



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

## Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

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# DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 29th Legislature**

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

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

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**Moe**, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)  
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**Ottenbreit**, Greg — Yorkton (SP)  
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**Ross**, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (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)

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**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

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Bowes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present a petition again today calling for pay equity legislation. The signatories would like to bring to our attention the following points: the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation which has not been pursued by the Government of Saskatchewan. Pay equity is a human rights issue, Mr. Speaker. Economic equality for women is a basic human right, and pay equity legislation is fundamentally necessary in order to achieve women's economic equality.

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.

Mr. Speaker, today the petition has been signed by people from Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and present a petition to save the Lighthouse and provide core funding to emergency homelessness shelters. The Lighthouse serving The Battlefords is the only general emergency shelter of its kind in the area. It was opened in 2015 to fill a need in the community for people struggling with homelessness, with mental health challenges, with addiction, Mr. Speaker, and it faced a 90 per cent cut to its core funding within the first year. That funding has never been reinstated, and The Battlefords serving North Battleford is at risk of closing.

This petition also speaks to the larger issue of the lack of core funding for shelters, which is of course an issue that plagues shelters across the province.

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 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, Mr. Speaker, reside in North Battleford. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Nippi-Albright:** — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak about the petition calling for the government to reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: Quebec-based Lambert Peat Moss has proposed the creation of a peat moss mine near La Ronge in northern Saskatchewan. Many local residents, hunters, trappers, and traditional land users are opposed to the proposed peat moss mine and are concerned about the potential for damage to habitats, including critical habitat for caribou, woodland caribou, traplines, and drinking water sources, as well as climate impacts.

More than 20,000 people have signed an online petition calling for the proposed peat moss mine to be stopped:

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.

With that, I present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Rare Earth Processing Plant Planned for Saskatoon

**Mr. Friesen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For many years technology has been advancing at a rapid pace, and sophisticated technology requires the rare earth elements that can be found right here in Canada. Last year, in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Research Council, our government announced the construction of a rare earth processing facility in Saskatoon. And that investment, Mr. Speaker, is already paying off.

Mr. Speaker, Cheetah Resources, a Canadian subsidiary of Vital Metals, announced today that they are planning a \$5 million rare earth extraction plant in Saskatoon. This extraction plant will complement Cheetah's mining investments in the Northwest Territories and allow for the complete rare earth metal supply chain to occur here in Canada. Mr. Speaker, ore will be mined in Canada's North, transported to Saskatoon, and turned into carbonate at Cheetah's new facility and refined into oxides by Saskatchewan Research Council, ready to be exported to market.

When asked why they chose Saskatchewan for their investment, Cheetah noted that SRC's [Saskatchewan Research Council] capability, accessibility of land, and the ease of permitting all made Saskatchewan their province of choice.

Mr. Speaker, investments like this show that Saskatchewan will rebound from the pandemic, despite the doom and gloom coming from the members opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina

Lakeview.

### Investment in Early Childhood Education

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to rise as the critic for Education in recognition of early childhood educators around the province today. Early childhood educators are some of the most impactful people in children's lives. They've been on the front line throughout this pandemic, ensuring families receive the quality care and education crucial to the healthy development and growth of our youngest citizens. Despite being named essential service providers during this pandemic, these critical workers — primarily women and often newcomers to Saskatchewan — remain some of the lowest paid people in the education sector.

Mr. Speaker, this government has, and I quote, proclaimed May to be "... Early Childhood Education Month and is an opportunity to acknowledge the important role early childhood education plays in the growth and development of children."

With the recent announcement of funding available in the federal budget, this government now has an opportunity to act on this acknowledgement and finally address long-standing issues in early childhood education. This government has an incredible opportunity to invest in the economic infrastructure that is child care and to ensure that our next generation is being set up for success.

I ask this government to truly recognize the contributions of our early childhood educators and not leave one penny of the federal money available on the table. Thank you.

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

### First Nation Opens New Business

**Ms. A. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this Chamber today to recognize a First Nations business locating in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, on April 21st, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, along with their partners Lake Country Co-op and Federated Co-operative's new brand, Western Nations, announced they will be building a new gas station with a convenience store and a Chester's Chicken drive-through.

Mr. Speaker, Sturgeon Lake First Nation's Chief Greg Ermine at the ribbon-cutting ceremony noted, "Tipi Fuel and Convenience Store is an exciting new venture for both the city of Prince Albert and the Sturgeon Lake First Nation. As referenced in the name Tipi, this project will be designed to include the traditions and the values of the First Nations." Mr. Speaker, Chief Ermine indicated this will not be the last business venture that the Sturgeon Lake First Nation hopes to bring to the city of Prince Albert. This project and others will benefit Sturgeon Lake First Nation and the city of Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me today in congratulating Sturgeon Lake First Nation and their partners in their construction of a new fuel and convenience store in Prince Albert.

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

### Support for Workers during Pandemic

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Saskatchewan workers. The pandemic has caused increased mental health challenges for so many in this province. This week is Mental Health Awareness Week, and I stand here in solidarity with all Saskatchewan workers.

Many have been laid off and many continue to work on the front lines to support our province, while not receiving the support they deserve from the government. Burnout, anxiety, depression — these are all on the rise. What many of us may not be aware of is that COVID-19 is considered a traumatic event. Traumatic events can cause physical, emotional, and psychological harm.

I stand to bring awareness because I worry for the people of this province. I worry deeply that this government is not doing what it needs to do to protect the mental health of those who are suffering. No paid sick leave, a grossly low minimum wage, increased stressors, limited access to resources and support — this is a crumbling system, yet this government continues to throw scraps at working-class people.

So to all the workers in this province, those on the front lines, those working from home, those laid off and unemployed: we hear you, we see you, and we will continue to fight for you.

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

### Renewal of Prince Albert Victoria Hospital

**Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand today to announce that the renewal of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital is moving ahead. Stantec has been selected as the design firm for this very important project. Stantec's team of local architects and engineers have a proud history of infrastructure project delivery throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert is the major hub for essential health care services across northern Saskatchewan. Our government is pleased to see this redevelopment project moving ahead. We look forward to working with the local community and our Indigenous partners to ensure it includes all the services and amenities they require.

We are investing more than \$300 million in the redesigned hospital for a new acute care tower, the replacement of existing mental health space, and renovations to the current facility. Upon completion, the total number of beds available is expected to increase by about 40 per cent, with space to expand further as needed.

Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital is a critical component of our province's health infrastructure. This significant investment will serve not only the people of Prince Albert but the entire northern half of the province for years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Be Ready for Anything during Emergency Preparedness Week

**Mr. Keisig:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has proclaimed May 2nd to the 8th as Emergency Preparedness Week. This year's national theme is Be Ready for Anything. Citizens across Saskatchewan and Canada are urged to identify the risks to their home and property, make a plan to respond to those risks, and prepare an emergency kit containing at least 72 hours of supplies in the event that local services are disrupted during a natural or human-caused hazard.

As we have all seen, Saskatchewan is not immune to emergency events like wildfires, floods, or severe weather events. In order to implement an emergency plan, residents need to know that an emergency is happening nearby. Mr. Speaker, the residents of Saskatchewan rely on the SaskAlert system to notify them of active emergencies in their area. A test of this system is timed for Wednesday, May 5th, at 1:55 p.m. This alert will be broadcast to wireless devices, radio, TV, and the SaskAlert app and website. We encourage everyone to download the SaskAlert app from their app store or from SaskAlert.ca. During Emergency Preparedness Week, let's all take the time to Be Ready for Anything. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Saskatchewan Government Donates Ventilators to India

**Mr. Grewal:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have all seen and heard the upsetting news out of India where they have been struggling with a massive surge of COVID-19. The situation is critical. And we want to express our deep concern and sincerest sympathies to the residents of India and to our own Saskatchewan residents who are worried about friends and family in India.

Mr. Speaker, our government is doing more than extending our sympathies and words. I'm proud to report that our government is reaching out and donating 100 ventilators to India. The donation will include 30 critical-care ventilators and 70 subacute ventilators. This donation will help provide critical resources to support care for the seriously ill in a country which has recently been suffering greatly.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, this is a global pandemic, and we are fortunate that we can make this donation while ensuring our own residents continue to have access to all necessary medical equipment. Early in the pandemic Saskatchewan proactively sourced several hundred additional ventilators. Thankfully we have not had to use anything near our capacity.

We all share the desire to see India, its residents, and the world come through this pandemic as safely, quickly, and healthy as possible. We are very happy to do our part to help. 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. Whether the Premier is willing to admit it or not, he's made serious mistakes in these past few months, mistakes that have cost people their lives and put people out of work.

In November the Premier downplayed the second wave. He boasted how Saskatchewan long-term care facilities hadn't been hit the way other provinces were, but he did nothing to do the work to prevent those deadly outbreaks happening here in Saskatchewan. As a result, over 100 people died in seniors' care homes here in the province.

Why did he do that, Mr. Speaker? Did he have information saying that somehow our long-term care homes would be spared, or was he just crossing his fingers and hoping for the best? Mr. Speaker, does the Premier regret acting on wishful thinking instead of taking every step he could to protect Saskatchewan seniors?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Right at the outset of this pandemic, I can remember conversations — myself and the previous Health minister — with respect to long-term care and some of the decisions that were brought forward from the Saskatchewan Health Authority around, you know, cohorting of staff, Mr. Speaker, keeping our staff in one location as opposed to working at multiple long-term care locations, Mr. Speaker. There was funding provided to ensure that that could actually be the case for our staff, our very valued staff that work in long-term care facilities taking care of our family members across the province.

That's but one example, Mr. Speaker, of the measures that were put in place very early. They were built on by public health measures that were put in place for communities and in long-term care facilities where, sadly, family members have not been able to enter into those long-term care facilities for some period of time.

Thankfully, more recently, due to how Saskatchewan people have met the challenges of COVID-19 by adhering to the public health measures and, yes, going out and getting vaccinated when it's their turn, we've been able to loosen up some of those opportunities so that people, family members, are able to go in and see their family in these facilities over the course of the now last number of days, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question of course was about the over 100 seniors who died in long-term care homes because this government chose to do nothing to protect them.

Mr. Speaker, he doesn't want to look at his own record. But let's talk about March. In March the Premier saw variants on the rise, and he inexplicably chose that time — the worst possible time — to relax restrictions. A hundred more Saskatchewan people have died since that fateful choice.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he made that choice based on the

information he was given. Surely then he wouldn't have any problem releasing that information to the public, because otherwise we have no option but to conclude that once again this Premier has put his own political desires ahead of public safety.

To the Premier: will he release the public health advice that guided this and other key decisions? Or do we simply have to assume he has a good reason to want to hide his role and his responsibility?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, every week I go out myself, multiple times with the media, once a week with Dr. Shahab. The Minister of Health goes out, Mr. Speaker, and we speak quite clearly to the public health advice that we have been provided. And we speak to the decisions that we have come to with public health and the Government of Saskatchewan on behalf of the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, we have done that for many, many months now with respect specifically to COVID.

And I would say that we are going to have a little bit more to say on this later today, Mr. Speaker, due to the effort of Saskatchewan people in adhering to the public health advice, going out and getting vaccinated. And we have people that are being vaccinated as we speak, 37 years old and over in this province, Mr. Speaker, the drive-through right in our capital city.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a very clear conversation with the people of this province as to what the metrics are for us to move through the COVID pandemic, and what we all need to continue to do to ensure that we're able to move through this COVID pandemic together, Mr. Speaker, get back to the way that life used to be, like they are in other areas of the world. Mr. Speaker, better days ahead for this province.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Premier continues to show no humility, no responsibility, no accountability for the pain caused by the choices he has made, no respect for the people of Saskatchewan and the suffering he has put them through, Mr. Speaker.

But as always, today's a new day. It's an opportunity to do better. The Premier said today he plans to put out the next steps for the road ahead, Mr. Speaker. Well any kind of plan would be preferable to the erratic blind driving we've seen thus far from a Premier who brings out new surprises every Tuesday without any explanation of whether or why he'll make any particular change.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to a plan that is guided not only by vaccination numbers, as important as we all know those are, but also by clear benchmarks about what's happening with COVID-19 in Saskatchewan? Test positivity, hospitalization, community transmission — these need to be part of that plan, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier show his work and release the public health advice that leads to these next decisions? Or will he continue to keep Saskatchewan people in the dark?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, no one's been left in the dark in

this province. We've been very clear with the public health measures that we've had in place across this province over the various number of months, Mr. Speaker. And we've been very clear on our message with respect to, when it's your turn, make your appointment; go to a drive-through; phone your pharmacy, and get vaccinated. Mr. Speaker, we can't be any more clear than that.

And saying that, as we move ahead here, Mr. Speaker, we are going to ensure that we continue with the cautious and measured approach that we have, Mr. Speaker, but understanding the rates of vaccination that we have in this province. And when you look at examples of other areas of the world, and I would take note in Israel or the UK [United Kingdom] or the USA [United States of America], but the UK in particular started their conversations and moving forward with their reopening road map, Mr. Speaker, in that country at about 43 per cent of their adult population vaccinated. Today we're at 44 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to put these metrics in place. The metrics will be based on vaccination rates as ultimately as has shown in these other areas of the world where their vaccination rates are higher than us. They drive the other rates of COVID, the other metrics of COVID, Mr. Speaker, the severe outcomes of COVID down. And that's what we want to do here in this province.

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

### Construction Industry in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier should show his work with respect to public health facts, plain and simple. And that government and that Premier needs to do so much more to get people back to work, to get our economy on its feet. The Sask Party's damaging decision to add the PST [provincial sales tax] to construction labour has driven jobs and investment and people out of this province.

The government is apparently launching a plan to reopen the economy later today. So why not take this as an opportunity to admit their mistake, to scrap the PST on construction labour, to get people back to work, and to get this economy back on its feet?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Finance minister.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, if nothing else, I have to say the member opposite is very persistent on this. He's brought it up now for three years. They ran an election on it and lost, Mr. Speaker, and quite frankly the facts fly in the face of what he has said time and time and time again.

When you look at just the recent announcements that we have had of the development here or investment here in the province, we have the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre. We have the Genesis Fertilizers facility just announced today, Mr. Speaker. The North American Helium announcement that we had a member's statement on. There is the big announcement by Viterra. Cargill is making a huge investment in our province.

Clean Seed Capital Group Ltd. Richardson International Ltd. with the crush plant in Yorkton. We have Highrock Resources



Ltd., and Kindersley-based Verdera Energy is expanding, Mr. Speaker. We also have Benchmark PPE. We have Proton Technologies, Prairie Lithium corporation, the NRGGen, the Dunkley Lumber and Nutrien announcements just within this last year.

Mr. Speaker, that is incredible investment in this province.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — That's a lot of spin, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that we've lost 23,000 jobs in Saskatchewan this year, the worst jobs creation record of all of the country, of all of the provinces. And according to the building permit numbers out today, the hardest hit construction sector in Canada too. Saskatchewan was the only province, the only province to see a decline, year over year, in the value of building permits. And that's after years of losses after the tax hike.

It's no wonder that this is happening, with the imposition of the PST onto construction labour that's driving the cost of projects up, and projects away, and people out of this province.

The Sask Party's keen to talk about their plan to reopen, but they've got no plan to get us out of last place when it comes to construction and when it comes to jobs. Why won't the Sask Party simply take the PST off of construction and get people back to work?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — The one thing, quite frankly, that's a lot of spin is what that member just said. This is over \$2 billion worth of investment in our province. I hardly think that's just a lot of spin. This is real investment within our province, real construction, real jobs, and we'll add to that the number of housing starts has gone up incredibly in the last several months.

So, Mr. Speaker, he may think that's just a lot of spin. We view that as investment. We view that as economic growth. We view that as jobs that are going to be created right here in this province. It shows confidence in this province. It shows confidence in this government. And it would not happen if the NDP [New Democratic Party] were in government.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, don't let the facts get in the way, hey? Stats Canada: a 12 per cent decrease, the worst in Canada in construction this year, year over year. Listening to those members you'd think that everything's just fine in Saskatchewan, but the numbers don't lie, Mr. Speaker. The worst job numbers in the country, the worst decline in construction in the country, the worst population decline in years — all from a jobs minister with the worst jobs record in Canada.

Saskatchewan people just can't afford to wait another day longer for this government to turn things around. Why won't the Sask Party admit this was a mistake, scrap this damaging tax, and use this summer's construction season to get people back to work and our economy back on its feet?

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

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, it shouldn't surprise people in this Chamber, but that member is completely wrong. The construction numbers, I have them right in front of me from March, the last StatsCan jobs report: construction, up 7.9 per cent, Mr. Speaker, year over year. I have no idea what that member is talking about.

And more good news today, Mr. Speaker, from Statistics Canada. Merchandise exports, these are the exports from this province that go around the globe. Mr. Speaker, how much were they up over the course of the last month? Twenty-six per cent, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-six per cent increase in exports. How much were they up over the course of the last year, Mr. Speaker? A remarkable 14 per cent increase in exports year over year.

Our job creators are doing a wonderful job in this province, Mr. Speaker, and that would never have happened if those guys were in government.

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

#### Vaccination of Early Childhood Education Staff

**Ms. Beck:** — We're expecting this government's second crack at a reopening plan later this afternoon. But we know this: this plan is doomed to fail if we're opening up our economy while child care workers are left unprotected by vaccines.

This government's patchwork approach has child care workers in centres attached to schools eligible for their shot, but those in stand-alone centres left out. How does it make any sense to pick and choose which essential workers are worth protecting based on which building they work in?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] has done a tremendous job in prioritizing people in this province based on age. Mr. Speaker, that's where we have seen the most severe outcomes in terms of hospitalizations and deaths, and it's why Saskatchewan is one of the leading countries not only in the rollout of vaccines, but also getting us to a position wherein today in Saskatchewan those that are 37 years old and over are able to get a vaccination, Mr. Speaker, are eligible to be vaccinated.

[14:00]

That's not the case in most other provinces, Mr. Speaker, that have gone a different route in terms of their vaccination rollout, Mr. Speaker. What we're going to see, as vaccine supply increases in the province, we're going to see that age eligibility continue to go down. I think it's going to go down in a pretty significant way, Mr. Speaker, as we see more vaccines delivered to the province by the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

I would urge those workers in any of those occupations that have been designated, Mr. Speaker, that are eligible to get their vaccinations. At a time when, for example, the members opposite

were calling for teachers, Mr. Speaker, more than 50 per cent of teachers were already eligible. There are child care workers that are eligible today to get a vaccination, and I encourage them to do so.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — “A complete oversight and it’s wrong.” That’s how Dr. Alex Wong described this government’s choice to leave our child care workers out of the vaccine plan. It isn’t surprising that this government continues to treat child care as an afterthought. This government sat on federal child care funding for a full year before they deployed it to the already struggling sector. And now this government is musing about opening up the economy without providing protection to all child care staff.

These essential workers, Mr. Speaker, cannot work from home, and if they’re sick they have to stay home, meaning the rest of us can’t work. There is nothing more essential to an economic recovery, Mr. Speaker. Will this minister commit to vaccinating all child care workers today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more urgent in terms of reopening the economy to get as many people as possible as quickly as possible vaccinated in this province, Mr. Speaker. And that is what we’re going to do, Mr. Speaker. And that is how we’re going to be successful in this province.

Mr. Speaker, again when we deal with a limited supply of vaccination and make determinations of what prioritization looks like, it means that somebody has to come off the list. So we hear often from the members opposite of who should be added to the list, but they never finish that sentence, Mr. Speaker, and explain who should be off the list.

We’re able to be at 37 years and over in this province for a very good reason — because of the way the vaccine rollout has gone in Saskatchewan. It’s gone very well. It’s been very successful, Mr. Speaker. I would urge all of those that are eligible, Mr. Speaker, to get their vaccinations regardless of their occupation. We’re doing it by age and we’re doing it very quickly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it’s very disappointing that the Minister of Education is shilling for the Health minister instead of standing up for these essential workers across our province. The SHA doctors are reporting that COVID transmission is out of control in two-thirds of our province. Our provincial test positivity rate is above 6 per cent and that rate was more than 11 per cent in Regina yesterday.

Community transmission is simply not under control in this province. The decision to keep piling kids from households across the province into child care centres with unvaccinated workers is a dangerous and even deadly proposition, Mr. Speaker. Again to this minister: will he reconsider and commit to

offering vaccines to essential child care workers today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again if the federal government was able to increase the supply coming to Saskatchewan, that could mean that we could prioritize additional people based on occupation, Mr. Speaker. But the quickest way to get vaccinations to the greatest number of people and has been proven to work is here in Saskatchewan, where we have largely focused on age-based vaccinations, which means that we’re down to 37 years old, Mr. Speaker.

That’s likely going to decrease further this week, Mr. Speaker. That’s great news for this province. The quickest way that we can get back to what normal is going to look like is getting shots in arms as quickly as possible. I had mine on Sunday night, Mr. Speaker. I was about 15 minutes behind the member from Regina Rosemont. Mr. Speaker, that is the quickest way that we’re going to get back to what normal is going to look like in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Child Care Subsidies and Tax Reductions for Families**

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked about child care subsidies last week in committee. The Minister of Social Services said it wasn’t appropriate to address my concerns at the Human Services Committee. Perhaps the floor of the Assembly is a better place.

Mr. Speaker, a single mother of one, two, even three children making the country’s lowest minimum wage does not qualify for the maximum child care subsidy in this province. Many are forced to drop shifts or leave their jobs altogether. The antiquated child care subsidy system in place for the Ministry of Social Services could direct valuable federal child care dollars to get our economy back on track and help working people. Will the minister commit to doing that today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — I’m not exactly sure the time, but I was told at some point that the member opposite had stated that a single parent making \$1,640 a month would not be able to get the child care subsidy, and that simply is not true. For one child the maximum threshold is 3,900 and for two children the maximum threshold is 6,200.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that with the proposal that the federal government has included in their budget this year, and with discussions of both this program and the programming that falls under the Minister of Education, all of this will be looked at because it’s very, very difficult to compare the different programs and subsidies that take place in each of the different provinces. We all approach this differently. Saskatchewan, for example, is the only province that has a universal child tax credit that parents all benefit from.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Let's talk about numbers for a minute. And I would ask that the Minister of Finance consult its own website. And listen to my words — the full subsidy. They don't qualify for the full subsidy. And clients of mine at Legal Aid, who were receiving the full subsidy, were still paying upwards of 450 per month for child care. So the full subsidy doesn't even cover child care, and what you're talking about is a partial subsidy.

Does the minister know what someone working full time on minimum wage earns? Seventeen hundred a month, net. A two-bedroom runs at 1,100 per month, and I know first-hand that licensed child care is about 700 per month per child, Mr. Speaker. We shouldn't expect any single parent in this province to go into debt by the time they pay their rent and put a kid in child care.

I was 10 years old the last time you increased the subsidy — 25 years without a change, Mr. Speaker. The subsidy made sense when the minimum wage was six bucks an hour and rent for a two-bedroom was less than 500 for a month, but it doesn't make sense now.

Will this government, with its worst-in-the-country minimum wage, commit to ensuring that parents can access child care?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — I would hope, quite frankly, that when that member opposite is talking to her clients that she's also telling them that in this province we have the lowest income tax in the country, or the second lowest, I believe, and it's because the personal tax exemption is so high in our province, something that we have increased a number of times and now we've indexed it. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? That means that each individual in our province gets to keep more of their income to spend as they so choose, and that may be in child care.

I hope she tells her clients that we have the only universal child tax credit in the country, and I hope she's telling her clients we also have a low-income tax credit that is cash that goes directly to her clients that they can spend on the child. Mr. Speaker, again, very few provinces have that. I hope she's telling the clients everything that this province has to offer, which is among the lowest taxes in the country for families.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't even know what to say to that pivot. And it just shows how out of touch this government is with low-income and working people, Mr. Speaker.

Like I said, many single working parents can't access the child care subsidy. Further, parents on income assistance are excluded, Mr. Speaker. I guess the Ministry of Social Services thinks low-income people couldn't use or don't deserve a babysitter. But child care isn't babysitting, Mr. Speaker. It's early childhood education. And this government is making child care inaccessible to the folks that could benefit from it the most.

The minister's own social service recommends early childhood education. It's simply good for kids. It can break the cycle of poverty. But because of this government's priorities, children in poverty are the least likely to access it. Does the Ministry of

Social Services think kids deserve a head start only if they can afford to pay?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the member opposite doesn't understand that if you allow an individual to retain more of their earnings, that allows them to spend it in how they see fit. And that may be on the child. She would rather have a subsidy that's dedicated to one thing and one thing only. That means the parent that chooses a family member to look after their child does not benefit from it.

If a couple, maybe low income, but they make the choice to go without a few things so that they can stay, one of the couple can stay home with the child, they also benefit. That is the importance of a universal child tax credit. That is the importance of keeping personal income tax low, Mr. Speaker, is that it allows all families to benefit from being able to retain their own income, Mr. Speaker.

She's fixated on one program and one program only, without looking at the whole suite of tax reductions that this government has made.

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Dennis:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 17, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2020* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 17 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may now proceed to move third reading.

## THIRD READINGS

### Bill No. 17 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2020*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 17 be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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.

**Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

##### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Dennis:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 18, *The All Terrain Vehicles Amendment Act, 2020* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of SGI.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 18 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move to third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 18 — *The All Terrain Vehicles Amendment Act, 2020*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 18 be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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.

**Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

[14:15]

##### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Dennis:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 24, *The Vehicles for Hire Amendment Act, 2020* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of SGI.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I request leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 24 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 24 — *The Vehicles for Hire Amendment Act, 2020*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 24 be now read the third time and passed under its title. 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.

**Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — Third reading.

## 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 Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into debate on this bill. I did read with delight the comments of my colleague, the critic for Environment. She certainly covered this bill and its implications with far more detail than I can hope to.

But generally, Mr. Speaker, I won't mince words. This government is completely failing people in Saskatchewan on the issue of climate change. It is so blinded by its right wing ideology that it throws up childish roadblocks to even minor action on climate change. This tax on EV [electric vehicle] vehicles is just the tip of the iceberg.

The climate crisis is not only the single greatest challenge we are facing, it is our single greatest opportunity to build a more equitable future and create good sustainable jobs. This government really hasn't achieved anything in terms of reducing our emissions.

And today we could be investing. We could be doing so much more. We could be investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, public transit, renewable energy, energy conservation, home and building retrofits, and of course zero-emission vehicles.

Solar, wind, geothermal energy, of which this province is rich, is part of the solution. We can harness these natural gifts. Of course baseload is always an issue, but there are solutions if we have the will to explore them. For example, Manitoba has hydro power to spare. We need only invest in infrastructure to get us where we need to be. It can easily be done, Mr. Speaker.

With the planned gas rebate, the tax on EV vehicles, this government is actively making it more difficult to take meaningful action on this important issue and it's just so embarrassing. They're actually leaving federal dollars on the table. We cannot keep sticking our heads in the sand on this issue, Mr. Speaker. It's irresponsible and it's economically stupid. We are going to be left behind. Our single-largest trading partner, the United States, has announced historical investments into transitioning to a new economy. The new economy is coming, Mr. Speaker. We can see some gains or we can keep feeling the pain.

This government was ill-prepared for the pandemic. They don't know how to think ahead to plan proactively for the future, and we're seeing that same approach play out on the issue of climate

change.

The truth is the industries that have served us so well are changing and we need to adapt. What is the plan to transition in such a way that protects workers, for example, especially our resource workers? There is zero plan, Mr. Speaker. All there is is bravado and denial. I have many, many energy workers in my riding, Mr. Speaker, and they're worried. No matter how hard this government tries to sell them a false bill of goods that is in it for them, these workers know this government is in it for their bosses, whoever is cutting the cheques. When the going gets tough, this government will not have their back and they know this intuitively. Energy workers want a plan and they deserve one — a plan that ensures they can keep paying their mortgage, supporting their families. They're just as interested in leaving a healthy and habitable planet for their kids as anyone else, but they're concerned, rightfully, because no one is taking them into consideration.

We need an unprecedented change if we are going to tackle the crisis of climate change, Mr. Speaker. And this government's discussion on nuclear reactors is just a pathetic distraction.

The appetite for leadership is so high on this, Mr. Speaker, and I am very disappointed to see bills like this come forward for consideration. This bill is more about sending political signals than doing anything meaningful on the greatest challenge facing, at least my generation, and those to come.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will close my comments and I'm adjourning debate on this bill, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. 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 day, 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. The House now stands adjourned till 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:22.]

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

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**Premier**  
**President of the Executive Council**  
**Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs**

**Hon. Fred Bradshaw**  
Minister of Highways  
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**Hon. Donna Harpauer**  
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**Hon. Jeremy Harrison**  
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Saskatchewan Government Insurance  
Minister Responsible for  
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**Hon. Christine Tell**  
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**Hon. Gordon Wyant**  
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