pass this bill through all stages, lamenting that the bill had not yet been passed. So what I am going to do, Mr. Speaker, is ask for leave that the House recess for a short period of time such that the Clerks are able to draft the appropriate script such that the bill can be put through all stages right now and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked leave to facilitate all stages of that bill. Is there agreement?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — There is not agreement. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would note sincere disappointment after what the NDP had just committed to. I would note that they were the ones who refused leave to pass this bill right now.

The Speaker: — It's noted.

Bill No. 24

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 24 — *The Vehicles for Hire Amendment Act, 2020*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to offer initial comments on Bill No. 24, *The Vehicles for Hire Amendment Act, 2020*.

I will note that on the previous mentioned bill, the members opposite had an opportunity back in December to ask us to pass that bill quickly, and we would have worked with them. But certainly we're not in a position to allow bills to pass without the scrutiny that this democratic process requires.

So with that, I will address my comments to Bill 24. My understanding is that this bill does provide a number of things including the ability for SGI to fine vehicle-for-hire companies that are not complying with the Act. Now certainly my generation has seen the rise of what's been dubbed the sharing economy, Mr. Speaker, but all too often we see that the sharing economy is something of a Trojan Horse for more and more precarity. And this opposition is very concerned with ensuring that when, you know, new initiatives such as ride-sharing companies come on the scene, that they're subject to the same safety requirements, employment standards as competitors that we have relied on for generations, like taxis and the like.

I know that this Act also addresses the powers of municipalities. I know that the regulation of ride-sharing companies like Uber was just something that was debated in my home constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre at the municipal level just recently. And there were many concerns brought forward by the community around ensuring that the drivers of these companies had undergone, you know, sufficient scrutiny to ensure that users were safe — concerns around relying on private contractors and further rendering some of this work quite precarious.

So with that, I will say that this opposition is certainly in favour of ensuring that this area is something that we're approaching thoughtfully, with an eye to some of maybe the unforeseen consequences of the sharing economy and the consequences that might have for existing industries. And I believe ultimately that's what this bill has tasked itself with doing.

I know that the critic on this bill will have some questions. I know that they're engaging in consultation and they will continue to do so to ensure that this piece of legislation, which I understand is a new bill, strikes the right balance. We're interested to know

whether this was based on existing legislation in other jurisdictions and whether we can build on and improve that, or if there are aspects of this bill that perhaps may have unintended consequences. So with that, I will close my statements on Bill 24, *The Vehicles for Hire Amendment Act*, and I will adjourn debate on this bill, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 26

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 26 — The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to offer initial comments on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 26, *The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021*. I am cautiously optimistic to see the government taking steps towards independent police oversight in Saskatchewan. I know that civilian oversight has been something that many people in our province have been calling for, and this is an issue I certainly have heard from my constituents on.

My colleague the member from Regina Lakeview noted yesterday that we are one of the last jurisdictions to have civilian oversight, so I am glad to see this government finally getting on board.

There are a number of questions I have about the amendments to this Act. One question I have pertains to the makeup of the serious incident response team. While the civilian executive director is not permitted to be a former police officer, I note that investigators and other staff are permitted to be former police officers. We will certainly need to discuss this aspect further with stakeholders. Civilian oversight of police must be fully transparent and above reproach.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I note as well that the amendments to this Act create a provision for a provincial police service. I would be interested to know what this means. Is it this government's intent to establish a provincial police force?

I see that Indigenous representation is required on the serious incident response team. This is very important, and I hope this will not merely serve as a box to be ticked off. Mr. Speaker, as a subordinate body to the Public Complaints Commission, it is crucial that the PCC [Public Complaints Commission] is fully resourced in order to properly undertake the work the serious incident response team is designed to do.

This piece of legislation will have extremely important

implications for the people of Saskatchewan. Our critic will certainly have to consult further with stakeholders on these amendments. It will of course be imperative for these concerns and others to be canvassed more thoroughly at committee.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 26, *The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 27

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 27 — The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2021** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to offer again my initial comments on behalf of the official opposition regarding *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act of 2021*.

Bringing fine payment into the 21st century is a welcome development and it sure is modernizing the processes that don't . . . unfairly impact those already struggling. So I'm thinking about those that are unable to have access to computers. You know, many in Saskatoon Centre, in my community, in my constituency, many people don't have access to the internet and computers. So I'm hoping that the minister here that's presenting this consults with those that are the grassroots people, you know, that would not normally access computers.

So the fine-option program: I'm glad to see that there's been an added ease of enrolling, considering the Sask Party tried to axe this program a few years ago. So this bill is providing alternatives to fines, which help community organizations and those that cannot afford a fine. So I'm pleased. I see the Saskatoon Friendship Centre utilizes a lot of fine-option workers. So I'm pleased to see that this is something that would help individuals that are unable to pay these traffic tickets.

And also just the backlogged courts and pandemic-related challenges have remand facilities overflowing while unconvicted inmates wait for justice. You know, in my constituency, and I've heard over the years in my work in the health sector how many people that have had to go to jail because (a) they had these traffic tickets that they were unable to pay for and had hoped that there were alternatives for them rather than going to jail. So for me, again I would ask that . . . And I also believe the critic for this, my colleague, would also have further questions to ask.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 27, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act of 2021*. miigwech.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:35.]

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