



FIRST SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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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.

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

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Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
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Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
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Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
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Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to save the Lighthouse and provide core funding to emergency homeless shelters. These citizens wish to raise to our attention that Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada that still uses a per diem funding model where emergency shelter for a person facing homelessness is provided only for social assistance recipients per bed per night, whereas other provinces use a block funding model where the shelter is funded by providing core funding and the shelter is open to anyone who needs it.

The Lighthouse serving The Battlefords was opened in 2015 to fill a need in the community for people facing homelessness, addictions, and mental health challenges. It faced a cut of 90 per cent of its core funding from the Government of Saskatchewan only one year after opening. This funding has never been restored.

I'd like to 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.

This is signed by individuals from North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to present a petition once again today calling for pay equity legislation. The signatories would like to bring to our attention the following points: that Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. In addition, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we have one of the highest gender-wage gaps in Canada, and the goal of pay equity legislation is simply to reduce that gap between men and women, something we should all surely have no trouble supporting.

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, the petition today has been signed by people from Prince Albert and Hague. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People. A significant percentage of those missing in Saskatchewan are Indigenous.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to claim they are dedicated to reconciliation, but if this was the case, we would not be begging our government to take the reports of these missing women, girls, and gender-diverse peoples with an ounce of legitimacy. I stand here in this Chamber to speak out about systemic racism. I do this because it is real. I stand here in this Chamber to speak out about systemic racism.

Mr. Speaker, this government continues to take no action against the pathways that maintain and uphold colonial violence being perpetuated against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, ignoring the historical and intergenerational trauma, ignoring social and economic marginalization, maintaining the status quo, and ignoring the agency and expertise of Indigenous people. How many more missing and murdered Indigenous girls and gender-diverse peoples need to be reported for this government to act?

Mr. Speaker, I stand here not to ask those in government to stand in solidarity because standing won't bring those lives back. I stand here instead to demand this government to act, to read the final report into the inquiry, and to create a province that values Indigenous women, girls, and diverse-gender people. miigwech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Red Dress Day

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize Red Dress Day, or the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Mr. Speaker, Red Dress Day was established by Indigenous artist Jaime Black, who created an art in Winnipeg featuring a collection of hanging red dresses. The empty dresses reminded us that an Indigenous woman or young girl should be standing in front of us, but she is not. It is a solemn and tragic reminder of the Indigenous women and girls that are missing or who have lost their lives to domestic or sexual violence.

Mr. Speaker, this day is an important part of bringing attention to the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and our government has taken significant steps to address this issue. This includes ongoing participation in activities resulting from the National Inquiry as well as working with our

Indigenous partners to improve confidence in and access to the justice system.

Our government knows that there is more to do, but today we will pause and send our condolences to the families who have lost a loved one in this tragic way.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that all members in this Assembly join me in recognizing Red Dress Day. Thank you very much.

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

Access to Midwifery Services

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, today on International Midwives' Day, it is especially fitting to recognize that midwifery services are not nearly as accessible to Saskatchewan women as they need to be. Midwifery care is something Saskatchewan women are passionate about and have been calling on the government to adequately fund for years. Midwifery wait-lists in Saskatchewan are unreasonably long. In Saskatoon, for example, 53 per cent of women seeking midwifery care are turned away, and this is with no promotion at all of the services.

Canadian midwifery is the model of maternity care that enjoys excellent patient satisfaction. Midwifery is also associated with decreasing rates of intervention and is especially suited to providing care in rural and remote communities where transportation costs to transfer patients are staggeringly high. What's more, an expansion of midwifery care would also lead to an overall reduction in cost to the health care system. For example, midwives have comparatively lower rates of C-section births and for each C-section that is averted, cost savings are a minimum of \$6,000.

Mr. Speaker, a woman's ability to have the birth of her child facilitated by a midwife is an important part of women's reproductive rights, which this government must recognize. I call on this government to properly fund and resource the midwifery program in Saskatchewan. This must include funding of a post-second midwifery education program in Saskatchewan in order to promote a sustainable expansion of services.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

T.rex Discovery Centre

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we move towards the start of tourism season here in Saskatchewan, many people from across the province will be starting to enjoy more of our great attractions. Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the T.rex Discovery Centre located in the community of Eastend. The T.rex Discovery Centre, along with the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, partnered together to provide visitors with information across the world and an opportunity to visit the home of Scotty, the largest and oldest T. rex in the world. This world-class facility welcomes 10,000 visitors per year to the area.

Mr. Speaker, visitors have an opportunity while touring the T.rex Discovery Centre to work on actual fossils in the newly renovated lab and facility. Mr. Speaker, it gives visitors a chance to walk the trails along the scenic Frenchman River Valley before

heading to the town of Eastend, where they can enjoy the new splash pool and their beautiful golf course located within the community.

Mr. Speaker, the Southwest has many world-class attractions to offer visitors. Whether it's the Cypress Hills, the centre in Eastend, or Fort Walsh, tourism is a very important industry in our communities. Mr. Speaker, I would like now to ask all the members of the Assembly to join me in wishing our communities and our tourism sector a safe and productive 2021 year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Business Women of Moose Jaw Fundraise for Transition House

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to rise today and recognize the Business Women of Moose Jaw, a diverse group of ladies who gather to share their different perspectives and experiences. They connect with each other to develop and expand their network of colleagues, and they host guest speakers to encourage, empower, and educate one another.

In addition to showcasing their own successful businesses, these remarkable ladies go a step further by recognizing excellence in other women from the community through their annual PRISM Awards. PRISM stands for perseverance, role model, influential, successful, and mentor. The group uses this annual gala event as a fundraiser for the Moose Jaw Transition House, a safe home for women and children who are escaping situations of interpersonal violence.

Mr. Speaker, due to COVID-19, the annual PRISM Awards could not proceed this year, but true to their dynamic and creative nature, this group decided to take the opportunity to highlight previous winners and host a 50/50 online raffle. President Crystal Milburn advised me they raised over \$3,000 through that raffle, and after eight years of these fundraisers now, the Business Women of Moose Jaw have donated over \$100,000 to the Moose Jaw Transition House.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot express how much pride it brings me to be able to acknowledge this truly inspiring group of ladies from my home community, and to recognize the fantastic initiatives they continue to find that support and promote each other. I now ask my colleagues to join me in a show of appreciation for the Business Women of Moose Jaw and the wonderful work they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Remembering Colin Maxwell

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to share the great story of a community leader, Colin Maxwell. Colin was a school principal and the mayor of Spiritwood before being elected to the Saskatchewan legislature in 1982. He proudly represented the Turtleford constituency and was re-elected in the 1986 general election. During his political career, he served as minister to a number of portfolios, including Advanced

Education and Manpower; Parks and Renewable Resources; and Culture and Recreation, a precursor to the current Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport.

After his political career, Colin's dedication to the outdoors saw him serve as the executive vice-president of the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Last year a grouping of lakes in the rural municipality of Spiritwood was officially named Maxwell lakes in honour of Colin Maxwell.

The Maxwell family submitted this request through the geographic names program, which considers naming places and features for people of prominence in the province. These names are meant to reflect the culture and heritage of the province and its people, from our inception to present day. Mr. Speaker, Colin's dedication to Saskatchewan, and in particular his passion for nature and wildlife conservation, has made the decision to name the grouping of lakes an easy one.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the members to join me in congratulating Colin Maxwell on a well-deserved honour. Thank you.

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

Upgrade for Sodium Sulphate Plant

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to share exciting news on Saskatchewan Mining and Minerals Inc.'s new expansion at their sodium sulphate plant in Chaplin in my constituency. This \$220 million sulphate-of-potash fertilizer production upgrade is expected to increase local jobs by 50 per cent and create over 360 construction jobs.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget our government changed sodium sulphate royalties to diversify our potash sector and achieve growth plan goals. The project is supported by our new sodium sulphate incentive, which provides credit for projects that diversify or improve operating efficiency. The upgrade is also conditionally approved under the Saskatchewan chemical fertilizer incentive, which offers a 15 per cent tax credit on capital expenditures for eligible chemical fertilizer production facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the expanded Chaplin facility is expected to produce 150 000 metric tons of sulphate of potash yearly to help meet growing demand in North America and international markets. SMMI's [Saskatchewan Mining and Minerals Inc.] president Rodney McCann said the Saskatchewan government clearly understands the immediate and long-term role that rural projects such as ours play in strengthening and building Saskatchewan's economy as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank SMMI for their work as we continue to protect and grow our strong economy. 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. We're all hoping to see

Saskatchewan people vaccinated as soon as possible. Everyone in this Chamber is getting their shots and encouraging others to do the same. We all want to see case numbers fall and see our hospitals and our ICUs [intensive care unit] clear of COVID. We all want to get back to normal.

[13:45]

There is something about the plan released yesterday that troubles me, Mr. Speaker. Is the Premier really saying that if case numbers, test positivity rates, hospitalizations, and deaths persist at the high levels we've seen in recent weeks, or God forbid, even get higher as we're seeing right now in Alberta, that he would still choose to reduce public health measures?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the plan that we put forward yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the vaccine-based Re-Opening Roadmap for this province, Mr. Speaker, we have full confidence that in Saskatchewan as vaccination levels do increase, we will continue to see the steady decline of not only our case rates but ultimately our hospitalizations in the province, Mr. Speaker. That is what occurred in Israel; that is what occurred in the UK [United Kingdom]; it's what is occurring in the United States, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say that vaccines in Saskatchewan, the over 450,000 vaccines that we have administered to date, are working and working quite well in Saskatchewan. And nowhere is that more evident than in our long-term care homes, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure why the Leader of the Opposition does not have faith that what has occurred with vaccines in other areas of the world will not occur here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are at 37 years old and up are being vaccinated as we speak here today. That's going to move to 35 and up tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow you're going to see more details around how we're going to unroll our second-dose vaccination strategy with over 360,000 vaccines coming in May, Mr. Speaker. And we're also going to provide some guidance, given Health Canada's recent announcement this morning, with respect to lowering the age for the Pfizer vaccines, Mr. Speaker.

Most certainly, most certainly we're going to continue to offer vaccines to everyone in this province that is eligible in the days ahead, Mr. Speaker. We're going to find our way through this pandemic; yesterday we provided a road map for people to see how.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a simple yes-or-no question. Should cases climb, if numbers fail to fall — fall as we all hope they will — will the Premier still stick to a purely vaccine-related strategy? Or will he let the health of Saskatchewan people guide his actions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I agree, it is a simple yes-or-no question. Vaccines work. They worked in Israel; they worked in the UK; they worked in the USA [United States of America].

They are already working in Saskatchewan and will continue to work when we deliver 368,000 in the month of May, Mr. Speaker. So the question is, why does the Leader of the Opposition not believe that vaccines will work here?

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That the Premier would not take real-life measures of COVID transmission into account at all shows a blatant disregard for human life, Mr. Speaker, and his stubborn refusal to learn from his many failures of the last six months, Mr. Speaker. We see why, with that level of stubbornness, things have gone so wrong.

Mr. Speaker, we passed a grim milestone today. Five hundred people have lost their lives to COVID-19 in Saskatchewan. Five hundred — it's an enormous number, but it's not just a number. These are real people. Parents, grandparents, sons and daughters, friends, co-workers lost, Mr. Speaker. So much grief around the province. It didn't have to be this way.

The Premier failed to protect Saskatchewan seniors in long-term care. He failed to prepare for the second wave. And when the third wave came along, when he saw the variants on the rise, he decided to relax restrictions prematurely, Mr. Speaker — all choices from this Premier that have led to loss of Saskatchewan life.

I've asked him many times but he never has an answer. And I see it's hard; he's got a lot of options to choose from. But what does this Premier regret the most about his role in Saskatchewan's unacceptable death toll?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, going back 13, 14 months when we were met with the COVID pandemic in Saskatchewan, in Canada, and in many places around the world, Mr. Speaker, we have closely worked with our public health physicians, our chief medical health officer, with the previous minister of Health, the current Minister of Health, and we have put forward various restrictions at various times over the course of the last year.

Mr. Speaker, those restrictions, I would say today, are significant in this province, more significant in the city of Regina with additional restrictions due to the variants of concern that we had in high concentrations here in our capital city. Mr. Speaker, we have made the very best decisions that we have, with the information that we have. We've consulted all along with our chief medical health officer, as well as public health, as well as others throughout the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Mr. Speaker, as well as in the Ministry of Health. As well and likely most importantly, with the public, the people that we ultimately, collectively in this Chamber, represent.

Mr. Speaker, we are in the final days of the COVID-19 pandemic. We've provided now a road map on how we are going to move forward. Yes, that road map can be a quick. It can happen quicker or it can be slowed down due to whatever we are facing in the weeks ahead. But ultimately, Mr. Speaker, our path through this COVID-19 pandemic does lead through one of our vaccination centres, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to encourage all Saskatchewan residents to make the decision, make their

appointment. Let's all go out and get vaccinated, and let's stick it to COVID today.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier fails to acknowledge just how much suffering — 500 people's lives lost — and he refuses to acknowledge his own very significant role in us achieving that unfortunate milestone, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier likes to — and inaccurately, I might add — but he likes to reference other countries. But let's look closer to home. A *Maclean's* report this last weekend showed that if we'd gone down the road of Nova Scotia, over 400 more people would be alive today. That's over 80 per cent of those lives lost still with us, Mr. Speaker. Nova Scotia, that also saw their GDP [gross domestic product] drop by only half of what the drop is here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This Premier has always argued that his weak half measures and the attendant sacrifice of health and life were necessary to protect the economy, but instead he's given us the worst of both worlds, Mr. Speaker. Too many deaths and too many jobs lost, Mr. Speaker. Does the Premier regret not taking that Canadian, close-to-home approach that would've saved lives and saved Saskatchewan jobs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the Leader of the Opposition would pick a province here, a province there for comparisons because, Mr. Speaker, when you look across Canada, when you look across Canada, Saskatchewan has fared and Saskatchewan people have met the challenge of ensuring that we are, we are dealing with COVID-19 here in this province and have been dealing with it, Mr. Speaker, in a very admirable fashion.

The fact of the matter is, and the Leader of the Opposition is correct, Mr. Speaker: with each of the statistics that we have, whether they be a hospitalization, whether they be a fatality, those are much more than a statistic. Those are a Saskatchewan resident, Mr. Speaker. They're a family member. They're a friend, Mr. Speaker. And they are forever in our thoughts, Mr. Speaker, in this government and I assume with all members on both sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, this global pandemic has been challenging for this province, been challenging for this nation. It's been challenging, I would say, for the world, Mr. Speaker, likely the largest global challenge that we have had in over a half century for sure, likely since World War II. Mr. Speaker, it's one where I have never been more proud to be from this province and represent the great people of Saskatchewan. We're finding our way through it. We're on the road now, Mr. Speaker. Let's all go out and do what we need to do. Follow the public health measures that are in place. Go get vaccinated.

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

Mr. Meili: — Saskatchewan people have been incredibly dedicated to fighting COVID-19. If only they'd had a Premier anywhere near as dedicated to protecting Saskatchewan lives.

Five hundred lives, five hundred lives, Mr. Speaker, lost under this Premier's watch. We all hope very much that we're reaching the end of this deadly stretch, that there will be no more lives lost to COVID-19, Mr. Speaker.

But this Premier has a lot to answer for, for his mishandling of the COVID response, month after month, Mr. Speaker. How does he intend to make sure that people across Saskatchewan, including grieving families, including those who will suffer long-term health effects from COVID-19, that they get honest answers on how this went so badly under his watch?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, they can ask and we provide, Mr. Speaker. We have been giving honest answers throughout this pandemic. We've been giving clear guidance throughout this pandemic, Mr. Speaker. The government, myself, the Minister of Health, Dr. Shahab, as well as leaders within the Saskatchewan Health Authority, the Ministry of Health, have been giving clear guidance to the people of this province on what the public health measures are and what our vaccination plan is.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we're vaccinating today people that are 37 and over. Tomorrow that will be 35. We'll be down through the age groups, ultimately until everyone 18 and up — and yes, likely very shortly, 12 and up with the Pfizer vaccine — will have access to those vaccines.

Mr. Speaker, I give an example of exactly who Saskatchewan people are. There's a young man here in Regina. His name's Brock Lumbard. Mr. Speaker, he'd put together an app, or actually a texting line, a phone number: 1-306-517-7062. If you text your postal code into that phone number, Mr. Speaker, you'll immediately get a text back that will provide you with the location of the nearest vaccination clinics to you, Mr. Speaker.

He did this without being asked. He did this to chip in to the vaccination effort in Saskatchewan. And I talked to him just before question period. SaskTel's going to waive the texting fees to Mr. Lumbard for his efforts, Mr. Speaker. This is the Saskatchewan way. These are real Saskatchewan people. And this is what we do in helping not only ourselves, but helping those around us.

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

Support for Indigenous People in Saskatchewan

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Today, of course, I've said earlier is National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. I just want to say that the minister for First Nation-Métis relations isn't in here and ought to be.

Anyway, this day represents the ongoing fight First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan have to endure due to the confrontations with violence, discrimination, and abuse. Colonial violence in Saskatchewan, historical trauma, socioeconomic marginalization, this government's lack of will to change the status quo, and the continued exclusion of the expertise and lived experiences of Indigenous women and girls — these all

contribute to Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people going missing and being murdered.

What is the Minister of First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs doing today to address the unacceptable levels of violence Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people in our province face each and every day?

The Speaker: — I'd just like to remind the member not to refer to a member's presence or absence in the Legislative Assembly. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today the government . . . certainly the government supports the ongoing work of the National Inquiry, Mr. Speaker. The inquiry certainly provides a critical voice to murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, Mr. Speaker. I was very proud that the Government of Saskatchewan was the first province to endorse and participate with the federal government with respect to proceeding with that inquiry, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to work with the federal government and our provincial and territorial counterparts to respond to that report, Mr. Speaker. We know that the federal government and the provinces will be providing their responses to that report in the next little while, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of actions that this government has taken in response to the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, Mr. Speaker, there are numerous calls, Mr. Speaker. But we understand, we understand that engaging with First Nations leaders in this province, engaging with the families of those whose . . . people that have gone missing is an important role that the government needs to play in terms of ensuring that we're addressing the root causes of this terrible tragedy in this country, Mr. Speaker.

This government has continued, and committed to continuing to do that work, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite has my commitment that we will continue to do that work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and specifically, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the families of people who've gone missing.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — I certainly hope my friend Sheila will be part of that conversation. Her daughter has been missing for quite some time.

Mr. Speaker, let's talk about this government's funding. In a budget with over \$17 billion in spending, less than half a million dollars to addressing missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls is just scraps. And coming up to the one-year mark of the initial implementation, this grant has only funded five programs.

To the new minister: what is the hold-up on awarding this funding? And when will we see real investments to help keep Indigenous women and girls and gender-diverse people in Saskatchewan safe?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, the inquiry provided a crucial voice for us to listen to, and we will continue to work with the federal government and our counterparts across the country to respond to this report.

She asked what we've done in this province, Mr. Speaker. In April 2021 we provided funding to establish a new SIRT [serious incident response team] team for a more accountable transparency oversight system.

[14:00]

In February of '21 my ministry discontinued birth alerts, a very important step, Mr. Speaker. In the winter of 2020 we launched an interpersonal violence awareness campaign that was advertised in English, French, Cree, and Dene.

Mr. Speaker, also in December of 2020 we announced \$400,000 for the First Nation and Métis projects to focus on issues raised by that National Inquiry. We also introduced *The Protection From Human Trafficking Act*. Mr. Speaker, I can list more if I get another question. Thank you.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, this government has shown through their actions that they are not interested in truth or reconciliation. And they are not interested in addressing the report on missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Blowing smoke is not enough. We need action.

This government continues to pat itself on the back, claiming to be doing all that they can. But I'm calling that bluff. For 14 years the Sask Party has put First Nation and Métis issues on the back burner, or they use them to divide Saskatchewan people to score cheap political points.

Today is National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Gender-Diverse People. When will we see this government come to the table, work with Indigenous women like me, and come up with a plan to ensure not one more Indigenous woman is stolen from her family forever?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, when anyone goes missing in this province, it's a tragedy, not just for the province, for the families, Mr. Speaker. We continue to reach out to First Nations leaders across this province. We understand the concept of reconciliation. We know what needs to happen in terms of addressing a terrible blight on this community, Mr. Speaker. We have conversations ongoing with our partners, not just our territorial and provincial partners, Mr. Speaker, but with First Nations leaders in Saskatchewan and across the country, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell the member this, Mr. Speaker. This government will continue to work hard to address the issues, Mr. Speaker, the Calls to Justice in the report, Mr. Speaker, and will continue to

work with leadership across this country, both men and women, in all First Nations across the province to address a very, very serious issue. We recognize it, Mr. Speaker — over \$22 million in the Justice budget alone to deal with domestic violence, interpersonal violence, Mr. Speaker, which has an effect on the entire province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Small-Business Supports during COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, small businesses are reeling from this government's lack of support. Just last week we saw an eleventh-hour rollout of the SSBEP [Saskatchewan small-business emergency payment program], inadequate and late for the restaurants closed by this government for going on six weeks. And, Mr. Speaker, another one of the supports that is not working for small-business owners is the Re-Open Saskatchewan training subsidy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many small-business owners are not employees of their companies, and as such, the costs that they've incurred for training aren't eligible for the program because they're not on payroll. Now, Mr. Speaker, the federal wage subsidy also used to exclude small-business owners from receiving supports. But after pushback and advocacy from small business, that was changed for the better.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister for Trade and Export Development stop shutting out small-business owners and fix this flawed program to make business owners eligible for the subsidy?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I've got to tell you, every day I come in here I am actually surprised by the increasing hypocrisy from the members opposite. They stand up day after day after day and demand that businesses be shut down, Mr. Speaker. Then they stand up later in the same question period and ask why businesses aren't doing better. Mr. Speaker, they can't have it both ways. They need to pick a lane, and I think we know which lane that is. And that is that they are demanding, and would have had businesses perpetually shut down for the last six months.

Mr. Speaker, we took a different course. We worked with small businesses because we know that they can and have operated in a responsible and safe fashion throughout this pandemic. And in addition to that, we've provided support on top of the fact that they were able to continue operating, something that would not have been the case if those members were in government.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and talk about putting the small in small business.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite clearly does not know the answer to the question. So again, leaving small-business

owners ineligible for this program makes no sense. Mr. Speaker, these are training dollars that could be spent in the local economy, and we need to be doing everything we can to help small-business owners during this challenging time. The Re-Open Saskatchewan training subsidy should simply be available to everyone who works in a small business, whether they are an employee or an owner.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the budget was introduced, millions of dollars remained allocated for this program and were left unspent. So, Mr. Speaker, how much remains unspent from this program today? And will the minister commit to getting these dollars out the door to small businesses?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. The utter hypocrisy of the members opposite I think is shocking to everybody, Mr. Speaker. On the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition stands up over and over and over again and demands lockdowns, saying to small businesses, you can't operate; we're going to shut you down, and we're going to put you out of business, and all of your employees are going to stay home. And then they have their critic stand up later in question period and say, why are people not working?

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people understand the hypocrisy of the members opposite, and they are glad that they have a government that is prepared to work with them because this government knows that they can operate safely, that they can operate responsibly. They have done so through this entire pandemic, Mr. Speaker, despite calls day after day after day from them and their allies to shut them down. Mr. Speaker, we're not going to do that.

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

Child Care Subsidy

Ms. Beck: — You know, Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Finance minister really pulled back the veil on this government's disdain for working-class families. To pretty basic questions about families unable to afford child care, the minister recommended families "... make the choice to go without a few things ..." I wonder, Mr. Speaker, is that groceries, or are we talking about the heating bill?

And another, as if we're all living in 1950s suburbia: "... one of the couple can stay home with the child ..." Such economic vision, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister explain exactly what she expects working families to go without so they can have access to child care options?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it is so many times that we need to clear the record on what those members say.

What I clearly said yesterday is different families want to make different choices. Some families will choose to put their child into a daycare centre; another family may choose a licensed day

home; another family may choose a family member; and some families may choose to go without a few things so that one parent can stay at home. It was about choice. We believe in choice in our government, and we believe that parents are in the right position to make that choice.

The fact that they want to misrepresent what I said is disgusting, Mr. Speaker, and I stand behind what I said. We believe in parents having choice in our government, and we respect their choices.

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, those are the minister's words, not mine, although she might have said the quiet part aloud. Quite the Thatcherisms, Mr. Speaker.

The suggestion that parents can just pick and choose what to provide their families is simply not a solution. Having one parent leave the workforce to stay home is also not a solution. It's no wonder that this government hasn't updated the subsidy rate. It's no wonder they've left federal ... childhood educators out of their vaccine plans.

Does this government understand that quality, affordable child care drives the economy? And if they do, why are they doing so much to refuse to improve it?

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

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, you know, is correct. We do talk about the child care subsidy and how important it is for families. We discuss these on individual cases, and each individual case is different. There are many variables that will actually determine if an individual will be eligible or not for that subsidy, but they will have access to apply.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of the subsidy is calculated on a sliding scale, based on gross family income, family size, type of service they want, where they're located in the province, the age of the child — many different things, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, to generalize a situation without all of the pertinent information, would truly be misleading anyone who may be listening.

Mr. Speaker, since 2017 this government has invested in the province of Saskatchewan and child care, \$214 million in this program alone. It's actually increased 76 per cent from when the NDP [New Democratic Party] was in power. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report. I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

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

That the first report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 21, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods 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 Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 21 and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 21 — *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2020*

Hon. Ms. Tell: — 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. 21 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 University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise here today and enter some comments in the record on Bill No. 34, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, small, shameful bit of personal history. Mr. Speaker, I didn't have a driver's licence until I was 26. I had grown up in the country and, I think like many kids, had probably driven illegally without a licence for quite some time, and hopefully the statute of limitations has run out on that one.

And then, Mr. Speaker, I went off to university at a very young age before I could take my in-car driver's test, and I thought downtown Montreal was probably not a place where I wanted to take my in-car test. I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if you've ever had the pleasure of spending time in downtown Montreal. It's a lovely city, but it is a hazardous place to walk, let alone a hazardous place to drive.

[14:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I read these embarrassing comments into the record because this has unfortunately continued through my family. Right now, Mr. Speaker, I have my younger brother living with me as he has been for quite some time. And my younger brother is now nearly 30 and also does not have his driver's licence, which as you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, is a great inconvenience to his older sister, who is responsible not only for being his big sister but also occasionally his chauffeur.

And the other day, Mr. Speaker, this had come to a head and I asked my brother when, when, Brodie, will you be getting your driver's licence? And he said, when electric vehicles are affordable. And now, Mr. Speaker, you can imagine how much this irked me, both as an older sister and also as somebody who now sees Bill No. 34 coming before this Assembly, making electric vehicles that much more inaccessible for my younger brother and giving him that much more incentive to rely on his older sister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a fairly straightforward Act in

many ways. The contentious point clearly seems to be the petty and punitive tax on electric vehicles. And now, Mr. Speaker, I don't have an electric vehicle myself. We've got a couple trucks and I drive a small, dented car back and forth to the legislature a few times a day.

1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:20.]

But, Mr. Speaker, you know who does have electric vehicles? The Government of Saskatchewan. Government of Saskatchewan owns 55 hybrid vehicles and five electric vehicles, as shared the other night in committee by the good Minister for SaskBuilds. And, Mr. Speaker, while I recognize this is a government that has never seen a tax it doesn't love, I was surprised to see them taxing themselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, there's not a whole lot to say about this bill hasn't already been canvassed. But I do think it is truly remarkable to see a government elect, just out of spite, to tax itself, to virtue-signal to I don't even know whom — the anti-electric car lobby? — that the government is so happy, so happy to virtue-signal that they are going to tax themselves and tax their own fleet of vehicles of which they were so celebratory last year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know, I think some of the slightly more insightful critique has already been read into the record by my much more articulate colleagues, so I don't have much more to add beyond that baseless personal anecdote and the deeply hilarious note about this government taxing its own electric vehicles. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think I will conclude my remarks, and I will allow this glorious bill to pass on to its next stage.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 34 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed?

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Fred Bradshaw
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
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Minister of Education

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Energy and Resources

Hon. Donna Harpauer
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Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General