

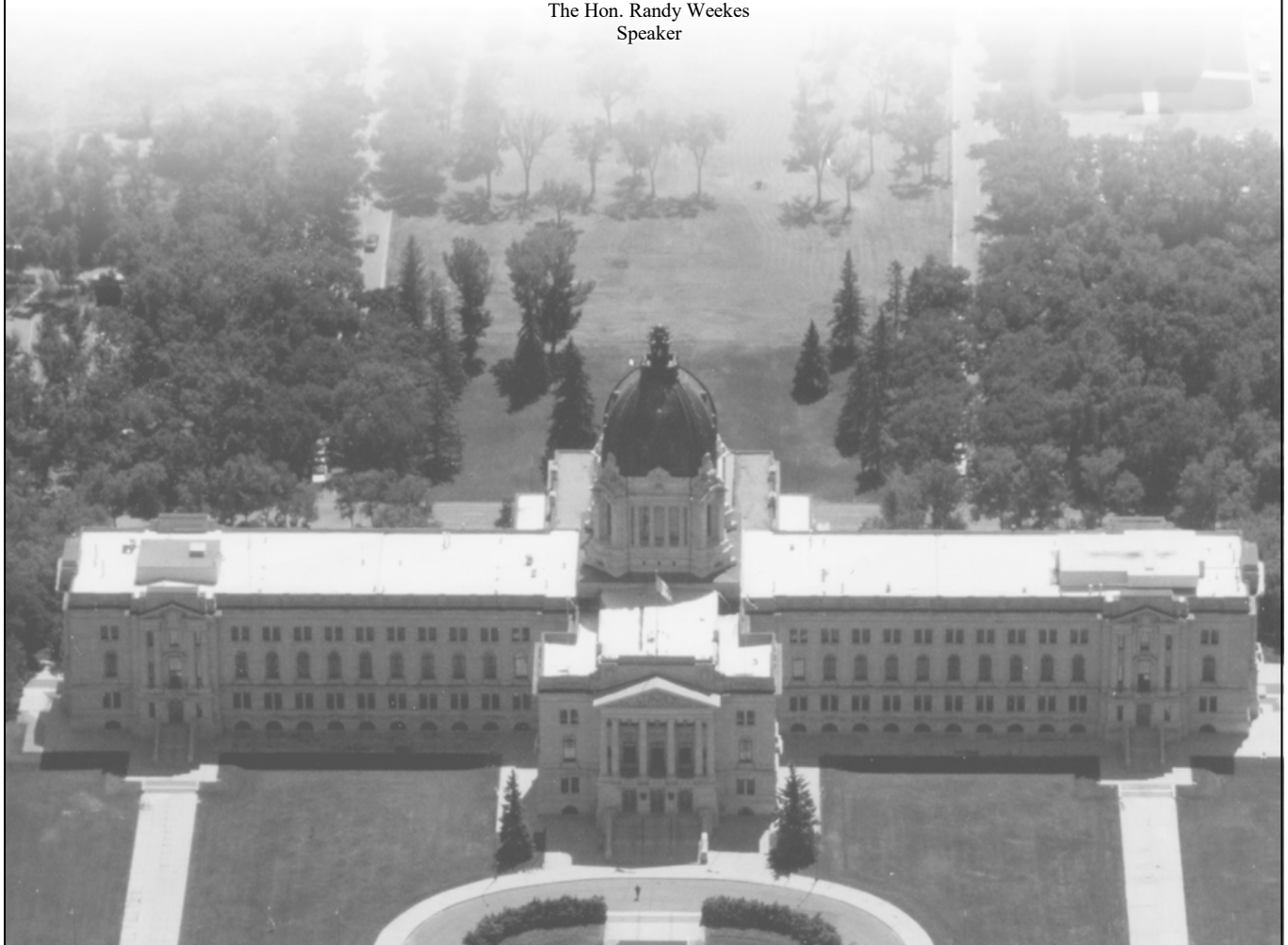
FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)
Belanger, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)
Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)
Bradshaw, Hon. Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)
Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)
Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)
Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)
Cockrill, Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)
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Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
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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Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave to make a statement regarding the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job. Mr. Speaker, as part of this, the member for Regina Lakeview will join me in reading the names into the record.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

COMMEMORATIVE STATEMENTS

National Day of Mourning

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, today I ask that everyone take a moment to acknowledge the National Day of Mourning for workers killed or injured on the job. On the Day of Mourning our thoughts are with the families, friends, and colleagues of those who lost someone to a workplace injury or illness. We will also be thinking of those who have experienced workplace illnesses and injuries. I encourage everyone to find some small way to recognize the Day of Mourning, whether that be through observing a moment of silence or reaching out to someone affected by the loss of a loved one, friend, or colleague.

At the legislature our flags will fly at half-mast, as they will at many buildings throughout the province and the country. Regardless of how you mark the day, please remember to reflect on how each of us can make our workplaces safe and healthy for ourselves and our colleagues. Mr. Speaker, workplace illnesses and injuries and fatalities have a tremendous impact on families, workplaces, and communities.

We need to honour the memories of those we have lost by making a daily commitment to keeping ourselves and each other safe in our homes, communities, and workplaces. It has been over a decade since we introduced Mission: Zero, and we maintain that the only acceptable number of workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities is none. That is an achievable goal if we all work together.

Last year in 2020, the Workers' Compensation Board accepted 34 claims for workplace-related deaths in the province. In 2019 the Workers' Compensation Board accepted 36 claims for workplace-related deaths in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members please rise while I read the names of those who have lost their lives. In 2020 the following workers lost their lives to a workplace injury or illness:

Trent Brears
John Yuzik
Leonard Siroski

William Kittle
Robert Read
Steven Deschambault

Earl McNair
Jeffrey Konecnik
Clarence Lekness
Rodney Malakoff
Darcy Rediger
Terrance Rugg
Joseph Koziol
Kenneth Ferguson
Ted Zuk
Jack Feist
Colin Hurd
Cole Crooks
Robert Vargo
Jose Nicolas Hernandez Osorio

Scott Bill
Darren McClelland
Robert Bates
Lawrence Rathgeber
Herb Hewitt
Gerald Eichenlaub
Harold Uytterhagen
Peter Lozinski
Trent Lang
Ivan Lind
Michael Coulic
Blair Koop
Randolph Gordon

Mr. Speaker, last year we had the very start of the pandemic and did not get the chance in this House to acknowledge to remember those individuals in 2019 who passed away due to a workplace illness or injury. I would ask that we remain standing while the member opposite reads out the names for 2019.

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

Ms. Beck: — In 2019 the WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] accepted fatality claims for the following workers who lost their lives due to workplace injury or illness:

Louis Antal
Lorne Beer
Murray Broad
Clifford Bueckert
Morley Coleman
Kris Hockley
Lisa Johnson
Douglas Lachambre
Kevin Milnes
Louis Nault
Knut Olsen
Reginald Reimche
Thomas (Les) Rogers
Keith Schentag
William Styranko
Donald Thibodeau
John Vanderhulst
Richard Wills

Shirley Barr
Mark Biglin
Stephen Brown
Erick (Leroy) Coates
Leslie Hajdu
Ian Irwin
Francis (Frank) Kunz
John Mansuy
Ronald Mogg
Richard Oak
Wayne O'Quinn
Danny Rider
Braeden Rudolph
Leigh Schroeder
Edward Thibault
Brendan Unger
Lloyd Wedewer
August Zepick

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, not included in these lists are the estimated 13 people who lost their lives working on Saskatchewan farms and ranches each year. On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I extend our condolences to everyone who lost a loved one. I now ask that we observe a moment of silence to commemorate the Day of Mourning and the lives that have been lost.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development. Many good northern residents, local trappers, traditional land users, and leaders are opposed to the proposed peat moss mine near La Ronge. The Lac La Ronge Indian Band is opposed. People have drafted a petition to let their concerns be known. More than 20,000 people have signed an online petition.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the provincial government to protect the boreal forest and reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development.

This petition is signed by many good people in northern Saskatchewan. It is signed, the one I will be serving today, by the good people of Stanley Mission and La Ronge. I so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to present a petition again today calling for pay equity legislation. The signatories would like to call our attention to 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.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in committee I was happy to be advised by the minister that she has asked the Status of Women office to conduct a jurisdictional scan on pay equity legislation across Canada. I'm very happy to hear this, very encouraged that the government is taking a close look at this, and I look forward to working with the minister on that front. I'll read the prayer:

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

The petition today, Mr. Speaker, is signed by people from Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise to present a petition to save the Lighthouse for The Battlefords and provide core funding to emergency homelessness shelters across the province. Saskatchewan is one of the only provinces in Canada that still uses a per diem funding model where emergency shelters for a person facing homelessness is

provided only for social assistance recipients per bed per night.

Core and block funding to shelters provides financial stability for organizations serving Saskatchewan's most vulnerable people. When it comes to the Lighthouse serving The Battlefords, it was opened in 2015 to fill a need in the community for people facing homelessness, addictions, and mental health challenges. It faced a cut of 90 per cent of its core funding only one year after opening, and that funding has never been restored. I was concerned to hear in estimates for the Ministry of Social Services that we have a nearly 20 per cent vacancy rate in our social housing.

Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government 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.

This petition is signed by residents of North Battleford. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Administrative Professionals Day

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today marks Administrative Professionals Day. The work done by these professionals quite often goes unseen, Mr. Speaker, but I assure you it never goes unnoticed.

There are a number of administrative professionals who work tirelessly to make our jobs here possible. They play many roles in our day-to-day work, and are often a jack of all trades. They have the ability to keep everyone organized, informed, and meeting deadlines. And, Mr. Speaker, for some members that is certainly a challenge.

Our constituency assistants are invaluable to us, especially during the legislative sitting. They keep the office running smoothly back home, and we all appreciate them. The commitment to their work, to our work, never goes unnoticed.

Thank you to the professional staff of the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service]. Thank you. You have continued to serve the members of this Assembly with dedication and commitment.

To the caucus staff, thank you. The work that is done behind the scenes to keep all of us up to date and organized is greatly appreciated.

Not only are administrative professionals the individuals who we as members rely on to do our jobs efficiently and effectively, but they are present in virtually every sector of our workforce, both public and private, and they deserve our most sincere appreciation today and every day. Thank you.

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

National Day of Mourning

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, I stand here today in recognition of the National Day of Mourning, a day that must come with real commitments to keep the workers of our province safe. In 1985 the Canadian Labour Congress officially declared the Day of Mourning an annual day of national remembrance for workers injured or killed at work. On this day it is critical that every member in this Chamber recognizes that we have not yet done all we can to protect workers in this province.

On this day we must remember those we have lost and those who were injured, and dedicate our words to actions to improve safety and support for workers, whether they work in a care home, a school, a hospital, or a group home; whether they work in a grocery store, a restaurant, or a factory; whether they drive a dozer, a combine, or a taxi. Whether they're a 40-year veteran or brand new worker on the job, workers are counting on us to ensure workplaces are safe and that the supports are in place when something does go wrong.

This year I stand here, Mr. Speaker, in solidarity with all those workers who have kept food on our tables, ensured access to our essentials; all those workers who maintained our facilities, cared for our families and friends, taught our children, and kept our vital services and institutions open and running. I ask all members to join me in recognizing the National Day of Mourning and in redoubling our efforts to end workplace-related deaths and injuries.

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

New Elementary School in Saskatoon Riversdale

Mr. Friesen: — Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk about a major project being undertaken in my constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale. As a part of the 2021-2022 budget, our government has announced nearly 190 million in educational capital. This will support 21 ongoing capital projects to build 16 new schools and renovate five existing schools.

The highlight of this for me is a new elementary school to replace Princess Alexandra, King George, and Pleasant Hill schools. These schools have served my community for many years, but now it's time for an upgrade. I'm pleased to announce that we will be completing the design this year and beginning construction as early as spring of 2022. This is welcome news to the school divisions and an exciting opportunity to pull three communities together. This will be a major boost to my community and the families I represent in Saskatoon Riversdale.

Our government is investing in Saskatoon and the Riversdale community like never before. This project will represent an investment in my community a scale of which has not yet been seen in decades. This should be no surprise, as we all remember the NDP [New Democratic Party] record — school closures, hospital closures, and divestment from the community.

Mr. Speaker, honesty matters, and in our first budget we will

keep 14 of our campaign commitments. Thank you.

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

Advocate for Children and Youth Calls for Group Home Oversight

Ms. Conway: — I was happy to receive the Advocate for Children and Youth's annual report yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and today I wish to recognize the important work that Dr. Lisa Broda and her team do on behalf of our province's most vulnerable.

The advocate's most recent special report was prompted when Elijah, a non-verbal child with autism, was found confused and naked in a Saskatoon Tim Hortons parking lot. Elijah was in the ministry's care and residing at a for-profit group home. Another child in that same home experienced malnourishment and, I quote, "egregious medical neglect" which required hospitalization. The home was understaffed and undertrained, something the Ministry of Social Services does not appear to even verify before it allows a company to assume 24-7 care over vulnerable kids.

I wish to reinforce this report's calls for immediate action to establish systemic oversight over group homes. The issues are well known. Many were flagged by the advocate back in 2017, then ignored by this Sask Party government. This report begs some important questions. Had those measures been adopted, would this have happened? If Elijah hadn't wandered off, would we even know about this group home? How many more children are suffering in obscurity due to this ministry's oversight failures?

The number of group homes keeps rising because the number of children in care keeps rising too. This ministry's budget, it keeps rising but we're not seeing better outcomes, fewer children in care, or lower death rates. Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker. It's past time these issues were treated with the urgency they deserve.

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

Revitalization Projects in the Town of Biggar

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I know no one is a bigger booster of the town of Biggar than yourself, but I will certainly try. Founded over 100 years ago with the slogan New York Is Big but This Is Biggar, I stand today to share the great story of the town of Biggar and its new revitalization projects.

Former residents Ina Lou and Wayne Brownlee wanted to give back to their community that they grew up in. Members will remember Wayne Brownlee and his contribution to the province through his position as vice-president of Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan.

The Brownlees approached the town in 2019 with a very exciting plan and vision to rejuvenate the town of Biggar for its residents and to attract more travellers. Mr. Speaker, a key feature will be a public park ranging from beautiful gardens and hospitable green space to a farmers' market, picnic, and music concert area

to a railway-style restaurant and a rejuvenated Main Street. The couple confirmed their commitment with a \$2.5 million matching pledge donation with the hope of inspiring others to contribute.

Mr. Speaker, indeed this initiative has sparked even more investments in the area. The town of Biggar, with other levels of government, are committing to \$7.5 million in upgrades of necessary infrastructure. And with this commitment, along with philanthropists and all levels of government, Biggar will continue to be a jewel in the province of Saskatchewan.

To finish, Mr. Speaker, the Brownlees set their gift as an engaging present to past residents and future businesses around a common goal embodied by the phrase, “New York is big, but our future is Biggar.” Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota.

Successful Docuseries Based on Saskatoon Paramedics

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize and highlight an exciting documentary project that paramedics from Medavie Health Services West, in my constituency of Saskatoon Stonebridge, have led and been involved in. The docuseries is called *Paramedics: Emergency Response*, and it’s based on and around Medavie Health Services. It features paramedics from Medavie, and some 24 have appeared in the show, including regulars Christian Grella, Holly Poirier, Kali Schatz, and Brett Hart.

The series highlights the incredible, brave work that paramedics do and what they face on a daily basis. Medavie’s director of public affairs, Troy Davies, who is also a Saskatoon city councillor, is the show’s editing producer. The pilot project posted on YouTube back in 2017 was an instant success and attracted 1 million views.

Since then over the last 4 years and 30 episodes, *Paramedics: Emergency Response* is currently airing around the world, not only here in Canada but in countries such as Spain and the UK [United Kingdom]. And currently, Medavie in Stonebridge is in negotiations to film a sixth season on Citytv with Fahrenheit Films.

Now more than ever, Mr. Speaker, it is so important to recognize the crucial role that paramedics play in our health system. Thank you to them; to Troy; Gerry Schriemer, the chief of EMS [emergency medical services]; and the whole team at Medavie Health Services West for everything you do.

Please join me, Mr. Speaker, in wishing them continued best of luck with this exciting documentary project. Thank you.

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

Growth and Investment at Carrot River Sawmill Facility

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the past five years, \$50 million of capital projects have been invested in the Carrot River sawmill facility. Dunkley Lumber purchased the

Edgewood Forest Products sawmill complex in January of 2019. In just two years of ownership, Dunkley has increased lumber production by 25 per cent. Dunkley is now embarking on a major capital plan that will double the current output capacity of the Carrot River mill complex. This plan is consistent with the Saskatchewan growth plan to 2030 for the forest industry.

Over the next two years, Dunkley will spend an additional \$100 million on new high-tech machinery, building expansions, and site infrastructure. The direct employment generated from this growth will be increased by approximately 130 new high-paying jobs in logging, log hauling, and manufacturing.

This project scope provides enough critical mass to attract an additional 60-million greenfield wood pellet plant that will utilize all Dunkley residual wood by-products. The new biomass pellet production facility will directly employ an additional 60 people in the local area.

In addition, the Novak Family Foundation, the owners of Dunkley Lumber, have just committed to a million-dollar donation to the new school in Carrot River.

Mr. Speaker, I’d like to thank Dunkley Lumber for their investment in our province and for believing in Saskatchewan. 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. Yesterday the Premier admitted it hasn’t been a good month. Well with over 200 cases a day on all but three days, with 50 people having lost their lives in April — still not over — that’s a pretty shocking understatement, Mr. Speaker. But with the Premier finally acknowledging that things are not going well, what would he personally have done differently, and what will he do differently to make sure he doesn’t have to say the same thing next month?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I always find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, to sit here and have explained to me what I said the day before or the day previous, as paraphrased by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, as we look back through the last number of months, Mr. Speaker, you know, hindsight is, you know . . . Is there opportunities where we could have done different things differently? Most certainly. Is there opportunities where people across this nation could have done things differently? Most certainly, Mr. Speaker. But what I think you saw leaders do across Canada and in this province as well is to make the very best decisions that they could alongside the public health advice that we had, with the information that they were provided at that point in time.

Mr. Speaker, one of those decisions was, although we were off to a sluggish start with our vaccination program in the early days, we very closely have been working with SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to ensure that we now have a nation-leading

vaccination program, Mr. Speaker. With some achievements here as recently as yesterday: people over the age of 60, 80 per cent of them have now received their vaccine here in Saskatchewan — that's a step towards getting back to normal; people over the age of 18, 40 per cent of them have now received their vaccine, another step towards getting back to normal in our communities and in our province.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier, who's done so much to make sure we have one of the worst records on COVID-19 in the country, still doesn't get it. A simple, straightforward question. No humility. No acknowledgement at all.

He's still in denial about the way his failures have cost Saskatchewan lives, Mr. Speaker. Syed Ali, Carrie Therrien, Matthew Cardinal. Too many people are losing their lives. Too many people are contracting COVID-19 at work, losing their lives or having to battle COVID-19 and face health issues that they'll deal with potentially for years to come. Every day thousands of people are putting themselves in harm's way just to do their jobs.

Can the Premier tell us how many people have contracted COVID-19 at work in Saskatchewan? How many of those people have died because they got the virus while doing their essential front-line jobs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have 486 families that have experienced loss due to COVID or experienced loss while their loved ones did have COVID-19 in this province.

Every fatality in this province, whether it's in the workplace which we're recognizing today, whether it be from COVID, Mr. Speaker, other means, most certainly is deserved of the condolences of this House, this government, and me, most certainly, personally. And I continue to think of each and every one of those, Mr. Speaker.

And that is why we have worked so very hard with our public health officer, Dr. Shahab, in this province, as well as his team, as well as the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the Ministry of Health, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are always bringing forward the public health measures that will ensure that we have every opportunity to stay safe in our communities and every opportunity to balance that with the livelihoods that we have, and doing the things that we love to do in our community, Mr. Speaker.

But it is job one for all of us in this province to follow those public health measures, most important over the next number of weeks to follow those public health measures. And then secondly, Mr. Speaker, is when it's your turn, let's roll up our sleeves; let's stick it to COVID; let's all go get vaccinated. That is ultimately, once and for all, our path out of this global pandemic.

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

Sick Leave and Supports for Employees

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier continues to point the finger at anyone but himself. He blames Saskatchewan people. He talks about their personal responsibility. But when will he ever take any personal responsibility at all?

Mr. Speaker, when will he tell us what's really going on with workplace transmission and how much it's driving this third wave? This Premier, Mr. Speaker . . . Ten people have died in the last two days alone. Ten people have died. Ten families are grieving a loved one. People are showing symptoms and having to make the choice: will they go to work and pay the rent, or will they stay home, get tested, keep themselves and others safe? No one should have to make that choice. No one should have to make that choice, and it's in the Premier's power to make sure that people don't have to make that choice. It's in the Premier's power to change things.

Mr. Speaker, today Ontario introduced three days of paid sick leave. And the minister said, "This is a game-changer, and this will save lives." This Premier too has a chance to change his ways. He has a chance to save lives. Will this Premier introduce paid sick days for Saskatchewan workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, our government is providing some of the best employee protections during COVID-19. We led the country as the first province to introduce special vaccination leave, which provides up to three hours of paid leave for workers to receive their vaccination shot. I can't emphasize enough, Mr. Speaker, as to the importance of getting vaccinated. So the best thing that all members can do is urge everybody to get out and get vaccinated. Do their best to overcome those that are reluctant to get a vaccination.

[14:00]

The members on the other side may not want to do that. I hear them chirping from their seats. Maybe the people over there are not understanding the importance of getting a vaccination. Mr. Speaker, the importance of vaccination is something that we cannot underestimate. We encourage everybody to get them.

Mr. Speaker, the public health emergency leave provides protection for employees that are required to self-isolate or take care of a dependant or someone who is sick or needs to isolate. Mr. Speaker, as of Friday people will be able to get appointments for those much-needed shots. I would encourage them to do it.

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

Mr. Meili: — Unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. That tells you everything you need to know. The fact that this Premier won't stand up and answer a question about paid sick days tells you everything you need to know about how this government is failing Saskatchewan working people.

Mr. Speaker, we heard yesterday that Saskatoon is on red alert, that they're facing a growing crisis, and the front-line health care

workers are terrified about what's coming towards them. And what did the Premier do when he had all this information in front of him? Absolutely nothing. He wouldn't change a thing, and he still won't change a thing, Mr. Speaker.

Vaccines are an important tool. We want everyone to get their vaccine. But we need to use all the tools at our disposal, all of the tools at our disposal to keep people safe. Paid sick days, experts tell us, are an extremely important method to keep transmission in the workplace under control, to get this third wave that this Premier has allowed to run wild under control, Mr. Speaker.

More and more people are contracting COVID-19 in the workplace. More and more people are getting sick. Why won't this Premier show some leadership? A game changer, it'll save lives. Why won't this Premier stand up for working people and introduce paid sick days?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'll tell the members opposite something that they can do. They can support us in initiatives that we have with the federal government. Over the summer, our government, along with all the other provinces, negotiated a historic \$19 billion Safe Restart Agreement that would provide over \$1 billion for paid sick days through the Canada recovery sickness benefit.

Mr. Speaker, as of April 18th, the federal government has left over \$665 million. Half of the funds allocated for this program are unspent. To maximize the benefit for employees, the feds need to provide the sickness benefit to employees quicker, better, and faster. The federal government should also consider topping up benefit payments.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to lobby the federal government for improvements to the Canada recovery sickness benefit. Mr. Speaker, I'd urge the members opposite to do that. I'd urge them to contact Jagmeet Singh. I'd urge them to contact everybody that they know that's in Ottawa and urge them to try and move forward with this as well.

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

Management of Long-Term Care Facilities

Mr. Love: — Looks like the Premier's taking a day off, Mr. Speaker.

Now the story of what happened to Margaret Warholm in a Saskatchewan long-term care facility is one that is impossible for this province to forget. The dehydration, the malnutrition, the weight loss, and the horrific bedsores before her death were something that no senior should have to endure. And it happened under this government's watch. It's no wonder why the former minister of Health committed to following the Ombudsman's advice, and I quote, "we accept the recommendation and we will look to implement them."

Now this Seniors minister keeps saying that they acted on all the recommendations from the Warholm report, but that simply is

not the case. To this day, there is no publicly accessible reporting process on how care homes are meeting provincial standards. Recommendation no. 13 has not been implemented. Why not?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to, on the record here, just mention a couple of things with respect to that investigation. That was the 2015 Ombudsman's investigation into Santa Maria, the long-term care home. The ministry and the former health authorities would have worked together to address the recommendations and ensure that the standards set out in the program guidelines were implemented, Mr. Speaker as we've discussed. My understanding is that 18 of those recommendations have been implemented, and there's one recommendation that's been partially implemented where work is ongoing, is my understanding.

Mr. Speaker, the recommendations on regulations, including performance monitoring and reporting, are continually reviewed to ensure that they meet the needs of families, residents, and homes. And we take this very seriously and know that we need to continuously make improvement to long-term care homes and the care that's provided for our seniors and our older adults in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the spin that this minister engages in would be laughable if the results for seniors weren't so tragic. This minister points to CEO [chief executive officer] tour reports. He keeps bringing up these CEO tour reports in here. And you know what? They've done nothing for accountability in long-term care. They sit on the minister's desk collecting dust.

And you know what? The Ombudsman agrees. She told Postmedia last month, "I want to know how many falls there were, how many people had bed sores . . . [how many] critical incidents [have been] reported. Why not make this information public?"

Now the minister thanks the Ombudsman for her work, but what he should say to her is, I'm sorry; I'm sorry for not implementing all of your recommendations; I'm sorry for giving you the same task again.

Will the minister today commit to full public reporting of conditions in all Saskatchewan care homes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The other Ombudsman investigation was in 2016 into Extendicare Sunset. And in that particular incident, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the former Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and Extendicare Sunset had implemented all of the recommendations in that particular report.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite made some points with respect to the CEO tours and the quality assessment tours that have been undertaken in this province since about 2013. Mr. Speaker, the results of these tours are posted publicly online.

And there's been a number of improvements as a result of those tours that take place, including capital investments in technology and communications, improvements to resident and staff safety, increased staffing, additional care for residents that have dementia — that's come about as the result of some of these visits — engagement with residents and families, increasing recreational activities for the residents of these long-term care homes, Mr. Speaker, as well as looking into improving resident comfort and flexible schedules, as well as looking into the menu quality and other items there.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's been a number of enhancements that have been made as the result of the CEO tours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the disappointing deflection from this minister continues. If they didn't listen to the Ombudsman report and the advice included last time, what makes the upcoming report any different?

There's a pattern from this government. I'd like to walk us through it. They ignored the Ombudsman recommendation for public reporting. They ignored the Provincial Auditor's recommendation to inspect our care homes, just like other provinces do. They've even ignored recommendations from a minister now sharing their own front bench who recommended that we create a seniors' advocate in Saskatchewan.

All the reports in the world don't do a thing to improve the lives of seniors if the recommendations are not acted on. Will the minister commit today to implementing all outstanding recommendations that they've thus far ignored?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would comment that with respect to the current Ombudsman's investigation, that we're looking forward to the thorough investigation that she is doing into the Extendicare Parkside situation, Mr. Speaker. As I said, with respect to one of the earlier reports that work continues on the final recommendation that has not been fully implemented.

Mr. Speaker, I would say this. In terms of the member's question and comments about this government's track record, the member's right. We do have a track record. We have a track record of investing into long-term care — 14 new long-term care facilities we've built in this province since 2007. We continue to build upon those investments with more long-term care homes being built in La Ronge, in Grenfell, in Watson as well as Estevan, Mr. Speaker.

We've invested into long-term capital, in addition to that into an Urgent Issues Action Fund, \$10 million in 2013, Mr. Speaker. These are all significant improvements into long-term care, not just the capital but their staffing as well. And we're going to continue to build upon that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Resumption of In-Classroom Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, students in Regina are headed back to the classroom next week. Parents are unsure if they should send their children back to school, and their concerns make sense when you look at the numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Recent figures show that test positivity in Regina's children and youth is nearly 20 per cent — double the rate in the general population — all while schools were closed. Dr. Shahab said yesterday that being young is no longer a shield against COVID-19. We're hearing of more and more children dying from this disease.

Returning to school with the Sask Party's status quo plan raises questions and raises anxiety. What is the plan to keep Saskatchewan's students safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member for the question. I'm aware as everybody else is that Regina Public and Regina Catholic have made the decision, working with their local public health officers and the information that they have at hand, Mr. Speaker, that they feel that it is appropriate for students to go back into class beginning next week. This is after an extended period of time where students have been at home. Certainly school divisions will have the ability to provide other options for families in the event that a family doesn't feel comfortable with having their student back into the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime I know both school divisions are working closely with the ministry, as well as Health and their local public health officers on the deployment of rapid tests. As well we have provided additional medical masks to both school divisions here in Regina, and we certainly are very pleased that beginning on Friday, all teachers and in-class support staff will have the ability to book a vaccination. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it's not just parents who are concerned. Many teachers and staff are terrified to return to school as well. STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] president Pat Maze told CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] that some teachers "want to refuse work. They feel it's unusually dangerous." We had a chance to get school staff vaccinated weeks ago, and teachers and staff could have been returning to school next Monday with a level of immunity, Mr. Speaker. Instead this government dithered and waited until it was too late.

Now school staff have the stress of both going back to busy, unusually dangerous classrooms while trying to find the time to get their shot. Can the Minister of Education commit to getting immunizers into Regina schools next week to show that they actually care about students and our front-line education workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that we . . . the Ministry of Health and the SHA focused on an age-based process because of the vast majority of hospitalizations and severe outcomes because of COVID-19 were largely based . . . age-related, 40 and over. I think it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of 81 per cent of hospitalizations.

Mr. Speaker, the good news is, is that now that we are at age 42, roughly 60 per cent of education staff are eligible for a vaccination; 75 per cent of substitute teachers have already been eligible for a vaccination. And that number has been significant for a number of weeks now, so the notion that somehow teachers and education staff have been missed out of vaccinations is simply not the case, Mr. Speaker.

And the good news is, is that when we reach the age of 40 by Friday, Mr. Speaker, every teacher and other educational support staff in the classroom will be eligible for a vaccination, to book their vaccination.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — We know that SHA has identified hundreds of recently recruited retirees who want to help with COVID-19 but aren't being used in immunization clinics. We know that there are thousands of rapid tests going unused in our schools. And we also know that school boards don't have the capacity or expertise to roll out rapid testing on their own, and this government promised that they wouldn't have to.

If schools are going to be open they, need to be safe. And it's the responsibility of this government to provide the resources and the health expertise to ensure that they are. Will the Sask Party get these health care workers, who want to help fight COVID-19, into our schools to help finally get that rapid testing under way?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, rapid tests have already been utilized in the school system in a number of instances. Regina Public is going to be accessing the rapid tests as schools return on Monday, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

The SHA is holding a virtual town hall this evening, Mr. Speaker. And in the instance where schools have not had that capacity — some have and some have indicated that they haven't — there are I believe five third-party vendors that are working with the SHA to provide that capacity. And in the event in the past where rapid tests have been used in schools, Mr. Speaker, where there wasn't that capacity, the SHA has provided that capacity. So we're working very hard to ensure that schools are safe and that students and teachers can return to the classroom in a safe manner and finish out the school year. Thank you.

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

Role of the Ministry of Trade and Export Development

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that somehow the jobs minister is the one responsible for interpreting public health orders during a pandemic. And now, Mr. Speaker, while that's concerning enough on its own, what's worse is the number of small-business owners that I hear from day in and day out who continue to be frustrated and confused by mixed messages and changing stories that they receive when it comes to public health orders.

Mr. Speaker, business owners call, speak to a representative, spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars making changes to their operation, only to call back and receive completely different advice, and even worse, in some cases then receive different advice from public health inspectors. So, Mr. Speaker, does the jobs minister take any responsibility for the mixed messages and shifting goalposts from his ministry when it comes to small businesses calling the BRT [business response team]?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the public servants, the hard-working public servants, at the business response team who have been doing such wonderful work over the last number of months, to folks who have taken, fielded literally tens of thousands of calls and emails and contacts, working with our business community to make sure, in conjunction with public health, that they are in compliance with the public health rules.

And they do a wonderful job at it, always done in good faith, Mr. Speaker, in an environment that is often rapidly changing. And I really do sincerely want to thank those individuals for just the exemplary work that they have done over the course of the last year in this pandemic.

Very good news as well, Mr. Speaker, on the jobs front. Once again we heard from our colleague, my colleague from Carrot River Valley talking about a very significant new investment in this province. \$160 million today, Mr. Speaker, Dunkley Lumber is putting into Saskatchewan, which I think is a reflection of the health of the forestry sector, which we believe is a very good thing.

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

Sick Leave and Supports for Employees

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. "Today we honour those that we have lost and recommit ourselves to worker safety." That's a quote from the Twitter account of this Premier, tweeted out at the very moment that he chose to stay in his seat and refuse to answer a question about paid sick days in this House, Mr. Speaker.

This is a very important day, the National Day of Mourning, April 28th. We share the sentiment, but we demand more than sentiment. We need action, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier has a chance. He has a chance to take action and

introduce paid sick leave. Instead he chose to stay in his seat and do nothing, say nothing and do nothing about something so important, Mr. Speaker. Will this Premier change his ways? Will he take his feet today and tell the people of Saskatchewan, tell the working people of Saskatchewan why in the middle of a pandemic that's being driven by workplace transmission, why he thinks they aren't worth it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as we heard from the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation, the Minister of Labour, the initiatives that we had put forward . . . and I would go back to the early days of this pandemic when it was this government that was the first province to put in place the self-isolation support program to ensure that we are not putting people in the position of facing the choice of not . . . Well if the Leader of the Opposition would like to hear the answer, Mr. Speaker, I'll provide it.

Mr. Speaker, this province was the first province to put in place the self-isolation support program. Mr. Speaker, it was then through meetings that I chaired at the Council of Federation meeting that we had the Safe Restart program, over \$20 billion that was transferred to the provinces, Mr. Speaker, of which over, of over which 1 billion, of over which 1 . . . Mr. Speaker, about which of over \$1 billion, \$1 billion was committed specifically to the Canada recovery sickness benefit to all Canadians across Canada to standardize the dollars that they can access, Mr. Speaker.

We talk about patterns in here, and I heard the conversation around patterns, Mr. Speaker. You know this is a government that has invested and invested heavily across health care, Mr. Speaker, invested heavily in creating jobs and the opportunity for private sector investment, like was announced today, to create jobs in our communities across this province. We've taken the proceeds of that investment, turned it around, invested it into, yes, long-term care beds, which was asked about here today, continuing to invest in today, invested in new hospitals that we see in community after community, Mr. Speaker.

We're investing those dollars in the people that are providing services in those facilities and in our vaccination program to find our way through this COVID pandemic. And today, Mr. Speaker, this week we're offering more vaccines. We're offering those vaccines in more locations, and we're offering them to more Saskatchewan people than ever before.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Mr. Steele: — I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to report Bill No. 901, *The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act, 2020*, with amendment, and to present its second report. I move:

That the second report of the standing committee on the

private member's bill be now be concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 901, *The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act, 2020*, and that the bill and its amendments be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 901, *The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act, 2020*, and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 901 — *The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act, 2020*

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 901 — *The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act, 2020*

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 901, *The Saskatoon Foundation Amendment Act, 2020* be now

read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning in committee I had the great opportunity to talk about the Saskatoon Foundation board and the CEO and the staff and the good work that the Saskatoon Community Foundation does. It is a registered charity here in Saskatchewan. It stewards some \$61 million in endowed and non-endowed funds, also manages \$20 million in funds for other charities. It committed \$46 million this year that benefited 200 local community charities in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, I again would like to sincerely thank Mr. Ian Sutherland, Mr. Curtis Kimpton, and Ms. Carm Michalenko, the CEO, for all of the good work that they have done. I'd also thank, Mr. Speaker, at this time Mr. Ken Ring, the Legislative Counsel, for his help in drafting this bill. And I'd also like to thank members opposite, especially the member for Saskatoon Fairview, for speedy passage of this bill. Mr. Speaker, at this time I'd like to thank all committee members and move this forward.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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 Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise and offer comments on Bill No. 26, *The Police (Serious Incident Response Team) Amendment Act, 2021*. I want to thank my colleagues who have offered significant and pretty fulsome comments on this bill up to this date. They have canvassed many of the issues that are raised with this new bill which proposes a form of civilian oversight here in Saskatchewan. And of course we know that civilian oversight of police has been something that many groups across the province have been urgently calling for,

for many, many, many years. So while we welcome a move to go in that direction, we do have lingering concerns and questions about this particular piece of legislation.

The Justice critic, member for Douglas Park, as we know is a new mother, and it is my pleasure to act as the critic on this bill, as critic for human rights.

So I will have further questions about the bill in committee. We have canvassed very fulsomely across the province. Budget bills move more quickly, so while we were concerned to see this very key piece of legislation introduced as a budget bill, myself and my team have moved quickly to ensure that we consult with stakeholders on this pressing issue across the province.

I think I will leave my comments at that, Mr. Speaker, because I will be speaking to this at the committee level. And so with that, it is my pleasure to move Bill 26 to committee at this time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 26 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 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 Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 27, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2021*. Of course this is not the first time I've risen to speak to this bill, and so I will keep my comments brief. It is my pleasure to act as lead critic on this bill, and I will have further questions on it at the committee level. And so with that, it is my pleasure to refer this bill to committee, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 27 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

[14:30]

Bill No. 30

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 30 — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter some comments into the record here on Bill 30, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Amendment Act*. This is something that I want to be on the record as saying, I think is an absolutely, fantastic incentive.

When I look at the future of Saskatchewan and when I look at how we can grow and develop this province, things like this I believe are inherently good and helpful, not just to creating good, well-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker. And I would note, you know, in the tech sector the average salary here in Regina, well it's not the same as it might be in Silicon Valley or in San Francisco. Here in silicon prairie, it's about \$76,000, which, Mr. Speaker, that is not a bad annual salary when you look at the age of a lot of these start-up founders and folks working in this sector. These are wonderful, wonderful opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity last week to tour the Conexus incubator with the member from Saskatoon University and meet a number of the people and learn about the founders and the entrepreneurs who are really bringing true vision to this province, Mr. Speaker. And it's everything from people looking at recycling to folks planning trips, you know, to BrewNinja, a wonderful opportunity used by good friends of mine at the Pile O' Bones Brewing Co. here in Regina.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about actually building a true economic vision for Saskatchewan and a true future, things like this are fantastic and we need more of this, Mr. Speaker. I would encourage the members opposite to double down on this. You will not hear a word of criticism from me on this file.

For every \$1 coming into Saskatchewan's economy ... Or pardon me, for every \$20, one is coming from the tech sector, Mr. Speaker. And these are great accessible jobs. And when I look at a province like Saskatchewan, where we enjoy a low cost of living, where we enjoy what personally I believe is the true Saskatchewan advantage, you know, the ability to get things done in a small market, Mr. Speaker. A tech founder here in Regina who wants to look at how you can sort recycling to ensure

what's actually going to be recycled is appropriate, he can get on the phone and call Mayor Sandra Masters and get a meeting within a week. And that accessibility and that willingness to pitch in and help I believe is the true Saskatchewan advantage.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we have incentives like this that are truly focused on not just growing but developing Saskatchewan and giving people opportunities and the ways to truly build a future that they see for themselves and for their families, and then to take their profits and earnings and reinvest in other companies, Mr. Speaker, what a wonderful thing. And I wish, I wish we saw more incentives like this. And I'm very pleased to see that it will be retroactive and that it will be going forward for five more years.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that uncharacteristically glowing review, I am happy to conclude my remarks and allow this to proceed to its next stage in committee with my full and enthusiastic support.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 30 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 30 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 31

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. J. Harrison that **Bill No. 31 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan 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 glad to offer a few further comments in addition to those I made yesterday on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 31, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2021*.

The opposition believes strongly in innovation as an essential component to transitioning Saskatchewan into the future economy, into a future of sustainable prosperity. We believe in the role of government in building the capacity for our industry and our economy to respond to this future by continually expanding our R & D [research and development] and supporting the knowledge requirements of local firms, building the capacity of local firms to make use of this knowledge, and building the human capital, finance capital, and intellectual property that

underpins local knowledge and transforms into stronger existing and new industries.

With all innovation comes ideas, ideas where people search for improvements, look to solve problems, or because they are simply curious, creative, and imaginative people. We often find these people in our leading-edge institutions, Mr. Speaker. This includes the universities of Regina and Saskatchewan — indeed I think of, you know, InterVac — our technological centres and schools such as Sask Poly, and the industrial research centres such as PAMI [Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute]. These are where ideas and frameworks find root and grow. Strong innovation ecosystems are always integral to these types of entities and our province's economic future. But while ideas are the seed, Mr. Speaker, they cannot prosper without our great local entrepreneurs and business leaders who have courage and tenacious energy to take these ideas and turn them into businesses.

I look forward to asking more detailed questions of the minister on this bill in committee. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 31 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 34

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 34 — *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to enter into adjourned debate on Bill No. 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act*. You know, I do have a number of things I'd like to say about this. And I was taking time obviously to listen to my colleagues in opposition as we, like folks in other parts of Canada and internationally who read the news, are doing some collective head-scratching here. And you know, it's not good when Saskatchewan makes the news nationally and internationally on something that, to folks who don't live here, make it seem so backwards and that we're really lacking the kind of vision of what this province will need for generations to come.

So I want to start with just a little bit of, you know, like reflecting personally on this bill. And you know, recently I had made the decision to buy a vehicle, Mr. Speaker, following the election. You see prior to that, you know, most of my transportation was within Saskatoon Eastview. I didn't have to go too far between my home and my work and so I rode a bicycle most of the time. I'm not a winter cyclist. You know, I never really . . . Not since university did I have that in me during the winter. But I'm kind of a three-season cyclist. My bicycle is from 1972, you know, probably around the same age as one of my fellow members from Saskatoon, from Riversdale. Caught a couple of vehicles here in the last week so probably around the same era.

But after I got elected I knew that my previous mode of transportation likely wouldn't get me to my new job, so I had to look at buying a vehicle. And, Mr. Speaker, it was something that I thought about a lot. You know, I'm somebody who likes a good sale. I'm somebody who doesn't . . . I haven't bought a new vehicle in about 15 years, so there was a lot of thinking. And obviously one of the things that I had to think about, a lot of folks think about when making this decision is where do I want my money to go and how will my choices impact others?

You know, one of the tenets of sustainability is that we need to think about, you know, how do my choices impact somebody else's ability to meet their needs. And the definition of sustainability is, you know, meeting my needs in the here and now without impacting somebody else's ability to meet their needs. It might be somebody who lives somewhere else on the planet or somebody who isn't born yet. And so this is kind of the filter that I often apply when I'm making decisions like this. How will my decisions impact others?

And I was in a fortunate position to be able to afford a hybrid vehicle. I know that's something . . . They're expensive, you know. If you go buy electric or hybrid vehicles they cost more money. And when you spend more money on that vehicle you're contributing more through your PST [provincial sales tax].

And so this is a decision that I made and I'm really happy with that decision. It's been a fantastic vehicle. It's great on gas. Certainly it generates some savings for us, but I think for me that was . . . Again, I was in a fortunate position to make that decision and it's been really positive. But one of the neat things about driving the vehicle, Mr. Speaker, is I pay a lot more attention to the fuel that I'm using. And it becomes a bit of one of the joys of driving to think, well, how little can I use in terms of how I drive it, how often I drive it. And it's something that I think is very necessary.

So when we look at what's happening with this bill, again I just go back to that head-scratching, you know. And it just makes me wonder about what are we doing to protect our beautiful province and our role as part of a collective movement on planet Earth to move towards a sustainable model of living. And I think that we fall short with this bill, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think that I want to note the transportation sector in Saskatchewan accounts for 23 per cent of total provincial emissions. And that's based on 2018, the most recent data from Canada greenhouse gas inventory. So obviously this is a huge amount of emissions that we need to look at and to generate some plans. And so it's a head-scratcher to see our provincial

government generate a plan to tax electric vehicles when we are not at the very least generating targets for electric vehicle sales.

There's no planning from this government to work within Canada to reach targets for 2050 that will require all vehicles to move towards zero-emission vehicles. There's no plan in Saskatchewan, while we are taxing electric vehicles, to set targets, to make a plan, to be part of this transition. There's nothing happening. And so just this one very small decision, though it may be, sends the wrong message. It sends the message that we are not going to go in the direction that not just the rest of our country is going but the rest of the planet.

I want to point out a few examples here, you know, and I've heard some of these spoken of in here. But I want to point to British Columbia, where policies have been wildly successful in accelerating electric vehicle adoption. In 2020 EVs [electric vehicles] accounted for roughly 9.5 per cent of new vehicle sales. There's 50,000 EVs on the roads in BC [British Columbia] compared to about 400 here in Saskatchewan.

They've developed a plan for how to get there and it takes planning. And unfortunately a lot of that planning also takes incentives. And we've decided here to go in the opposite direction.

So the Sask Party proposing an EV tax would dissuade the uptake of electric vehicles. And they've sometimes used the example of other places where they have implemented these type of taxes on electric vehicles, but what they've failed to report is that in places where they have implemented these taxes, they have already reached a critical mass of electric vehicles on the road. And that was through incentives, government planning, and you know, what we like to call skating where the puck is going. So they've decided to bring in these taxes after they've already done the work to move in the direction that we so obviously need to go. We are choosing to do this in a different order, and that brings me back to head-scratching.

Now the other thing that I've heard a lot of in the discussion of this bill is that this is being done under the guise of fairness, that there's some . . . like this is somehow levelling the playing field with internal combustion engine vehicles. But I want to question that, Mr. Speaker. You know we see that electric vehicles, you know, there are really very few roads in the province that are equipped with the infrastructure to allow them to travel with ease, to recharge. So it's not really very fair, I don't think, to say that they need to pay the same as everyone else when the infrastructure isn't there for them to travel on. Again these are steps that, had the government taken to incentivize these vehicles, to build up the infrastructure, to have a plan, that maybe a tax like this would make a little bit more sense and the argument of fairness would also be there.

[14:45]

But I also wanted to say one more thing, Mr. Speaker, on the argument of fairness. I wonder like for whom is this fair? Is this fair for my kids? I know members on both sides have grandkids. Is this fair to them? Is it fair to them to fight against, you know, to actively oppose a transition to zero-emission vehicles? It just doesn't make sense, and I don't see this as being something that is fair to our children and grandchildren and future generations

in Saskatchewan. So I do reject that argument of fairness. It does not come across as fair. It comes across as short-sighted, and it's not something that I'll be supporting for all the reasons that I've detailed today.

I will move that Bill 34, that we adjourn debate on this bill. I'm looking forward to hearing more comments from my colleagues in opposition as to why this bill just simply does not meet the needs of the present or the future. On that I will move Bill 34, the fuel tax amendment, that we adjourn debate on the bill. 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. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of the committee this afternoon and 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 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:47.]

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