



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

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

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Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
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Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
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Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

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Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

First All-Female Municipal Council in Saskatchewan

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many things are changing in the history of this province, and I want to share with you a historical change that happened on the November 9th municipal elections in my constituency. An all-female council was elected for the village of Pierceland. All five members, including the mayor, were acclaimed — the first all-female council in the province's history.

It was a surprise to the now-mayor Coral Dale. Dale had a 42-year career in municipal work across the province. In 2007 she chose to move back to her hometown of Pierceland and has mentored current village and RM [rural municipality] administrators. Jane Eistetter is a former Pierceland administrator. Candace Frolick has a strong background in investments. Trudy Buchner is heavily involved in community volunteer work. And Shannon Wilton has served on the council before.

The ladies all agreed, each brings something different to the table. They are a very optimistic group and believe that by working together, they will serve their community well.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's refreshing to have some girl power at the table. I now ask all members to join me in congratulating these women on their election to Pierceland Village Council and wish them much success in their service to their community and this province. Thank you.

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

Women and Health Care Leaders during COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to honour, recognize, and thank all of the health care workers and health leaders in Saskatchewan for the work they've done and continue to do to protect Saskatchewan people from COVID-19.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Saskatchewan women have showcased an exceptional capacity to lead and support their communities in times of crisis. Now I know that it's not just women; it's men, it's gender-diverse people as well. But we must recognize how during the pandemic, Saskatchewan women have led the way on the front lines and in positions of leadership.

The work of the organizations that support those front-line workers must also be recognized. The leadership of Lori Johb, Tracy Zambory, Barb Cape, Judy Henley, Karen Wasylenko, and newly elected SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General

Employees' Union] president Tracy Sauer is greatly appreciated.

And it's not just paid work where women are being disproportionately put at risk of COVID-19 and tasked with increased workload, it's also in unpaid work. Issues of paid and unpaid work and care, and the profound economic disparities that characterize our economy, lie at the heart of the pandemic experience for women and must be recognized.

To Dr. Shahab, Saskatchewan's chief medical health officer, your job has not been an easy one, and this official opposition recognizes and genuinely thanks you. And to all of the health care workers, we thank you. And to each woman in this province who's been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic: we see you; we hear you; we thank you, and we will continue to fight for you.

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

Thanks to Departing Legislative Assembly Service Employees

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to say a few words about a retiring Legislative Assembly employee who has served this building and this province for 30 years.

Cheryl Behrns is up there in the press gallery operating our microphones right now. Since 2016 she has been the Hansard production supervisor. Everyone knows that Hansard works late to publish our debate after adjournment. But perhaps what isn't commonly known, Mr. Speaker, is that the Hansard production folks have the longest day — they're always the last to leave the building.

Cheryl's co-workers think of her as Ms. Hansard and Eagle Eye Behrns. She provides wisdom, heart, fabulous baking, and, they say, the perfect amount of insubordination. She loves the energy of session and the work of the Assembly. Her cheerful motto to the editors is, "expect the unexpected." And as you know, Mr. Speaker, a few members didn't disappoint this session. I'd like to thank Cheryl for her dedication and wish her well in retirement.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize the hard work of another employee, Stacey Ursulescu. She has been involved in committee work, as members know, and she will be leaving us shortly.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all of the building staff who have tirelessly worked throughout this session to make sure that things are running smoothly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

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

State of Emergency in Keeseekoose First Nation

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

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

Earlier this week Chief Calvin Straightnose of Keeseekoowung First Nation declared a state of emergency in his community. I reached out to him, and I rise today to echo his calls for action and resources needed to protect people.

The overdose crisis in Keeseekoowung has taken far too many lives. The Yorkton Tribal Council says that at least five kids from the community are orphaned by drug overdose every year. One of the elders in the community told CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] News, “Pretty soon we’re not going to have room to bury anybody. The graveyards are getting full. Where to next?” Mr. Speaker.

This is systemic racism in action. If this happened in a suburban centre, every level of government would move heaven and earth to bring resources to that community. And this, Mr. Speaker, I ask on behalf of Keeseekoowung First Nation, on behalf of First Nations people in this community that suffer from alcohol and drug addiction, suicide. I ask that this government do something to address the systemic racism that is perpetuated and is not being addressed or taken seriously by this government.

So I ask all to recognize and do something to address racism in Saskatchewan against Indigenous communities.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Melfort Woman Named Queen’s Counsel

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I have a privilege of speaking again about my neighbours. Last year I did a statement about Dr. Yemi when he was given the national rural surgeon of excellence award for Canada. Today I’ll be talking about the girl he married, Foluke Laosebikan, a true Nigerian princess. A girl who left her home and security on an adventure that led them to, of all places, Melfort, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Foluke was elected as the president of Saskatchewan’s Law Society, and now recently honoured again with the designation of Queen’s Counsel. Mr. Speaker, these people are more than our neighbours; they’re more than our friends; they are truly family. I thank God for Foluke Laosebikan, a lawyer who focuses on kindness and reconciliation. I’ve heard some jokingly call her a kumbaya lawyer. Well today they can call her Q.C. [Queen’s Counsel].

My neighbours have taught me many things: how to care for others, how to sacrifice for others, and how to pray. These neighbours immigrated to Canada and made their home among us. Their two boys, Peter and Daniel, they have a special spot in our hearts. And we’re looking forward to them following in their parents’ footsteps.

There’s a proverb that says, “let another man praise you, not your own mouth; a stranger, not your own lips.” So, with that in mind, I would like to ask the Assembly to join with me and honour my friend and, in my mind, a princess in two nations, Foluke Laosebikan, Q.C. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Saskatchewan’s Forestry Sector

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share exciting updates on Saskatchewan’s forestry sector. Mr. Speaker, for many, forest products are currently at record highs. In 2020 our forest product sales were over \$1.1 billion, up by almost 30 per cent, and forestry exports were valued at over \$700 million. The sector is expected to produce record levels of product in 2022, with potential to generate over \$2 billion in annual sales and support nearly 12,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, forestry is northern Saskatchewan’s largest sector, with seven major forest product facilities, over 200 businesses that supply primary and secondary forest products, and hundreds of supply chain businesses that support the sector. Mr. Speaker, Indigenous peoples make up over 27 per cent of the total forestry sector workforce, the highest of any province. Saskatchewan is proud to be home to the largest 100 per cent First Nations-owned forestry products mill in Canada, in addition to dozens of Indigenous-owned, forestry-related businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the forestry sector plays an important role in our economy and will lead Saskatchewan’s post-pandemic recovery. The sector will continue to support Saskatchewan communities and increase employment as we are on track to meet our growth plan to double the growth in our forestry sector by 2030. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Positive News for Saskatchewan

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is truly an honour to stand up and be delivering the final member’s statement of this session, going to bring some positive news today before the Leader of the Opposition jumps up and tries to drag us all down with more fear and gloom.

In April we had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and led the nation in month-to-month job growth. We’ve had a 10.6 per cent increase from this past February in manufacturing sales, and we’ve also seen a 29.6 per cent increase from March of last year and we’re well above the national average.

Yesterday we passed a budget that shows record investment into our province that will continue to lead us to a strong economic recovery from this pandemic. Mr. Speaker, our government is looking forward to working with Cargill, Viterra, Richardson, and North American Helium Inc., to name just a few, as they continue to invest into our economy and into our communities.

What I’m most proud of, Mr. Speaker, is Saskatchewan people, the Saskatchewan citizens over the last year and the way they’re rolling up their sleeves to stick it to COVID. And, Mr. Speaker, I’ve been a part of many teams in my life. I’ve been very fortunate, but never so fortunate as to be on this team, this government caucus. I’ve never seen a stronger team. We are here to protect, build, and grow Saskatchewan.

Unfortunately the members opposite came in with a childish political agenda to campaign 365, and the disrespect they’ve shown in this institution is quite honestly a bit unsettling. Mr.

Speaker, they can focus on social media and grandstanding. We're here to focus on Saskatchewan people and have a great summer coming out of COVID and to see our economy booming again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just before I get into my question, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for your work this session. It's been a bit of a pressure cooker in here and a difficult job. You've handled yourself well, and I apologize for any missteps on our side that have made that work more difficult.

"To admit easily of mistakes, to fix them and resolve that they not be repeated." Members opposite might recognize those words. Those words come from the swearing-in of Brad Wall as premier back in 2007. That spirit unfortunately has not been on display from this iteration of the Sask Party.

This Premier spent the last six weeks trying so hard to demonstrate that he wasn't listening, that he hadn't heard the people of Saskatchewan and all the ways they've struggled with COVID-19. He had the opportunity to demonstrate that he was listening, that he listened to doctors, to front-line workers, to all those whose lives have been affected by COVID-19. He had the opportunity to show us that he was willing to take responsibility for his failures and make the changes we need, to not repeat those same mistakes and make smarter choices in the future. He chose not to take that opportunity.

What will the Premier do now to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan see some of that promised Sask Party humility, that they get real answers and better plans for the future?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

[10:15]

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. Thank you very much and I thank the member opposite for the question. I truly do. And I'm just disappointed. I'm disappointed that the Leader of the Opposition continues to get up and minimize the significant measures that have been in place in this province for a number of months, minimize the effort that Saskatchewan people have brought to the table to ensure that, yes, we are controlling COVID in our communities across this province, Mr. Speaker.

But these measures — lockdowns as the opposition party would like — but these measures, significant as they are, are working in Saskatchewan. Our numbers continue to decrease. The ultimate measure that is going to help us control COVID in this province and around the world is ultimately everyone going out and getting vaccinated.

We see this in action. And I was pleased to see south of the border yesterday that the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] had come out and said, if you have gone out and got not one but both of your vaccinations, you can now take off your

mask. We saw the President support this message. We saw the First Lady touring a vaccination clinic without her mask on.

This is what vaccinations can achieve. The measures that are in place are to buy us time until such time enough people get vaccinated, ultimately find our way through this pandemic. We have a road map for how we're going to do that now in this province, the first in Canada. First in Canada at vaccination effort, Mr. Speaker, and I would say the efforts of Saskatchewan people also is first in Canada.

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

Mr. Meili: — Admit easily of mistakes and endeavour to fix them. Not a single time has this Premier acknowledged a single mistake that he has made. On March the 9th this Premier loosened restrictions in the province. This was the same day that his government announced 35 cases of variants of concern in the province, the beginning of a third wave that has taken over 100 more Saskatchewan lives.

We've asked repeatedly for the government to release the advice they received at the time that led to this deadly error. They will not. Will the government finally trust the people of Saskatchewan, show their work, and release the information that guided the decisions throughout this pandemic? Or will this Premier continue to do everything he can to bury his mistakes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Again, Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing here today is the Leader of the Opposition that, by his own admission, is running his never-ending campaign. He's campaigning in this House day after day after day. Mr. Speaker, this is a . . . The governing party is doing just that on behalf of the people that elected our members to this House.

We have made very serious decisions over the course of the past year since the last provincial election when we were last campaigning, aside from the vaccination campaign that we are conducting here in the province right now, a vaccination campaign that is now next week going to offer vaccines to everyone in Saskatchewan 12 and over.

That is going to provide us . . . We're not quite where President Biden and his wife, as they indicated yesterday, where they are in the USA [United States of America], where if you have two shots of your vaccine and have waited two weeks, you can actually take your masks off. We're not quite there yet. But we have over half a million people vaccinated in this province. We're well on our way. We're leading the nation in our effort to actually arrive there. That is the ultimate way that we are going to find our way through this pandemic.

Our path out of the pandemic does go through one of our vaccination clinics here in the province. We have a road map for how we're going to get there. And I want to thank Saskatchewan people again for everything they've done and everything I know they're going to do for just a little while longer till we get this place back to normal.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To admit freely of mistakes and to fix them. But still not a single admission from this Premier that he could possibly have been anything less than absolutely perfect. In February the Premier said that the existing public health orders were as effective with variants as they were with the original COVID-19 virus.

Of course that's not the case, and Saskatchewan spent months with the worst case rates and worst hospitalizations in the country, a devastating third wave that left over 100 more people dead, that overwhelmed our ICUs [intensive care unit].

Mr. Speaker, at the critical juncture when variants appeared in Saskatchewan, the Premier once again played politics. He once again downplayed the severity of the risk. Why, at every chance that he had, did this Premier choose to downplay the risks of COVID-19? When will this . . . People want answers; they deserve answers. Maybe we'll get an answer to this question for once. Will he finally follow the example set by other jurisdictions and commit to an independent, objective inquiry into his mismanagement of COVID-19?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Again, Mr. Speaker, we see the never-ending campaign continue here from a very unserious Leader of the Opposition in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, here is the answer Saskatchewan people have been given, and here's the answers they can continue to expect into the future.

One, we have implemented significant measures across this province over the course . . . on and off over the course of the last year but most certainly over the last number of months, measures that Saskatchewan people have adhered to, measures that the Leader of the Opposition has consistently got up in this House and has admonished the Saskatchewan people for the effort that they have made in controlling COVID in our communities.

Two, this government has put forward the strongest vaccination effort that this province has ever seen and the strongest vaccination effort that the country of Canada is seeing right now.

Mr. Speaker, the third thing Saskatchewan people should know what their government is doing down here is now we have charted our course out of this pandemic. We have only been able to do that because of the effort each and every individual has made in this province, the effort collectively that that brings to the province.

We need Saskatchewan people — and I implore on them — to just hold a little while longer with the public health measures that we have in order. And ensure that when it is your turn, go out; roll up your sleeve; let's get vaccinated. Not your first shot, but go back and get your second shot when it's available. Everybody over 12 has an opportunity next week, Mr. Speaker. That's how we'll stick it to COVID. That's how we'll find our way back to normal. And that's how later this summer, we're going to fill that stadium down in this town here.

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

Mr. Meili: — To admit freely of mistakes and to fix them. But not a single one. Everything this Premier has done has been perfect in his mind, not a moment of humility. This arrogance, this incredible arrogance is so jarring with the reality. Over 500 people have died from COVID-19 in this province. The members want to heckle; the members want to jeer. But over 500 people have lost their lives, Mr. Speaker.

Thousands more will have to deal with the lasting health effects. Thousands more are out of work. And thousands are waiting for surgery on a backlog that this government has zero plan to deal with, has put zero resources in to deal with. No plan from this government to deal with a health care system that's been overwhelmed.

The people of Saskatchewan want and deserve answers, Mr. Speaker. They want to know what really happened in this past year. Why did the Premier make the terrible, deadly mistakes that he made? Why did he make the choices he did? What, as we hear over and over again a refusal to answer this question, what does the Premier have to hide? Why won't he commit to an independent, objective inquiry and get us some honest answers for once?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, why does the Leader of the Opposition minimize the efforts of Saskatchewan people? That is the question that they want to know the answer to. Why does he minimize the efforts that they have put forward in such great fashion for so long? Mr. Speaker, why does the Leader of the Opposition minimize the efforts of the people that we collectively represent?

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had brought up the fact that we had a number of fatalities here in this province. I understand that each and every one of those fatalities is much more than a number — it is a person. It is a family member in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we most certainly grieve with each and every one of those families.

The way for that to not happen into the future is to get vaccinated, each and every one of us to make a decision to get vaccinated. Now I understand, Mr. Speaker, there will be some that may not get vaccinated, but they should know this: they are putting themselves at great risk by not getting vaccinated because we very shortly are going to achieve the metrics that we had put forward in our reopen plan.

We're going to reopen this province, Mr. Speaker. We're going to reopen our communities. We're going to reopen youth athletics, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to get things back to normal in community after community in this great province. And the only reason we're able to do that is because of what the people of Saskatchewan have and continue to do.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Ms. A. Young: — Wow, wow, wow, wow, wow. We are not getting anywhere today, Mr. Speaker. So let's take us back to

2004. It was a great year. I had just gotten my braces off. And one day that March, you might remember, Mr. Speaker, 20-some members of the Sask Party got up and presented the same petition: do not tax our food.

Former Premier Brad Wall: do not tax our food. The CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] minister: do not tax our food. The Minister of Government Relations said he was getting thousands of petitions every day, all with the same message: do not tax our food. And the Minister of Finance, whose portfolio does include taxes: do not tax our food.

So for four years now, Mr. Speaker, this government has nickel-and-dimed the people of Saskatchewan every time they go out for a meal. So, Mr. Speaker, will they sing from their own songbook and stop taxing our food?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we have seen this session is an opposition that is completely unserious and completely lacking in all credibility. An opposition that thinks Twitter is real life, that thinks juvenile stunts like jumping up on pedestals and declaring themselves the next premier are cool, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government, by complete contrast, that has been focused on governing, that has had to make incredibly difficult decisions over the course of the last year, the sort of decisions that have never faced a provincial government before in its history, Mr. Speaker.

And on both fronts . . . On the public health front, we have now the best vaccination campaign in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, which has allowed us to put forward the very first reopening plan and is going to result in this province returning to normal and having a full Mosaic Stadium this summer, Mr. Speaker.

On the economic front, we have the economy that is leading this country, the lowest unemployment rate in the country. We have investments after investment — billions of dollars — that have been made. Those are the things that this government is focused on, while they're focused on Twitter and their stunts.

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

Ms. A. Young: — My God, Mr. Speaker, the number of times my Twitter account has been brought up in this House is astonishing. I just want to say for the record, Mr. Speaker, I hope they're not on my Instagram because it's getting a little bit creepy.

So, Mr. Speaker, let's fast-forward to March 2017, the year the members opposite broke their own promises. The Finance minister at the time said he listened to restaurants and that he was concerned about tax fairness. He was worried that people would pick up their meals at grocery stores. He said he listened. And he listened so very hard that he decided to tax even more food. Now, Mr. Speaker, tax fairness to the Sask Party is about ensuring everyone gets taxed everywhere they turn.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are fed up with the tax-loving turncoats on the other side. So will the Sask Party give consumers and restaurants a break, breathing room this summer, and stop taxing our food?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — You know, Mr. Speaker, these questions speak to the fundamental unseriousness of this party and the complete lack of historic memory, something that they have been seriously lost, with a number of their veteran members having retired, Mr. Speaker.

I would remind members opposite though who do not know or don't remember or choose not to remember, when they were in government, the PST [provincial sales tax] on restaurant meals not only existed, it was at 9 per cent, Mr. Speaker. They are a party opposite that raised taxes 52 times. They were a party opposite that had farmers camped out here in a tax revolt. None of these things they seem to remember. Mr. Speaker, they are unserious.

On this side of the House, we have been making some incredibly difficult decisions, decisions that have never been faced by a provincial government before. There is no rule book. There is no guide on how to do that, Mr. Speaker. But under the leadership of this Premier, we have come through this better than any other jurisdiction in the country.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, you just love to see a conservative government get up and pat themselves on the back for a 6 per cent tax. But you know, the Sask Party love taxes so much that you'd think we'd get something for it. But no, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is the tax-and-no-spend party. All these taxes they've been hoarding for years, and all they do is cut, cut, cut.

So yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we called on the government to relaunch a summer employment program and stop charging people to use their own parks. Mr. Speaker, other provinces have summer employment programs, and other provinces give residents free access to their parks. Yet our minister stood up and patted herself on the back for taking half a million bucks from the people of Saskatchewan.

[10:30]

Mr. Speaker, I don't know what a Trudeau summer is, but I can tell you what a Sask Party summer looks like — getting taxed on the patio, getting taxed at the park gate, axing student jobs, axing any fun. Tax and axe, Mr. Speaker, tax and axe. So when will the Sask Party quit sucking the fun out of summer and blowing it?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Exhibit A for an opposition with no credibility. Exhibit A for a party that is completely unserious. Exhibit A for members who think Twitter is real life. Exhibit A

for members who think jumping up on pedestals in this building and acting like they're the next premier is a funny and cool thing, Mr. Speaker.

This is a serious government that has been faced by incredibly serious decisions, and we have taken those decisions extremely seriously, Mr. Speaker, and have come through this in a more successful way than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

On restaurants, they stand up and say, well restaurants are not doing great, Mr. Speaker. On the same question they're saying, you need to shut them all down though, Mr. Speaker. This is why they have no credibility, and this is why there's 13 of them sitting over there.

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

Support for Seniors and Long-Term Care

Ms. Mowat: — Well I guess that's a no, Mr. Speaker. Well let's get serious. The members opposite want to get serious.

After the devastating toll this pandemic has taken on our seniors in long-term care, provinces across this country are making desperately needed changes to the way the system is funded, the way they are staffed, and what oversights exist to keep our seniors safe. But this government refuses to learn from its mistakes. They refuse to listen to families who've lost loved ones in a broken system, to health care workers who've been pleading for this government to staff up, and to the Ombudsman and the Auditor who've both called for changes to keep seniors safe.

Why does this government refuse to make changes? Why are they so committed to the deadly status quo instead of reforms that could help our seniors stay safe in long-term care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue we take very seriously, and we've made some significant investments into long-term care and into a number of programs and services that support our seniors. By and large, Mr. Speaker, a vast majority of our long-term care homes and personal care homes in this province are providing outstanding care to our senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I've said in this Chamber before that the situation that happened at Parkside Extendicare, of course, is very tragic. That's why we've asked the Ombudsman to look at that situation very thoroughly and we're awaiting her report and her recommendations that will provide us with some direction as to where we need to make some improvements, Mr. Speaker.

And in addition to other investments we've made, as I've said in this Chamber, we'll be investing in more continuing care aids in this province. The first 108 will be hired around Saskatchewan this year, and we'll hire the additional as part of the 300 in part . . . as of our election commitment as quickly as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. This government couldn't even keep their own campaign promise to hire 300 continuing care aids. Three weeks before the budget, the Premier was still telling people to expect 300 care aids this spring. In Premier's estimates he acknowledged he couldn't keep this promise because he's realized, "There is a shortage of continuing care aids, not only in Saskatchewan, but across the nation." Like this is some kind of surprise, Mr. Speaker. For members who seem so excited to talk about last year's election, isn't figuring out if you can fulfil your promises, platform 101?

Given all our seniors have been through, why does this government continue to treat the people who built this province like they're an afterthought?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite didn't even cost their election platform. Let's talk about some of the campaign . . . Let's talk about some of the commitments of this government: \$7.6 million for development at work of the La Ronge long-term care replacement facility, something that they didn't get to when they were in government; additional funding, \$3.6 million for the replacement of the Grenfell long-term care facility; additional funding in this year's budget to look at the replacement of long-term care beds in the capital city of this province here in Regina; more funding to replace the new facilities . . . long-term care facilities in the city of Estevan and also in the community of Watson, Mr. Speaker.

And what did they say in Watson? April 13th of the *Humboldt Journal*, Norma Weber, who's the mayor of Watson and also the Chair of the local health care fundraising foundation — in rural Saskatchewan you have to wear a couple of hats, and Norma does a great job of that — here's what she said, Mr. Speaker. This is a quote: "So we're happy when the government came along and looked at our facility and had faith in rural Saskatchewan to come out here and give us funding for that."

Mr. Speaker, this government has faith in rural Saskatchewan. We're grateful for rural Saskatchewan, unlike the NDP [New Democratic Party] who decimated rural Saskatchewan.

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

Provision of Health Care

Ms. Mowat: — The inability to show humility, Mr. Speaker. But here's a chance for them to get this right. Last summer Michelle Klein's son walked in Regina General Hospital without assistance. He was 10 years old, Mr. Speaker. His condition rapidly deteriorated. His mom scrambled to find someone to help her. This little boy developed breathing issues and went into cardiac arrest. He never made it out of that hospital, Mr. Speaker.

We wrote to the Minister of Health about this tragic case, but we've seen no action. This family still does not have a critical incident report. They still don't understand what happened to their little boy.

Will the minister meet with this family, help them get answers and the closure that they need? Will he listen to their story to

ensure that no family has to go through such a tragic loss again?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And no, I'm not familiar with this specific case. I endeavour to look into it. I will be reaching out. If the member opposite can provide the information, I'll certainly reach out to that individual and discuss what happened last summer.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Survivors of Interpersonal Violence

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, in 2020 women and girls in Saskatchewan were killed at the second-highest rate amongst all provinces. We know that the ongoing pandemic has only made matters worse for those faced with intimate partner violence.

Saskatchewan is one of only a few provinces in Canada where the provincial government provides no operational funding for second-stage shelters. Shelters like SOFIA [Support Of Families In Affliction] House operate through grants, donations, and support from the community. And they are often having long wait-lists, which for women facing interpersonal violence can be very deadly.

The need that exists in our communities goes unmet, putting more women and their children into harm's way and more lives at risk. Funding for second-stage shelters would make a difference in eliminating wait-lists, protecting women, and saving lives.

Why won't the Sask Party commit to operational funding for second-stage shelters in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This government's commitment to people suffering interpersonal violence is well documented. Another . . . in excess of \$800,000, Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget.

Violence with respect to women is taken very seriously by this government. Mr. Speaker, we've got \$22 million in the budget to deal with matters. In terms of the work that's being done by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to help assist in providing housing to individuals who require the help, it's work that's being done by the Saskatchewan housing association in conjunction with the work that's being done by both the ministries of Correction and the ministries of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to work to advocate for the best interests of people in Saskatchewan that require the support of this government. Not just through our budget, Mr. Speaker, but through the advocacy with our partners in the community.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions no. 22 through 31.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave of the Assembly to make brief comments regarding the end of session prior to moving the motion of adjournment.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

End-of-Session Acknowledgements

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well. Mr. Speaker, a session comes to an end. As is our tradition in this Chamber, I'd like to offer some brief comments and thank yous to those who have made this all possible. Firstly, Mr. Speaker, to you in your role in presiding over this Chamber and Assembly, I want to say thank you very much. And it's been a real pleasure to have worked with you in putting together what has been really an unprecedented complete session during this unprecedented time. So I want to say thank you to you and the staff in your office for all of the incredible work.

I want to say thank you to my colleagues in the government caucus who have just been incredible to work with through all of this. And you know, we had a great discussion this morning about some of this, but this is just a wonderful, wonderful group, Mr. Speaker, that we have the great honour and pleasure of working with. I want to say thank you to all of my colleagues.

And I want to say a very specific thank you to this gentleman sitting right in front of me, our Premier. Mr. Speaker, I can't tell you how difficult some of the discussions and meetings that we have had over the last 14 months have been. And I can't tell you how grateful and thankful I am that this man has been leading our province, how proud I am to stand behind him and be able to work with him and our colleagues here. Thank you, sir.

And, Mr. Speaker, our families. All of us have been down here now for over six weeks, some for two and a half months, without seeing our families, without being able to leave this city. That is a real sacrifice, and it's members on both sides who have not been able to see their family. And I want to acknowledge that incredible sacrifice that members have made in order to conduct and transact the business of this province over that period of time. So thank you to them.

And I want to as well thank the staff in this building: the Clerks,

Greg Putz, who's been just a wonderful leader of the professional staff of this Assembly for many, many years, but in really what has been an unprecedented time in making adjustments and literally coming up with, you know, massive revisions to the rules and procedures within very short time frames in order that we can conduct our business both in the Chamber here and in committee. And I want to just say thank you to you, Greg and Iris and your entire team, for the work that has been done to make this all possible. So thank you so much.

And the other elements of the team as well: Hansard. Cheryl was recognized earlier today. Cheryl, thanks for all the work you do in deciphering our commentary in here over many years, making us sound like we are credible and putting together what are sometimes disjointed thoughts in question period and elsewhere. So thank you to you and your team at Hansard.

Thank our broadcasting staff who, you know, despite a very challenging time here during this session, have moved heaven and earth to be able to make sure that the public know what is going on in this Chamber, adjustments and changes and just some very real challenges. So I want to thank our broadcasting team for the work that they have done.

I want to thank our building staff and the security. Again, there have been some challenges which the public don't necessarily know about. And they have gone above and beyond in working to keep this building secure and keeping all of us safe and secure throughout this entire sitting. And I really have a heartfelt thank you, Terry, to you and your team. So thank you.

And our team within government as well: I want to thank the public service very much. And without singling out any in particular, I do want to single out one individual who's going to be retiring: Ian Brown who's been our chief legislative counsel for many, many years. And for those of us who are in the House leadership it has been a huge pleasure to work with him through our operations committee. He really is just a consummate professional. Ian's retiring and I want to acknowledge his service for, I think, nearly 40 years to the province and Government of Saskatchewan.

[10:45]

Want to acknowledge as well, I haven't had the opportunity to do this, Mr. Speaker, but I do want to acknowledge some folks who I had the chance to work with over the past number of years. And you know, a lot of what goes on in this place is done through discussions between parties. And I want to, really just a heartfelt thank you to Warren McCall, who had been opposition House leader for most of the last decade and an absolute gentlemen, somebody with a huge amount of respect for the institution, with a huge amount of respect for the building, and a huge amount of respect for the traditions of this institution. And I want to say thank you very much to Warren and how much I think we all miss him in this Chamber and his leadership.

Want to thank a couple other members as well: David Forbes, who was a member of the House leadership opposite for many years as well, a gentlemen who genuinely respected this place, genuinely respected the institution and the building. I want to acknowledge him. And Cathy Sproule as well, who had been their House leader for a number of years also, who had the same

attributes, I want to say thank you to her.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to conclude by wishing everybody a great summer, and once again, thank you all around.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek leave to make a statement.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the Government House Leader in providing some brief end-of-session remarks, also recognizing the fact that it's a couple of speeches, including myself, that are standing between these members and their families. So I will endeavour to be brief.

Despite this being a shorter session at six weeks, this session presented a lot of unprecedented challenges. In the winter months, we've made reference to the fact before that we've worked with the Government House Leader and Clerk and Table Officers to try to come up with a plan that everyone agreed to, and I think everyone following along at home knows that we didn't fully get there. We did disagree on the masking requirement, but we did get there on everything else.

And there was a tremendous amount of work that went into this place even before we even showed up, so I want to thank the Clerk and the Table Officers for their thoughtful entry into how we approach COVID-19 and to making sure that we could still run this place as a well-oiled machine. It does take so many parts to make sure that it can run effectively, and I think that's not always obvious to folks who are viewing on TV or on the internet to see exactly what all goes into this.

We faced many challenges during the sitting. We sat on the first Saturday in decades, apparently. We were sitting throughout Fridays. We had committee meetings over the weekend. And you know, voting looked quite a bit different. The pace has been extremely fast, and this has impacted everyone.

And you know, I know that there have been impacts on the Legislative Assembly staff, on broadcasting, Hansard, the custodial staffs, the Sarge, and security, as well as the Speaker's office and committee Clerks, you know. Like these changes have had ripple-down effects on everyone. And so normally we would thank them for their work in this place, but I want to say an extra bit of thanks this time around because I know that these decisions had an impact all the way down, and that there are so many people who have made personal sacrifices to make sure that we can sit in this space together and get the work done that needs to be done. So there has been a significant impact, and some of this has been overtime, COVID precautions.

Masks have probably been a real treat for Hansard to have to deal with. It's already incomprehensible, a lot of what we say some of the time, so a special thanks to Hansard and especially Cheryl, who it was mentioned that she's got over 30 years in Hansard.

And you know, what a commitment to the job and to this place. I can only imagine the things that you've seen in this place as well. So a sincere thank you to yourself and other individuals who are retiring or leaving us this year as well.

And we know that these challenges have also included things like COVID illness and self-isolation and scheduling pressures, and it's been a hard six weeks. So thank you to everyone who has a hand in running this place for making sure that, you know, in many cases these challenges were not even obvious to the public. So thank you for that.

And we did get through it together. And even though things have gotten more heated in this session than I've seen in years past, I do want to thank the Government House Leader for responding to most of my texts and working together to ensure some procedural predictability so that, you know, things could run as smoothly as they could in those circumstances. We know we have work to do and we're committed to doing that work together, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot that goes into everything that happens in this space. And everything we do in here as members is supported by our caucus staff, the team behind the scenes that so many don't know about. And they work so hard, they don't complain, and they have been smiling throughout this whole session. And you know, it's amazing to me that they're still having a good time, putting on a brave face in what has been a tremendous challenge for the staff as well, so I do want to specifically thank them.

And particularly I want to give a shout-out to Mitch Bonokoski. He's our director of issues management and legislative affairs, wears many hats in this place. He knows all the processes, and he helps to make it look like we do too, Mr. Speaker. I've relied on him so much since becoming Opposition House Leader, and I do want to thank him for all of that support and guidance and willingness to look up rules no matter what time of day it is or weekend. You know, he's always there for us, and I want to thank him for that. And I know he's got a new bundle of joy joining him hopefully this week, and I want to wish him and his wife all the best in welcoming this new member of their family. It's a good thing he's well rested.

And to the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] of this Assembly, I know we have all made sacrifices, myself included, to be away from our families, which has been particularly hard I think on the folks who don't live here or weren't able to share that time with their families. And I want to say thanks to the members, but I also want to thank the spouses and the family members and the children, who I know this has been quite hard on them. And just to say, please forgive us for choosing public service.

And to our caucus, I do want to thank you for your support and your hard work during this time. I know it's not easy. And people see the question period side of it, but they don't see all the other work that goes into it, and being a critic and being engaged and working with the stakeholders. And all of that work is done very well by the members of this caucus. And I'm so proud of the team that is here and that I get to work with these bright, energetic, motivated folks who are here to make sure that we have a just world in front of us.

And in particular I want to thank our leader. There's a lot of jokes in this place particularly by members opposite. But I'm incredibly proud of our leader for the work that he does day after day in standing up for the people of this province and making sure that people who don't always have a voice are well heard. And he really is like the Energizer Bunny; he just keeps going and going and going. He works tirelessly. And he also displays a great deal of empathy and humility which makes it very easy to work with him and work for him because he can put himself in your shoes. He can see many sides to a situation. And I want to thank him for displaying those qualities in addition to strong leadership.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do wish everyone an enjoyable summer. Until we come back here, we will be going back to work in our home constituencies. Encourage everyone to stay safe and to take care. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Session Adjournment

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A couple of thank yous I did genuinely forget was to our House business team, Michelle Lang and Cole Zawislak, who've done a great job down there, and to the Opposition House Leader who I've really appreciated working with, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sorry I forgot that during my comments.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of this sitting day, in accordance with the parliamentary calendar, it shall stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on October 27th, 2021 unless earlier recalled by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government. And if recalled, Mr. Speaker, shall give each member seven days' clear notice if possible of such date and time.

I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That this Assembly adjourns at the end of the sitting day, in accordance with the parliamentary calendar, it shall stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on October 27th, 2021 unless earlier recalled by the Speaker, upon the request of the government. And if recalled, Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven days' clear notice if possible of such date and time.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — I ask leave to make a few comments. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Thank you. Before we close the twenty-ninth

session of parliament, I'd like to make a few remarks. I would like to pay tribute to the people that support us in our roles as legislators, leaders, and our province.

To the Clerk's office: Greg Putz, Iris Lang, Ken Ring, Kathy Burianyk, Rob Park, and I understand Stacey is leaving us, so good luck, Stacey — we will miss you — and Anne Drake.

Hansard, committees, broadcast services, IT [information technology], Legislative Library, the financial services and staff of the Legislative Assembly — thanks to you all for your extraordinary efforts to keep us all on task, and by doing so, enabling the democratic process to run smoothly. They have worked many extra hours, including Saturdays, to accommodate the members to facilitate session in a condensed amount of time. We as members appreciate your expertise and dedication to the institution.

Members, I'd like to draw to your attention as others have to the Hansard microphone operator who is working above me in the press gallery. That familiar face is Cheryl Behrns. Today is the last day that Cheryl will operate the microphones in this Chamber. At the end of the session she will retire after working 30 years for the Assembly, all within Hansard. As the Hansard production supervisor, Cheryl has trained just about everyone, every microphone operator you see. I'd like to thank Cheryl and wish her well in her retirement.

Thank you to Terry Quinn, Sergeant-at-Arms, and staff for their diligence in maintaining the security of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly and its precinct during these very unpredictable circumstances at various times during this session, and also during the last year. Thanks to Monique Lovatt for her dedication and hard work, supporting members' participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. A special shout-out to Steve Bata and his team always working behind the scenes keeping things running smoothly in this building. And I want to acknowledge the deep-cleaning measures taken recently to keep the building safe for the members and all staff working in the building in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. Also want to thank him for his assistance in accommodating the historic photo in the Chamber last week.

I also would like to thank my staff, Sheila Sterling and Hayley Lucas, for all their hard work in keeping the office running smoothly. And I also would like to thank all the members' families for their sacrifice during this legislative session. Thank you for lending the members to the people of Saskatchewan for the last six weeks.

[11:00]

I'd like to recognize my family. My wife, Cindy; our daughter Lacey who works for Nature Saskatchewan and is on the Regina Public School Board. And her and Nick have three daughters — Surayya, Amara, and Leonora. And I would like to also recognize my son who is just recently graduated and is a federal corrections officer. And my daughter Alex and her fiancé, Andrew, who are going to try to get married again this summer. They postponed it from last year, and so we're hoping for a wedding in July.

And I mention every now and then our grandson by choice, Zane. His mother, Des, has had some difficult problems, legal

problems, and she's working through it. Anyway, so she decided she's been on the wrong side of the law for some time, so she's taking a legal assistant course. So hopefully she will work through that.

So little Zane decided that when Zane and my wife Cindy went shopping, that grandpa needed to plant some garden. So he picked out corn and cucumbers and carrots, so when I get home I need to plant a garden.

And so I'd like to thank all of them for their support.

Also of course I'd like to thank my constituency assistant, Janet, and also thank the Deputy Speaker for your support and your hard work during these times. And to the members, thank you for the sacrifice you've made being away from your families for an extended period during this session, that you were able to do your work as legislators in Regina in a safe manner during the pandemic. Thank you for your many hours of service, your strong commitment, the important roles you play as elected officials of the province of Saskatchewan, for representing the people of this fine province and this Assembly with passion and integrity.

I hope that by the fall sitting the Pages will be allowed to return to the Chamber and the restrictions of the member of the . . . the number of members allowed in the Chamber will be lifted, and we'll be back to some semblance of normal.

In closing, I wish to thank the citizens of Saskatchewan for having trust in their elected officials to uphold the democratic process. We sometimes forget that democracy is not a right, it's a privilege. Safe travel, stay safe, and have a good summer.

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. I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until 10 a.m. on October 27th, 2021.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:03.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Fred Bradshaw
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Education

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Warren Kaeding
Minister of Environment

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the
Provincial Capital Commission

Hon. Paul Merriman
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor
and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

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

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General