



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

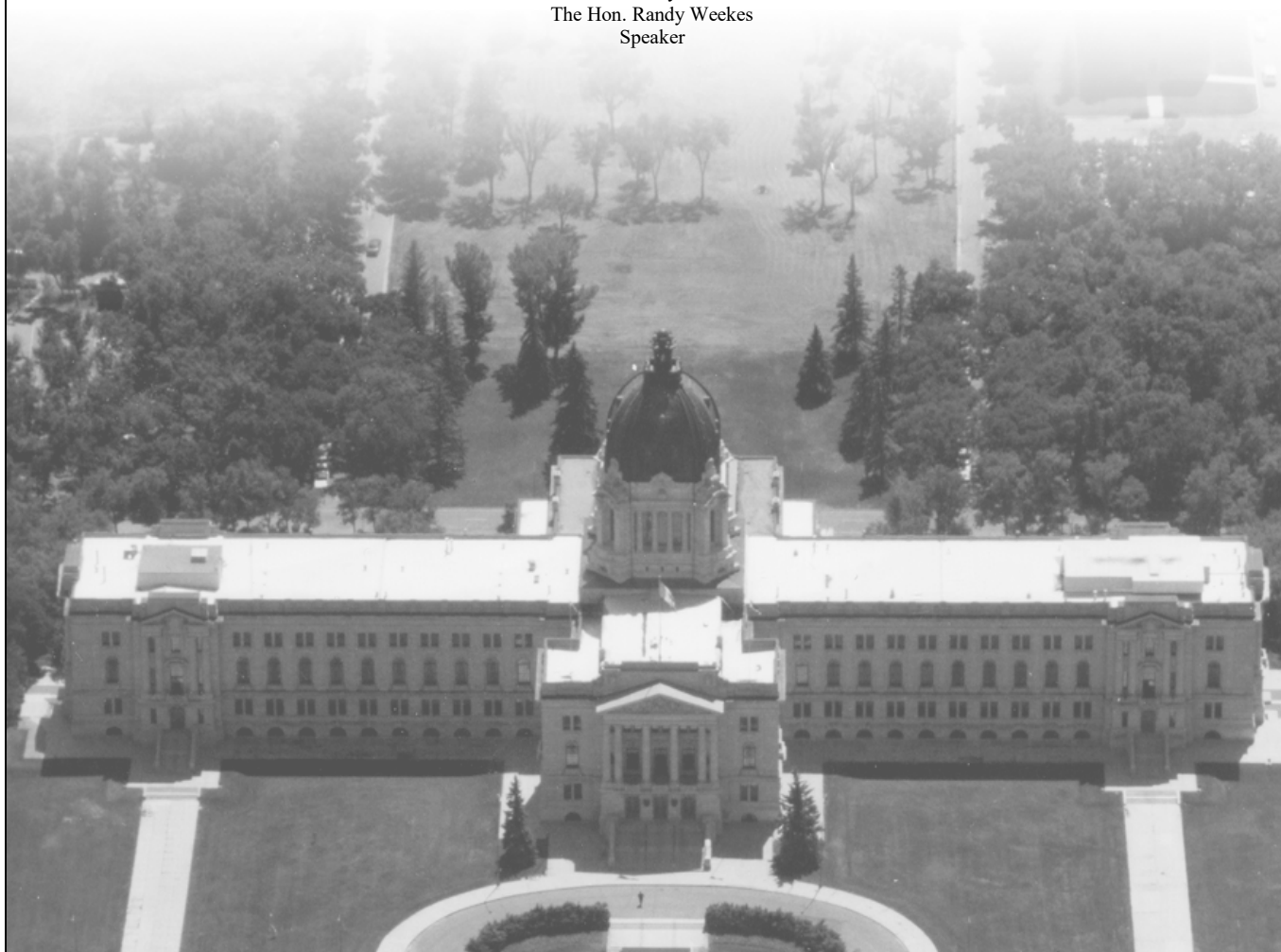
of the

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)
Docherty, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)
Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)
Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)
Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)
Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)
Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)
Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)
Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)
Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)
Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
McLeod, Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
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

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

Sergeant-at-Arms — Terry Quinn

Hansard on the internet

Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Calendar>

CONTENTS

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker.....	689
------------------	-----

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Vermette	689
Young, A.	689
Conway	689

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Recognizing Impact of COVID-19 in India	
Wotherspoon	689
Weyburn Musician Tops Country Chart	
Meyers	690
Practice of Conversion Therapy	
Conway	690
Regina Boy Contributes to Financial Literacy Education	
Grewal	690
Internet Child Exploitation Unit Protecting Saskatchewan Youth	
Dennis	690
Dig Safe Month	
Cockrill	691
Viterra Constructing New Grain Elevator in Biggar	
Kirsch.....	691

QUESTION PERIOD

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic	
Meili	691
Moe.....	691
Management of Long-Term Care Facilities	
Love.....	693
Hindley.....	693
Group Homes and Children in Care	
Conway	694
Carr.....	694
Support for Saskatchewan Businesses	
Young, A.	695
Harrison, J.	695

POINT OF ORDER

Harrison, J.	696
Mowat	696
The Speaker.....	696

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 602 — <i>The Sikh Heritage Month Act</i>	
Wotherspoon	696

MOTIONS

Remote Participation of Officials in Committee	
Harrison, J.	696

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 34 — <i>The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021</i>	
Bowes	697

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — I would like to table the Ombudsman of Saskatchewan 2020 annual report and the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner 2020 annual report in accordance with the subsection 38(1) of *The Ombudsman Act, 2012* and section 23(1) of *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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, 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. The petition I am serving today are from residents of Air Ronge. I so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for pay equity legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, I would note some of the positive movement that we have seen thus far from the minister responsible, as indicated by my colleague from Saskatoon University, and I would urge the government to continue to take this seriously and give it due consideration. Not only will this positively impact over 50 per cent of the people in the province, Mr. Speaker, this will help the government as well, as the more economic participation and upward mobility we provide to women, the more money that will flow to the government.

So, 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 of Saskatchewan to introduce pay equity legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition are from Saskatoon.

I do so submit.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to present a petition to save the Lighthouse for The Battlefords and provide core funding to emergency shelters across the province. As I've noted many times before, Saskatchewan is one of the last jurisdictions to adopt a core funding model. Core and block funding to shelters provides financial stability for organizations serving Saskatchewan's most vulnerable.

This petition is particularly concerned about the possible closure of the Lighthouse serving The Battlefords, which 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 in that first year and it's never seen its funding returned, Mr. Speaker.

With that, I will read the prayer as follows:

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

The signatories of this petition reside in North Battleford. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Recognizing Impact of COVID-19 in India

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today in solidarity with India. COVID-19 continues to take control of places all over the world, but as we have heard, India is facing devastating realities.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is strengthened by and privileged to be home to many Indo-Canadians. I know many of those here in our province have family and friends who still live in India, and they are hurt and feeling hopeless.

The cases of COVID-19 and variants of concern are on the surge. Yesterday India reported 17.9 million cases. Yesterday they also reported something even more heart wrenching. I stand here today knowing that over 3,000 lives were lost yesterday — 3,000 lives lost just yesterday. The infrastructure is not in place to support people. They have reached capacity in hospitals. They've maxed out resources. And for those mourning the losses of loved ones, the crematories are unable to make space. The crisis in India is real and it's heartbreaking.

I ask all members to stand with me to recognize and stand in

solidarity with all those in India, all those who have family and friends in India, and all those who continue to face the impacts of COVID-19. We may be a world away, but that does not mean it's not close to our hearts.

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

Weyburn Musician Tops Country Chart

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Weyburn, Saskatchewan was once known as the Opportunity City, and that seems especially applicable today. There's oil fields, there's grain farmers, there's cattle ranchers, and now a country music superstar. It's been a long journey for Tenille Arts; in fact it's been 2500 kilometres. That's how far it is from McKenna Hall in Weyburn to the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Tenille is celebrating a history-making number one single this week with her breakout hit "Somebody Like That." It reached the top spot on the Mediabase/Country Aircheck chart.

Now Tenille grew up taking lessons at Music Craft in Weyburn. She played a number of small fundraisers for family and friends, and she would post her country favourite idols' songs on YouTube. All along the way, her mom Glenda was there, attending virtually and literally every show.

Now Arts is the first Canadian artist to top the country charts in over a decade, and the number one hit song is also making history of another kind. The song was co-written by Arts, Allison Cruze, and Alex Kline, and is the first number one song in country music history that was written, performed, and produced all by females.

I'd like to ask all members of the House in joining me in congratulating somebody like Tenille Arts for topping the charts and making Weyburn and Saskatchewan proud of our newest superstar. Thank you.

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

Practice of Conversion Therapy

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address the harmful practice of conversion therapy, a practice based on the false belief that diverse sexual and gender identities are illnesses that can be cured through treatment. These programs prey on the LGBTQ2S+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, or two-spirit plus] community and particularly its youth at a time when they are working to develop confidence and self-acceptance.

Last night Regina City Council took a step towards banning conversion therapy after a marathon meeting. While this is good news, my heart hurt for my LGBTQ2S+ friends and constituents who were the subject of reductive comments suggesting they are deviants, perverts, porn addicts, and pedophiles.

We have a long way to go, Mr. Speaker. Just this week we saw a gay Saskatoon city councillor become the target of vitriol. Nipawin's gay-straight alliance was banned from painting a rainbow sidewalk, citing slippery paint. And here in Regina a previous iteration of the public school board recently voted down

a basic motion acknowledging and celebrating Pride in our schools.

Homophobia and transphobia are woven deep into our communities, our institutions, and our halls of decision making. I ask all members to join me in sending love and solidarity to our resilient LGBTQ2S+ community, who have had to face this diminishment. I also call on this Premier to at the very least make a statement that conversion therapy has no place in this province.

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

Regina Boy Contributes to Financial Literacy Education

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize a young boy named Rashid Heydar-Zada, who was one of the seven finalists chosen to compete in a national financial literacy fair.

Mr. Speaker, at nine years old, Rashid is learning the importance of saving money and wanted to share his helpful tips with the rest of the nation. Rashid sent a video into the fair, where he shared his tips on how to save money to the tune of "Can't Stop the Feeling!" by Justin Timberlake. In the video he had three jars: one for saving, one for spending, and one for sharing. My favourite tip he shared though was, if you are having a little trouble staying out of your savings, you should glue down the lid to your savings jar — something I will be teaching to my grandchildren one day.

Mr. Speaker, the competition coincided with Talk With Our Kids About Money Day, which is an opportunity to educate our children on their financial future. Though he did not win the first prize, he is well on his way to securing a safe financial future for himself.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that this Assembly join me in congratulating Rashid on his success at the national financial literacy fair. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Internet Child Exploitation Unit Protecting Saskatchewan Youth

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan internet child exploitation unit, or ICE, does critical work for protecting Saskatchewan residents. The unit's mandate is to reduce internet-facilitated child exploitation by identifying victimized children and investigating and assisting in prosecution of the sexual offenders.

In response to the increased number of internet-based crimes against children, our government is providing an additional \$243,000 in this year's budget to help ensure the important work continues. In 2020 the work of ICE was critical in laying 115 charges against 39 people in 2020, and we hope that the additional funding will help continue to go after similar individuals moving forward. This investment shows that our government is committed to working with our partners so that all Saskatchewan community residents and communities are safe.

The unit is led by Staff Sergeant Shawn Stubbs of the Prince

Albert Police Service, who recently took over from Sergeant Scott Lambie. I want to ask all members to join me in thanking Sergeant Stubbs, Staff Sergeant Lambie, and the entire ICE unit for the important work they do in protecting our Saskatchewan youth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Dig Safe Month

Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to announce the Government of Saskatchewan has declared April, Dig Safe Month here in Saskatchewan. Our government has proclaimed this designation since 2011 to increase awareness of the importance of working safely around buried infrastructure.

We know there's going to be a lot of digging activity across the province this spring whether it's new construction or homeowners planning a new fence, and we want this work done safely, Mr. Speaker. These activities often take place near critical underground infrastructure that deliver natural gas, electricity, water, phone, cable, and internet to the people of this province.

Uncontrolled excavation is the most frequent cause of damage to underground utilities. Hundreds of contacts with these utilities occur each year due to improper digging practices. The consequence of these line contacts can result in service loss and costly property and equipment damage. More importantly, Mr. Speaker, these incidents can result in injuries or fatalities.

Prior to the start of any digging project, simply click or call before you dig. Contacting Sask 1st Call to have underground infrastructure located and marked is a free service. Let's make sure everyone goes home safely this spring.

I now ask all members to join me in recognizing Dig Safe Month. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Viterra Constructing New Grain Elevator in Biggar

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have more great news to share for the town of Biggar. Earlier this fall Viterra announced that it is starting construction on a new grain elevator. This also includes a grain dryer and a loop track for more efficient unloading of producer trucks and loading of railcars. Viterra is a global grain company with proud roots in our province and, just like the town of Biggar, a history going back nearly a century.

[13:45]

The current facility on the CN railway line has storage capacity of over 11 000 metric tons. The new state-of-the-art elevator will triple that capacity up to 34 000 metric tons by 2022. Kyle Jeworski, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Viterra North America, stated, "We're pleased to be revitalizing our presence in Biggar area and making a long-term commitment to our customers through this significant investment."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Viterra on this exciting

news and for believing in our province. I ask all members to join me in welcoming another significant investment to the town of Biggar, further contributing to its revitalization efforts. Mr. Speaker, New York is big, but our future is Biggar. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Tuesday the Premier admitted that this hasn't been a good week. And then weirdly yesterday he tried to walk that back, a strange move considering just what's been going on in the province. Leading the country in hospitalizations, overwhelmed ICUs [intensive care unit] even if the Premier doesn't want to see it with his own eyes, dozens of new deaths, and well over 1,000 new cases every week.

The Premier, the Premier knows he's failed. And whatever the trained-seal applause around him might suggest, the members opposite know he's failed as well, Mr. Speaker. And you know who else knows, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan know that he's failed because there's just no ignoring the deaths, the illness, the chaos caused by his inaction.

So to the Premier: knowing how badly things have gone under his watch, what does he think has been his biggest mistake?

The Speaker: — I would like to caution the member that making personal comments about another member are not in order. I ask the Leader of the Opposition not to make comments that may impugn or reflect on another member's character. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Every day I get up here and I'm interested to hear how the Leader of the Opposition has paraphrased — incorrectly — some of my comments from earlier question periods, Mr. Speaker. But more than fine for him to say that, as we're all accountable ultimately, Mr. Speaker.

What this government has done over the course of the last close to 14 months now, Mr. Speaker, is used all the tools that we have available to ensure that we're able to do what we can to protect people's lives in this province and to protect their livelihoods. Mr. Speaker, that started with our testing and contact tracing capacity, of which about 15, 16 months ago no one was testing or contact tracing for COVID. Mr. Speaker, we ramped that up to a level that we very seldom are able to hit each and every day here in this province. Mr. Speaker, we have followed that up with the access to rapid tests in our schools, in our correctional centres, in our long-term care centres, in our health care centres in this province, Mr. Speaker, to augment that testing capacity.

We have engaged in public health measures across the province when they are necessary. And, Mr. Speaker, we are now currently in the midst of delivering the largest vaccination effort this province has ever seen, leading the nation with vaccines that we're making available to Saskatchewan people. Over 422,000 vaccines delivered to date. Mr. Speaker, over 40 per cent of our eligible adult population has now received their first dose. Mr. Speaker, that's over 32 per cent of the total population. That's an

important number, Mr. Speaker, that'll come to light in the days ahead.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ignoring the second wave, relaxing restrictions when he saw variant cases on the rise, failing to do anything to prevent the deadly outbreaks in long-term care, and refusing to visit overwhelmed ICUs. I can see why the Premier has a hard time picking out his biggest regret.

But yesterday he added another one: rejecting paid sick leave to protect Saskatchewan workers. Rejecting that paid sick leave on the National Day of Mourning for workers hurt or killed on the job, despite the calls from labour leaders, from doctors, from public health experts saying this is a key and critical tool to fighting the second wave.

So to the Premier once again, because he chose not to answer yesterday, will he tell the people of Saskatchewan why he thinks the lives of Saskatchewan workers aren't worth protecting with paid sick leave?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said yesterday, this province was the first province in the early days of COVID to move on the self-isolation support program to support people that did have to stay home from their work. And they would still be able to access at that time \$450 a week.

Mr. Speaker, through the negotiations of the Safe Restart between the Council of Federation — all of Canada's premiers and the federal government — over \$20 billion was transferred to the provinces. The federal government explicitly wanted to move into this area of paid sick leave. They had said as much and they put the dollars behind that, Mr. Speaker. They formed the Canada recovery sickness benefit. Over a billion dollars they invested in this program, Mr. Speaker, in the Canada recovery sickness benefit to uniformly offer this sick leave across the nation of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, that was part of the Safe Restart program. It was part of the request and the agreement between 13 provincial and territorial premiers and the Prime Minister of this nation. Mr. Speaker, it's the program that is in place for all 30-plus million Canadians should they require it.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier will always point fingers at anyone but himself. He blames Saskatchewan people. He points fingers at their personal responsibility, will never take any personal responsibility for himself, and will never show any leadership for himself.

Mr. Speaker, when I asked him last week, I asked him last week about the P.1 variant that is rising in our province. He said, COVID is COVID. Well the experts think differently, Mr. Speaker. The SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] CEO, Scott Livingstone, said, "This is not the same COVID virus we saw in 2020. We are seeing younger people and they are sicker, and

we've got a lot of tired critical care workers in Regina."

Whether the Premier wants to see it with his own eyes or not, the truth is the game has changed. Isn't it time for us to change our approach? Isn't it time to show leadership and introduce paid sick leave here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, another paraphrase by the Leader of the Opposition that just is incorrect. If I recall correctly, the words I had said last week to the people of this province were a note of appreciation, a thank you, a thank you for adhering to the public health measures over the course of the now year plus a couple of months, Mr. Speaker. A thank you to over 40 per cent of our adult population that has now gone out and received their first dose of this vaccine, Mr. Speaker — 60 per cent, 60 per cent of those over 40 years of age have now received their first dose, 48 per cent of those over 30, 40 per cent of those over 18. Mr. Speaker, over 32 per cent of Saskatchewan's population as a whole have received their vaccination, Mr. Speaker.

When we look around the world and look at a number of different countries that are ahead of us, yes, because they've procured vaccines earlier, they have started to re-open their communities, re-open their countries, Mr. Speaker. And I would take of note the United Kingdom, where the UK [United Kingdom] variant originated, Mr. Speaker — thus its name — at 43 per cent, 43 per cent of their total population, they did start to slowly turn up the dimmer switch on re-opening their communities, re-opening their economy, Mr. Speaker.

We're sitting at just over 32 per cent here today. That is — just so this isn't misinterpreted — thanks to the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier talks about the economy. But the worst thing for our economy is COVID-19 running wild, people getting sick, going to work sick, infecting others, filling up our hospitals, filling up our ICUs, shutting down businesses, Mr. Speaker. The worst thing for our economy, the worst thing for our health, is this Premier — a Premier who's dedicated to doing as little as possible, always too little and always too late.

But it's not too late, Mr. Speaker, it's not too late for us to make a change. We have two and a half weeks left in this session, Mr. Speaker. We have two and a half weeks left. We're willing to do the work. To the Premier: will he work with us and introduce paid sick leave to protect the people of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is if the Leader of the Opposition had his chance, there would be no paid sick leave required because he would shut down all of the businesses and everybody would be sitting at home, Mr. Speaker. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that is a fact of what is occurring here in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's relevant to look at, you know, the Leader of the Opposition and an opposing party that want to continue to look back, Mr. Speaker. And you have a government, Mr. Speaker, that does have, yes, the challenges that government has but is looking forward, looking through to the end of this pandemic and is charting a course alongside Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan businesses, Saskatchewan communities on how we are ultimately going to achieve that.

We're looking around the world, looking at places like the UK that were challenged with the same variant that we, for the most part, are here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. How they found their way through that variant, it was through a mass access to vaccines, Mr. Speaker. When they got into that 40, 45 per cent of their population being vaccinated, they started to find their way back to normal life, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd have a message to the people of this province. The first is a thank you to all of those that have received their first shot; and to all of those that have not, I would say as soon as it is your turn, I would ask you to do so. And if you're on the fence, you shouldn't be. Mr. Speaker, everyone in this province needs to go out and get their vaccine, and we will find our way through the COVID-19 pandemic in Saskatchewan.

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

Management of Long-Term Care Facilities

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind the Assembly that Saskatchewan does not have an independent seniors' advocate. So the work of our Provincial Ombudsman is vitally important when it comes to seeking answers and seeking reforms for people who are being let down by this government, including families of loved ones in long-term care.

The minister said yesterday that they had partially implemented her recommendations from 2015. Well my question to the minister is, which parts? And why doesn't this government think that seniors deserve the benefit of all the desperately needed reforms that the Ombudsman has already called for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the Ombudsman's report, as I mentioned yesterday, a vast majority of the recommendations have been implemented. The one that is outstanding is with respect to the 2015 investigation by the Ombudsman in her report at Santa Maria. Eighteen of the 19 recommendations, Mr. Speaker, have been addressed, with work on the final recommendation ongoing.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that this is with regards to implementing a publicly accessible reporting process that families can use to see whether each long-term care facility is meeting the program guidelines for special-care homes. And, Mr. Speaker, work is ongoing. It is under way currently on that final recommendation, Mr. Speaker, and will continue. Thank you.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman annual report shows a 49 per cent increase in health-related complaints since 2018. Fifty-one from last year were related to long-term care, and this should not be a surprise. This government sat on the sidelines for years, ignoring concerns coming from every direction, including those coming straight from the Ombudsman.

We understand her report on the deadly outbreak at Extendicare will be coming within the next few months. That gives this government a chance, a runway of time to implement previous calls from the Ombudsman from five years ago.

This is a call to publicly report on how long-term care homes perform. Will the minister commit to that today? And if he won't, can he provide a clear explanation to the people of Saskatchewan why not?

The Speaker: — I'd like to recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We acknowledge the tragic circumstances that have happened at Parkside Extendicare and any of the other previous incidents that have been investigated and, Mr. Speaker, have been done so thoroughly and have been, where there's been recommendations, where this government has fallen through it. And that has happened over the years, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned previously, 18 of the 19 recommendations in the 2015 investigation have been implemented. The investigation from 2016, all seven recommendations implemented. There was an auditor's report from 2014, all 12 recommendations implemented; 2012, an auditor's report, all five recommendations implemented.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on but I would say this: Mr. Speaker, this government takes this very seriously. We look forward to the Ombudsman's investigation and to her thorough work, and we'll be collaborating fully with her through the SHA and the ministry, and looking forward to her recommendations when she's completed her report.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, it's sad to hear this minister cherry-picking facts without addressing the big concerns. So let's look at how well Extendicare performed in meeting standards and expectations of care.

If the Ombudsman's recommendations have been implemented, Extendicare would have been publicly reporting on conditions and one of two things would have happened: either they would have been shamed into fixing the long-standing issues, or families simply would not have placed their loved ones inside these ticking time bombs.

[14:00]

This government has handed Extendicare millions of dollars, and the Ombudsman and others have found problems over the years. I'll go through them again: harassment of employees; rodent infestations; scabies outbreaks; seniors dehydrated, malnourished, and riddled with bedsores. All the while this

company hands out millions of dollars to its shareholders. It is shameful and it cannot go on. Will the minister commit today to scrapping their deadly contract with Extendicare?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Seniors.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question has been asked before and as I've said previously, we take this very seriously. I've extended my condolences to the families of all those residents at Parkside who tragically lost their lives earlier this winter, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we've asked the Ombudsman to do a very thorough investigation and why we're co-operating fully through the SHA and the ministry. We've asked Extendicare to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, we're not going to prejudge what might be in the Ombudsman's report. We know she will do a very thorough investigation. And it's those recommendations that we look forward to, to help us make sure that we can improve long-term care for residents in our seniors' care homes, in our personal care homes all across this province.

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

Group Homes and Children in Care

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the for-profit model failed the many seniors who died in Extendicare's homes. It's also failing vulnerable children and youth in our province. As the root causes go under-addressed, child apprehensions are on the rise, and this government's solution is now to contract out to for-profit group homes.

Just when we're seeing the for-profit model fail so extraordinarily, the Ministry of Social Services is turning to it to care for our most vulnerable children. Why, Mr. Speaker? Does the minister opposite really think that for-profit companies are going to put the interests of vulnerable children ahead of turning a profit?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, protecting the safety and well-being of children in the care of our ministry is a top priority.

The Ministry of Social Services identifies children who are in immediate need of danger and child maltreatment and determines what interventions are required to ensure safety. The ministry always looks for ways to keep families together if possible and reunite them as soon as possible. But there are instances when we have to put these children into care. And we always pick facilities that are the best for these children, Mr. Speaker.

The Ministry of Social Services over the past several years have worked very hard to try and ensure the safety and well-being of all of these children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — The best facilities? I hope the minister will take a break from reading her script and look to one of the examples from this province where a child was failed spectacularly while in for-profit care.

Elijah was a seven-year-old boy. Elijah was a seven-year-old boy living in a group home in Saskatoon. He was found naked and confused in a Tim Hortons parking lot. His discovery prompted the child advocate to investigate the home, which found another child . . . egregious medical neglect, required hospitalization — the advocate's words, not mine — malnourished, Mr. Speaker.

Public Accounts shows that this government shelled out \$8 million to that out-of-province Ontario for-profit company. A senior staff member in that company tried to mislead the advocate. Surely this company was barred from ever caring for another child in Saskatchewan. But no, Mr. Speaker, it continues to operate for-profit group homes in Saskatoon today.

Does the minister recognize that the for-profit model failed Elijah, the other children in that home, and it continues to put children at risk in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and once again I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that she brought up the work that the advocate does for the province of Saskatchewan. She does a lot of work. She looks into these reports and she reports back to us. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Services, while they work with the Advocate for Children and Youth, look into individual circumstances, individual situations that happen. They work together to find solutions and they work together so that in the future, situations don't happen again.

Mr. Speaker, our ministry does care for the children of this province and does the best they can to take care of them. When situations arise, we work with the advocate to find proper solutions to help ensure that they do not happen again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, did she read the report? The advocate made recommendations in 2017 that your ministry ignored, and that's why this happened. We should be learning from the lessons of the dangers in for-profit long-term care and applying those lessons to vulnerable children in our province.

The Children's Advocate's most recent report urges proper resourcing of the group home system, comprehensive oversight, accountability. We know that for-profit group homes were highlighted for not meeting the requirements of quality of care. Yet despite those failures, despite pointing that out, this budget continues to allow these for-profit homes to operate in our province.

Will this government review its decision to contract for-profit group homes that continue to harm our province's children and youth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And once again I do thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, I don't think I could make it much more clear. The Ministry of Social Services and this government does care about the people of this province, including our children and our youth. Mr. Speaker, we're going to provide services for those children and youth, whether that be in a group home, whether that be in a foster family home, or whatever kind of service that we provide for those children to ensure that their safety is kept.

And when and if unfortunate circumstances take place, this government has and will continue to act on any recommendations that come forward to try and ensure that it does not happen in the future, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Services takes their job very, very seriously, and it's quite insulting to the people that work there for them to insinuate that they don't. Thank you.

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

Support for Saskatchewan Businesses

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, this week we've heard from the minister's own officials and colleagues around the cabinet table that the jobs minister has been focused on doing everyone else's job, including the Health minister's. But, Mr. Speaker, maybe if he allowed the Ministry of Health to do their job, we'd have consistent enforcement, safer workers, and lower COVID numbers.

Maybe if he'd stayed in his lane and focused on helping businesses instead of interpreting public health orders willy-nilly, we'd have timely and accessible assistance. But instead our worst-in-the-nation jobs minister is so focused on building fiefdoms and micromanaging everyone else, he has forgotten about small business.

So, Mr. Speaker, today is April 29th and the SSBEP [Saskatchewan small-business emergency payment] expires tomorrow on April 30th. And his government's own public health orders extend to May 10th. So can the minister explain why thousands of businesses are still waiting to hear whether or not they'll receive any assistance updated for May 1? Or has it always been his plan to both under-promise and under-deliver?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On the specific question, I would encourage the member to stay tuned. There's going to be more news very soon.

On the jobs front, though, Mr. Speaker, we've had a remarkable week in this province. Announcements from Cargill. Announcements from Viterra. Announcements from Dunkley Lumber. Just another announcement from Viterra about a new elevator. Things have been going remarkably well, Mr. Speaker — literally nearly \$2 billion of investment just in the last month in this province.

On the jobs front though, Mr. Speaker, I want to correct the record, something that I brought into the House here about a week ago, Mr. Speaker. And talking about the NDP's [New Democratic Party] massive hypocrisy on jobs. Sending 32 per cent of every dollar outside of the province for those who worked on that campaign. As it turned out, Mr. Speaker, that information is wrong. I apologize to the House. New documents have emerged, Mr. Speaker, and that number is actually 54 per cent, Mr. Speaker, of dollars that went outside of the province. One I would point to, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker's hurrying me up here. I look forward to the next question.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Why thank you, Mr. Speaker, and you have no idea how much deep, deep joy it gives me to know how much real estate I take up in the member opposite's mind. But, Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly clear who's really calling the shots when it comes to COVID-19 because our worst-in-the-nation jobs minister is in charge of small-business supports, which he's going to announce at his pleasure apparently. He's in charge of the Re-Open plan. He's in charge of interpreting public health orders.

So, Mr. Speaker, here's a question for the Health minister; see if he can answer it. Do you, sir, have any regrets about handing the Health response off to the jobs minister who's failed doubly or maybe even triply — I don't know any more — failed to protect jobs and he's failed to protect COVID-19. So to the Health minister, any regrets?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And of course the BRT [business response team] works very, very closely with the SHA officials, who of course are the lead on public health measures.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's go back to the previous discussion about jobs. One of the . . . the NDP campaign return, \$978,000 that they spent in total, Mr. Speaker, \$527,000 of which went out of province. Here's an example. There's many examples, Mr. Speaker, and we might have a chance to canvass some more of them, but here's one of them.

The Leader of the Opposition's personal photographer, Mr. Speaker. Apparently he needed a personal photographer. But the pictures that came out, Mr. Speaker, of him reading his own book, for example, with a pensive look on his face; him outside on a hill with a slightly less pensive look on his face, Mr. Speaker; him in a parking lot with a very pensive look on his face, Mr. Speaker — it covered the entire gamut of the Leader of the Opposition's emotions. Where did this person come from, Mr. Speaker? They came from Vancouver, Mr. Speaker. Could he find no one from Saskatchewan to take his own picture?

The Speaker: — Ministerial statements . . . oh. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, during question period, you had made a ruling on the first question with regard to members referring to other members in a respectful way. One of the cornerstones of that is obviously that members do not reflect on or criticize the rulings of the Speaker. The entire House heard the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre do directly that: criticize your ruling. I would call on that member to do the right thing: stand up, withdraw, and apologize.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening very intently during question period. I believe what the member said was, apologize to the seals. I do believe she was referring to the actual animals that exist in a joke, Mr. Speaker. I believe it was a joke and had nothing to do with your ruling. I think the point of order is not well founded, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Well thank you for that. I think I'll deal with this right now. I heard the comment. You know, we'll leave it at that today. But just to restate — I won't say it again, what I said to the Leader of the Opposition — please be careful about your personal comments to members.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 602 — *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 602, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member from Regina Rosemont that Bill No. 602 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

[14:15]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask for leave to move a motion regarding committee sitting tomorrow.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to move a motion regarding remote participation of a committee meeting. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Remote Participation of Officials in Committee

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to colleagues for providing leave. I would move that:

Notwithstanding the sessional order dated April 6th, 2021 for the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Economy on Friday, April 30th, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. in room 8, the rules for remote participating members, section 6(b) shall not apply; and further

That Saskatchewan Research Council and Innovation Saskatchewan officials are permitted to participate in the meeting remotely.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved:

Notwithstanding the sessional order dated April 6th, 2021 for the meeting of the Standing Committee on the Economy on Friday, April 30th, 2021 at 2:30 p.m. in the mānawapiwin nāyati room, the rules for remote participating members, section 6(b) shall not apply; and further

That Saskatchewan Research Council and Innovation Saskatchewan officials are permitted to participate in the meeting remotely.

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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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 University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to offer my comments on behalf of the official opposition with respect to Bill 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*. This bill brings in a new \$150-per-year tax on electric vehicle owners, with the government claiming the tax will ensure drivers of EVs [electric vehicle] pay their fair share to maintain roads in Saskatchewan, which they say are normally funded through gas taxes. I believe that taxes collected on gas just go into the General Revenue Fund.

Many of my colleagues have already spoken very passionately and capably in opposition to this bill, and so I'll chime in as well to further reinforce what they've said. Many of my colleagues have already spoken very passionately. I've noted since EVs are more costly, their owners are already paying more in provincial sales tax than owners of internal combustion engine vehicles. Electricity is also something that is already taxed.

I'd spoken to the new tax on electric vehicles in my budget reply, and I'll reiterate some of my comments here. The EV tax is just one more example of this government's agenda to stubbornly and blindly maintain the status quo in our province despite the incredible opportunities that are just waiting to be seized upon. Decisions like this one would seem to be based solely on ideology. This is just one more display of how old and tired and stuck in the past this government really is, kind of like that one old embarrassing uncle that we all have who just can't seem to grasp or keep up with the progressive changes in society that are happening all around them.

Instead of showing leadership by responsibly and proactively diversifying our economy or by incentivizing actions that will help us to reduce our shameful levels of greenhouse gas emissions, this government does the exact opposite. They stick their head in the sand, they double down, and they bow to their corporate overlords and their enormous donations.

With the suspension of the net metering program, this government has already hobbled the solar industry in our province, which should be an industry that is thriving. Here in Saskatchewan we have the greatest solar resource in Canada. Why are we not taking advantage of it? Now we see this government disincentivizing people from making the switch to electric vehicles . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. Order.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you. Appreciate it. With their new tax, Mr. Speaker, on EV owners. With only 400 electric vehicle owners in Saskatchewan, amounting to less than 1 per cent of provincial vehicle ownership, the government's new tax on EVs will bring in a grand total of \$60,000 — an absolute joke. But it wasn't really about the revenue, was it?

Again, where are the purchase incentives or literally any progressive policy to help the people of this province make the

shift to environmentally responsible transportation? This latest move is completely unsurprising, coming from a government that has no policy whatsoever to reduce transportation emissions.

Mr. Speaker, this latest move is entirely consistent with the government that we see over and over again shirking their responsibility to lower greenhouse gas emissions which remain the highest per capita in all of Canada. This government is setting our province up for failure by refusing to acknowledge and embrace the future economy. I hope they will change course to ensure the people of our province won't be left behind.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2021*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee later 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 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:22.]

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