



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

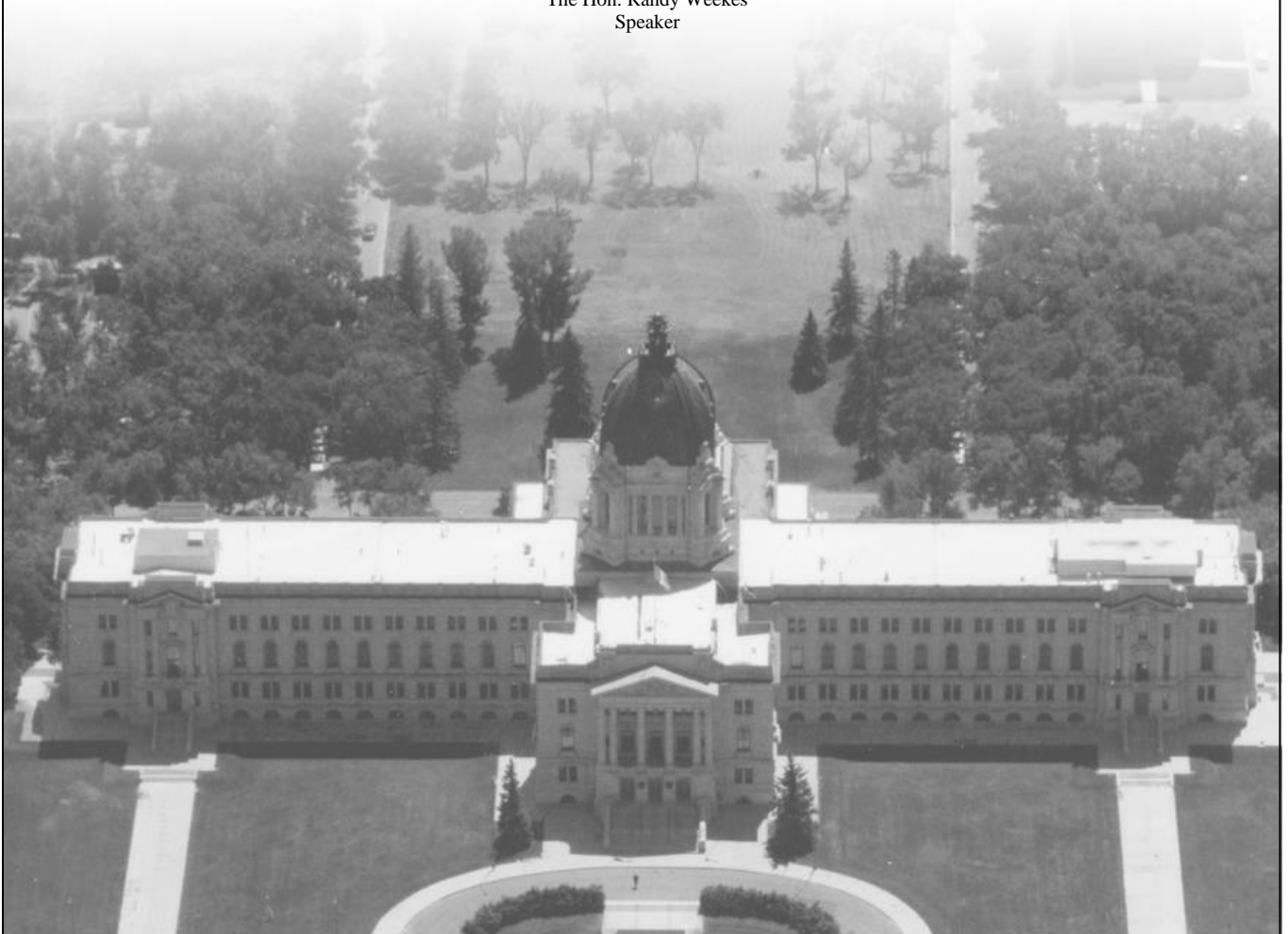
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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**2nd 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

<b>Beck, Carla</b> — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>Makowsky, Hon. Gene</b> — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
<b>Bonk, Steven</b> — Moosomin (SP)	<b>Marit, Hon. David</b> — Wood River (SP)
<b>Bowes, Jennifer</b> — Saskatoon University (NDP)	<b>McLeod, Tim</b> — Moose Jaw North (SP)
<b>Bradshaw, Hon. Fred</b> — Carrot River Valley (SP)	<b>McMorris, Hon. Don</b> — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
<b>Buckingham, David</b> — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	<b>Meili, Ryan</b> — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
<b>Carr, Hon. Lori</b> — Estevan (SP)	<b>Merriman, Hon. Paul</b> — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
<b>Cheveldayoff, Ken</b> — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	<b>Meyers, Derek</b> — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
<b>Cockrill, Jeremy</b> — The Battlefords (SP)	<b>Moe, Hon. Scott</b> — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
<b>Conway, Meara</b> — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	<b>Morgan, Hon. Don</b> — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
<b>Dennis, Terry</b> — Canora-Pelly (SP)	<b>Mowat, Vicki</b> — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
<b>Docherty, Mark</b> — Regina Coronation Park (SP)	<b>Nerlien, Hugh</b> — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
<b>Domotor, Ryan</b> — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	<b>Nippi-Albright, Betty</b> — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
<b>Duncan, Hon. Dustin</b> — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	<b>Ottenbreit, Greg</b> — Yorkton (SP)
<b>Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn</b> — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	<b>Reiter, Hon. Jim</b> — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
<b>Fiaz, Muhammad</b> — Regina Pasqua (SP)	<b>Ritchie, Erika</b> — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
<b>Francis, Ken</b> — Kindersley (SP)	<b>Ross, Alana</b> — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
<b>Friesen, Marv</b> — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	<b>Ross, Hon. Laura</b> — Regina Rochdale (SP)
<b>Goudy, Todd</b> — Melfort (SP)	<b>Sarauer, Nicole</b> — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
<b>Grewal, Gary</b> — Regina Northeast (SP)	<b>Skoropad, Dana</b> — Arm River (SP)
<b>Hargrave, Joe</b> — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Steele, Doug</b> — Cypress Hills (SP)
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<b>Harrison, Daryl</b> — Cannington (SP)	<b>Tell, Hon. Christine</b> — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harrison, Hon. Jeremy</b> — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Vermette, Doyle</b> — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Hindley, Hon. Everett</b> — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Weekes, Hon. Randy</b> — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Jenson, Terry</b> — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Wilson, Nadine</b> — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
<b>Kaeding, Hon. Warren</b> — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon, Trent</b> — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Keisig, Travis</b> — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Wyant, Hon. Gordon</b> — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Kirsch, Delbert</b> — Batoche (SP)	<b>Young, Aleana</b> — Regina University (NDP)
<b>Lambert, Lisa</b> — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young, Colleen</b> — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Lawrence, Greg</b> — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	
<b>Love, Matt</b> — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)	<b>Vacant</b> — Athabasca

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 1

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Deputy Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyk

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — First I'd like to introduce a Page, Sydney Sulymka. Welcome, Sydney.

I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a real privilege and honour to introduce to you and to all the members of the Assembly, in the north gallery, the Speaker's gallery, a distinguished group of folks from our post-secondary sector here in the province of Saskatchewan. They were here for the launch of the province's international education strategy, and obviously they were a big part of the collaboration that went into that.

So joining us — I've quite a list here — from the University of Regina, Dr. Jeff Keshen, the president; Haroon Chaudhry, acting associate vice-president; and Yaya Siggins, director, Global Outreach.

And from the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Peter Stoicheff, president; Alison Pickrell, associate vice-provost; Dara Hrytzak, chief of staff; Sara Daniels, vice-president, government relations; and Dr. Meghna Ramaswamy, director of the international office.

And from Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Dr. Larry Rosia, president; Dr. Has Malik, provost and vice-president; Thevi Pather, associate vice-president; and Mary Donlevy-Konkin, advisor. And from Collège Mathieu, Francis Kasongo, the CEO [chief executive officer]. And representing the regional colleges, Kami DePape, vice-president of academics at Parkland College.

And finally from the ministry, Deputy Minister Mark McLoughlin; also Livia Castellanos, Danelle Reiss, and Jennifer Augustin from the international education branch.

So we'll hear more in a member statement in a few minutes about the goings on and the announcement, but I'd like all members to join me, help me welcome this group to the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you on behalf of the official opposition, I join the minister in welcoming our honoured guests from the post-secondary sector. Thank you for being with us.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join the minister and the member opposite in welcoming the delegation to the Assembly here today.

Accompanying them, someone well known to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, my good friend, Mary Donlevy-Konkin.

The Assembly will remember Mary as chief of staff to a number of members on this side of the House, a number of ministers, including my first chief of staff when I was the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General. Mary is currently engaged with the McKercher firm in Saskatoon doing some work in the post-secondary sector, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like all members to welcome Mary to her Assembly.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with all of the members who have already spoken, but in particular the Minister of Justice in welcoming all of these leaders here today, but in particular Mary. It's such a pleasure to see you here. It's always wonderful to see Mary Donlevy-Konkin at events.

As the minister had said, she served many years in government and now works as counsel in McKercher. She is very well respected in her profession and a very lovely person generally speaking. So I wanted to take the opportunity to join with the minister and thank Mary for her service to her province as well as welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce 43 grade 8 students from Harbour Landing School, Mr. Speaker, accompanied by Danielle Stinson and Brianne McFetridge. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to meeting them after this question period, and we're going to have a group photo as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to make an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members, I rise today to welcome Betty Jennifer Grace Vos who's seated in the Speaker's gallery.

Betty is nine years old and in grade 4 at École Hawrylak, and Betty lives on an acreage east of Regina in the RM [rural municipality] of Sherwood. I understand she lives there with a small horse, two baby goats, six goats total, four dogs, a stray cat that just kind of hangs out, about 26 chickens, and a miniature pony.

She cares deeply about clean drinking water on-reserve,

protecting the environment, gender equality — especially after discovering today that women's blazers rarely come with pockets — and everyone getting their COVID-19 vaccines so that her grandparents stay safe. And she herself is desperately waiting for her shot.

Her great-grandpa Snyder from Moose Jaw served as minister of Labour here in this Assembly and introduced, amongst other things, the 40-hour work week and occupational health and safety legislation that went on to set the standard across Canada.

Her other great-grandpa Kramer served as minister of Natural Resources, Co-operatives, and Highways from the constituency of North Battleford, and he won every election he contested between 1952 and his retirement in 1980.

In addition to that, her grandpa, Randy Sydnor, worked in this very building. Betty herself is passionate about her future career as prime minister of Canada. And as evidenced, her family has a deep personal connection and a proud connection to this building, and I am confident that she will too.

Mr. Speaker, and all members, please join me in welcoming Betty Vos to this, her legislature.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the government to protect contract workers from harassment, abuse, and exploitation.

Those who've signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: contract workers are not protected by Saskatchewan's occupational health and safety standards; contract workers, particularly women working in arts and culture, face disproportionate amount of abuse and are at risk of high exploitation, assault, and trafficking; updating occupational health and safety standards to protect contract workers would decrease workplace violence against women and racialized people; the language in occupational health and safety standards to address mental illness would help contract workers targeted by harassment and abuse in the workplace; and, Mr. Speaker, other provinces' occupational health and safety standards specifically address sexual harassment in the workplace, but ours does not.

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 modernize occupational health and safety protections to include contract and gig workers and include comprehensive provisions on mental illness and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing the petition today come from Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise here today to

present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for pay equity.

The signatories of the petition wish to draw to our attention the following issues: that Saskatchewan is sadly one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation; and that unfortunately Saskatchewan has one of the highest gendered wage gaps in Canada, which is a result of systemic gender discrimination; and that the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation, which has unfortunately not been pursued by the Government of Saskatchewan.

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 signatories of this petition are from Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on the Saskatchewan income support program, or SIS, a new social assistance program that has been rammed through by this Sask Party government despite the advice and appeals of affected stakeholders, including landlords, community-based organizations, recipients, and poverty and advocacy groups, Mr. Speaker.

The signatories of this petition wish to bring to the government's attention the following: unlike its predecessors, SIS does not directly pay for housing and utilities. This is a deep, deep cut, Mr. Speaker. Since introduced, SIS has led to dramatic increases in rental arrears, evictions, and homelessness, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government was warned years ago that implementing SIS would lead to rental arrears, evictions, and homelessness.

I was just reviewing a public paper presented to the government in 2020 by the Saskatchewan Landlord Association predicted this very thing, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government has ignored alarms from social workers, landlords, and housing and anti-poverty advocates for months on this exact issue.

I'll read the prayer as follows, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to restore direct payment of rent and utilities from income support clients.

I would note the heckling from across while we have a city of tents in this city with 170 people living in it, Mr. Speaker. The signatories of this petition reside in Regina. I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### New Council Elected by Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Thursday the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations held its 2020-2021 elections. Mr. Speaker, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations represents 74 First Nations in Saskatchewan. The Federation is committed to honouring the spirit and intent of the treaties as well as the promotion, protection, and the implementation of the treaty promises that were made more than a century ago.

Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my sincere congratulations to all of those elected. Congratulations to Bobby Cameron being re-elected as Chief of FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. Congratulations to long-time family friend David Pratt being elected as the new first vice-chief. Congratulations to Dutch Lerat on being re-elected as the second vice-chief. Congratulations to newly elected Alyson Bear as the third vice-chief, and congratulations to Heather Bear being re-elected as the fourth vice-chief of FSIN.

Saskatchewan remains committed to the Calls to Action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Mr. Speaker, I know all members of this Assembly look forward to our continued work in advancing the treaty relationship here in Saskatchewan with the newly elected council. Together we will work on reconciliation, greater economic development opportunities, and a stronger Saskatchewan for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

### Celebrating Women's History Month

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to acknowledge October as Women's History Month which just concluded yesterday. Women's History Month was proclaimed in 1992 to bring awareness to the important contributions of women and girls in our society.

Throughout the month we celebrate the remarkable women in our country who have broken barriers and strived to create a path forward for all women to follow: from Nellie McClung, who fought to see women obtain the right to vote in 1916, to Agnes Mcphail, the first woman elected to the House of Commons in 1921; from Elsie Knott who in 1954 became the first woman elected as chief of a First Nation in Canada, to Jean Augustine, the first black Canadian woman elected to the House of Commons in 1993.

We honour these women along with so many others. We thank them for forging a path forward, a path in which all women and girls are awarded equitable opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the theme for 2021 is Women Making History Now. This is in recognition of the dedicated women making history and advocating for social change today. I encourage all members to consider women they know who are currently making history. Please take the time to thank these women for

their leadership and their lasting work that will inevitably create a better future for all.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

### Provincial Strategy for International Education

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning, in partnership with our post-secondary sector, we announced our international education strategy. International education is a major contributor to the Saskatchewan economy, and this strategy helps position the province as a choice destination. The strategy includes a number of initiatives related to global engagement, capacity building, and leadership to help enhance the province's profile and to attract new international markets and to develop new markets.

In collaboration with our international trade offices and government partners, we are building relationships in multiple countries to help strengthen the province's brand, while increasing trade and investment opportunities. Fostering new international partnerships will play a critical role in education and research opportunities in both Saskatchewan and abroad. These connections are supporting the post-secondary sector to attract international students in innovative ways while meeting commitments outlined in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

A new international education practitioner training program will develop a provincial approach to international education training. We are also supporting the growth and sustainability of French post-secondary programs through targeted recruitment in key French-language markets.

To enhance the study abroad experience for students in our province, a Saskatchewan student ambassador program is being developed. These relationships will open doors, strengthen intellectual and cultural relations through research, exchange, and trade. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Recognizing Health Care Worker Appreciation Week

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Mr. Speaker, today is the first day of Saskatoon's Health Care Worker Appreciation Week. I wish to recognize all of the health care workers who live in my constituency of Saskatoon Nutana. Over the course of the pandemic, I have heard from many health care workers who have shared their concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. I've heard from a continuing care assistant working in unsafe conditions who was not considered a front-line worker. They, like countless others, have advocated for measures to protect both their patients, themselves, and their families.

Other constituents have taken time to publicly share their first-hand experiences of the health care crisis. Dr. Tamara Hinz is a child and adolescent psychiatrist and my constituent. Tamara is finding time to be an advocate on social and traditional media between doing her job and raising a young family. Her advocacy has been instrumental in keeping Saskatchewan people informed about COVID-19 realities, including the chronic stress and fatigue of health care workers.

I ask all members to join me in saluting the perseverance of Nutana's health care professionals, and recognize Saskatoon City Council in proclaiming Health Care Worker Appreciation Week. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

### Provincial Investments in Public Safety

**Ms. C. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government understands the importance of investing in public safety. In 2021-22 this government will provide over \$17 million to municipalities to fund 133 police positions through our municipal police grants program. This investment represents an increase of \$1.7 million from 2020-21. This increase will provide new funding for three municipal police positions in the crime reduction teams in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, it will add one police and crisis team, PACT, position in Estevan.

The province will provide \$6.37 million for 49 police officers to the Saskatoon Police Service, \$5.9 million for 45 police officers to the Regina Police Service, \$3.7 million for 25 police officers to the Prince Albert Police Service, \$800,000 for six police officers to the Moose Jaw Police Service, \$400,000 for three police officers to the Weyburn Police Service, and \$620,000 for five police officers to the Estevan Police Service.

The city of Meadow Lake and North Battleford will each receive \$770,000 for seven RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers, and the city of Yorkton will receive \$330,000 for three RCMP officers.

Mr. Speaker, with these investments, we continue to strengthen communities across Saskatchewan and support those who work to keep our citizens safe. Thank you.

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

### Movember Changes the Face of Men's Health

**Mr. Keisig:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Movember Foundation has set out to change the face of men's health around the world, and every November many men make the decision to grow out their facial hair. But, Mr. Speaker, Movember is about much more than growing a moustache for 30 days. Movember is about mental health, suicide prevention, prostate cancer, and testicular cancer.

You see, on average, men are dying five years earlier than women for largely preventable reasons. These are topics a lot of men don't like to think about, let alone discuss, Mr. Speaker, and that is what Movember is all about — inspiring action and starting conversations.

Mr. Speaker, all this month those of us who can are encouraged to grow a moustache and use our faces as billboards for men's health. In addition to that, we're encouraged to do what we can to raise funds either virtually or in person. There are a ton of great ideas and examples of what men can do online at [movember.com](http://movember.com).

Mr. Speaker, whatever we grow and however we mo, we know

that our dough will help save a bro. I now ask all members to join me in recognizing the Movember Foundation and its global movement to save men's lives by changing the face of men's health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

### Recognizing Aviation and Aerospace Week

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — I've got to follow that one. Mr. Speaker, this is Aviation and Aerospace Week in Saskatchewan. It's time to recognize the industry's contribution to our economy and our way of life. The aviation sector is responsible for roughly 15,000 jobs throughout our province. Farmers have better yields because of aerial applicators.

Northern and remote workers travel to and from their workplaces by aircraft, largely charter. Aviation plays an important role in mineral exploration and is critical to northern outfitters who bring much-appreciated tourism dollars. I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the often unsung heroes of aviation: the maintenance engineers and their facilities. They keep our aircraft safe and flying.

Northern airports are a key part of our response to forest fires and medical services, and Saskatchewan's air ambulance and medevac services are critical lifelines. The Government of Saskatchewan operates and maintains 16 northern airports. We roughly invest 2 million per year running them and millions more in improvements. In fact at Cumberland House the apron and taxiway are being strengthened. Pelican Narrows, we've lengthened and strengthened the runway and installed airfield lighting and a new fence. And we've completed the \$14 million overhaul at Fond-du-Lac.

We also continue to invest in community airports through the CAP [community airport partnership] program. Boosted by the stimulus program, we are investing 1.5 million to help fund improvements in 19 community airports around Saskatchewan this year. These 50/50 matching grants help communities offset the costs associated with rehabilitation and upgrades.

Mr. Speaker, there's lots to celebrate in our aviation sector. To be fair this province could not have been built and could not operate without the benefit of aviation. So I ask all members to join me in wishing clear skies to everyone involved in our aviation industry. 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. Last week the Premier tried to spin his way out of responsibility for the worst fourth wave in the entire country, refusing to release the information that he ignored when he made his deadly decisions. Now if the Premier thinks that those were the wise choices to make, surely he would have no problem releasing Dr. Shahab's recommendations and the modelling that informed his decisions. Will he release that information to Saskatchewan people today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. With reference to the answers that I had provided last week, Mr. Speaker, Dr. Shahab and the Government of Saskatchewan, a number of folks within the Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Health Authority work together to come up with a set of recommendations, ultimately then that are released to the public, Mr. Speaker. And the recommendations are either just that — recommendations — of which we have a number of today, or they come forward as public health orders here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

And the Leader of the Opposition is correct that Saskatchewan has been hard hit with the fourth wave of COVID-19. That's why we moved with a number of public health orders and additional recommendations in the middle of September. And those recommendations are effective, Mr. Speaker. We today are down, our active cases are down under 2,000. They're down about 60 per cent from our peak which was on September the 26th. Our seven-day case average is now down under 200, down to about 188, Mr. Speaker. That's down about 62 per cent from our peak. That is in the appropriate direction, Mr. Speaker.

And alongside that, with the proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy, our vaccinations in this province are up 8 per cent. We're up a per cent from last week on our first doses, up to 86 per cent of those that are eligible have went out and gotten their first dose. We would expect they'll go out and get their second dose soon. And we would ask the 14 per cent of Saskatchewan residents that have not yet made that decision to please reconsider. It is the most effective tool we have in keeping themselves, their family members, their community members safe in the days and weeks ahead.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all want to see those case numbers fall. But there's a number that continues to rise and that's the number of deaths in this province — 156 people lost in October, the deadliest month of the entire pandemic. It's clear that this Premier has ignored the advice of the MHOs [medical health officer]. It's increasingly clear he also ignores the advice of Dr. Shahab. If not, why would he not be comfortable releasing those recommendations? Mr. Speaker, what does the Premier have to hide?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — As I said, Mr. Speaker, we had moved forward with a number of public health measures and recommendations in the middle of September that are proving to be effective in Saskatchewan's battle through the fourth wave of COVID which admittedly, Mr. Speaker, has hit this province and hit this province in quite a difficult way, Mr. Speaker.

As we were discussing last week, Mr. Speaker, there is going to be a difference of approaches with respect to the opposition members, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Government of Saskatchewan. The NDP [New Democratic Party] have adopted a position, have adopted a position most certainly that would include banning thousands of kids, thousands of children from attending school in this province, Mr. Speaker, with the

mandatory vaccine, Mr. Speaker. They have adopted the policy . . . Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has adopted a policy that would ban children from attending school if they are not vaccinated or if their family is not vaccinated. Mr. Speaker, the government feels that that is too far, Mr. Speaker.

The government has certainly stepped forward to encourage all Saskatchewan residents that are eligible to go out and get vaccinated. It is our most effective tool. But kicking thousands of Saskatchewan children out of school for not being vaccinated is too far. It's the Leader of the Opposition's position. It's the opposition party's position, Mr. Speaker, which they adopted last week. The government is charting a different route.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — We would have very different paths, Mr. Speaker — their path which has killed hundreds of people in this province; ours, which would save people's lives. And theirs, which apparently means completely misrepresenting our position, playing politics ahead of people's lives, Mr. Speaker. That is what this Premier does every time.

And let's go back, Mr. Speaker, to what this Premier chose to do. He waited over three weeks before implementing the measures brought in by, or recommended by medical health officers. Over 200 people have died since he chose to make that decision. Does the Premier recognize that his decisions have cost Saskatchewan people their lives?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, what we do recognize is that Saskatchewan has been hit quite hard with the fourth wave of COVID-19. That's why we moved in the middle of September with a number of public health measures, a number of public health orders that were put in place at that point in time, Mr. Speaker, as I explained in a previous answer. Those measures most certainly are making a difference not only in our caseloads, down over 60 per cent since our peak, but making a difference in our vaccination rates. Here in the province now up to 86 per cent of those that are eligible have went out and gotten their first shot, Mr. Speaker, and we would anticipate that they would follow up with a second shot.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we are providing every tool that we have available to Saskatchewan people to ensure that we can keep them safe, keep them ultimately out of hospitals, Mr. Speaker. That includes early intervention treatment such as monoclonal antibodies. It includes making self rapid tests available in communities right across this province. I think we deployed close to a couple million of those tests over the course of the last week, Mr. Speaker.

And we have done this because this is a virus that largely and inordinately impacts those that are not vaccinated, that 14 per cent of our population, Mr. Speaker. As we know, that portion of our population is six more times likely to contract COVID. They are 13 more times likely to end up in hospital and 28 times more likely to end up in one of our intensive care units.

We're giving them all of the tools that will keep them as safe as we possibly can through the next number of weeks and months, Mr. Speaker. The safest among them is to make themselves available to one of the vaccines that is available and accessible to them in their community.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Once again, the Premier takes no responsibility in it. And it's worth taking a moment just to correct those numbers for a second. The number that he's spinning around vaccination rates applies only to those over 12 who've had a single dose. When you look at full vaccination of the full population, we're at 66 per cent of the population — dead last in the entire country. All of these members, every single member across spent the entire last session bragging: we're leading the nation; we're tops in the nation. But not a word since we're dead last.

Why did this Premier choose to do nothing all summer, take zero action to advance the cause of vaccination, resulting in us being dead last in vaccination rates but highest in the number of people who have died from COVID-19?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — If we're in the business of clarifying one another's policy, Mr. Speaker, I'll clarify the Leader of the Opposition and the opposing party's policy with respect to them banning thousands of children from attending school here in this province if they are not vaccinated, Mr. Speaker. Just to clarify, that's those students that are 12 and over that are not vaccinated. The NDP has asked for them to not be able to attend in-person classes in this province. That's their policy. Mr. Speaker, for those students that are 11 or under, if their family is not vaccinated, the NDP has now put a policy forward that would not allow those students to attend education class, in-person classes in this province as well, Mr. Speaker.

The government thinks that's a bridge too far. The government is making vaccines available and accessible to everyone that is eligible here in this province. But we will not, we will not ban kids from going to school, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, throughout the summer this Premier ignored Dr. Shahab's advice. He ignored the advice of the medical health officers. They had to go public with their letter. Hundreds of people have died because of his failure to follow their advice. Now today, to the Premier, does he really believe that the wise thing to do is for him to spit in the face of the recommendations of the public health experts across this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and I can assure the House that I do meet with the medical health officer, chief medical health officer on a weekly basis. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I've also met with the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association]. I've also met with the dean of medicine to discuss their concerns, Mr. Speaker. What they have all expressed to me is that, yes, there were some concerns when we implemented our

measures. They were pleased to see those measures come in, Mr. Speaker, and we're driving down the numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Exactly what those measures and the verification of vaccine were done in the middle of September, Mr. Speaker, was to bring down our hospitalizations, bring down our ICU [intensive care unit] numbers, Mr. Speaker, bring down our new cases. All which we've been able to achieve not just because of what the government's doing, Mr. Speaker, but what the good people of Saskatchewan are doing to be able to adhere to these new restrictions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's interesting that the Minister of Health appears to have decided to report to work finally. But let's be straight — the question was for the Premier. In June he ignored the modelling that showed the fourth wave was coming. In August he ignored the advice of experts that would have saved lives. Does the Premier recognize if he would have acted sooner, more Saskatchewan people would be alive today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and again I'll reiterate some of the answers that I addressed before in the House, Mr. Speaker. We're very happy that the numbers are going in a very positive direction, Mr. Speaker. Despite what the opposition is saying, Mr. Speaker, things are improving in Saskatchewan.

What I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, is thank you. Thank you to the people out there on the front line that have been able to help us out, Mr. Speaker, people that are picking up extra shifts, Mr. Speaker, people that are doing their jobs, sometimes having to relocate from their home to be able to help us out in this challenging time, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to thank the people in Ontario that were able to accept some of our ICU patients while we were going through this challenging time. Mr. Speaker, some of those ICU patients are being repatriated back to Saskatchewan, and we're very glad that they will be coming back, Mr. Speaker.

But you can see by the evidence that is presented to this House, presented to the general public that the recommendations that we did in September, followed by the proof of vaccination, the QR [quick response] code, and the restrictions that we did have in place, Mr. Speaker, are working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In August our case numbers in Saskatchewan were spiking, a spike predicted by the modelling that the Premier saw in June, saw that information in June. And yet in July and August, this government chose to dismantle the field hospitals. Why dismantle the field hospitals when you knew they were going to be needed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In reference to the field hospitals, they were built when our original

modelling came out, called for by the opposition to be able to build them. Mr. Speaker, we have the capacity within our health care system to manage what we had, Mr. Speaker.

When we did hit that overflow point, Mr. Speaker, we started utilizing . . . All of the experts have told me, Mr. Speaker, it's not a matter of the facilities. It's not a matter of the equipment, Mr. Speaker. It's the human resources. That's where we had our troubles, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have moved people in from other positions across the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to backfill those positions, Mr. Speaker. That is why we'll continue to do that until we can get this fourth wave in behind us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — We have the capacity, Mr. Speaker? There are two dozen Saskatchewan patients fighting for their lives in Ontario hospitals right now. There are federal and military personnel in our hospitals helping our staff right now. We didn't have the capacity to handle this because this government failed to prepare. Why dismantle those field hospitals when you knew they were going to be needed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been very transparent with the public about moving some people out of our province when our ICUs did hit a critical capacity. Mr. Speaker, the recommendation for dismantling . . . Well maybe the opposition wants to hear this, Mr. Speaker. The recommendation for dismantling the two field hospitals in Regina and Saskatoon was from the SHA. It certainly didn't come from my office. This was something that they said that they weren't going to utilize in the near future, Mr. Speaker, so those hospitals were dismantled.

We were able to save most of that equipment, be able to move it around and upgrade some of the other equipment that we have around our other SHA facilities, Mr. Speaker. So those field hospitals were dismantled, Mr. Speaker, but we made sure that the human resources were in the right place at the right time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know where a tweet from an Ontario doctor about ICU patients being accepted is this government's idea of transparency, but it's pretty par for the course. Pretty par for the course from a government who downplays everything they can, hides every piece of information they can. Federal aid for testing and tracing, all the way to establishing field hospitals, was available for months. An offer for direct Canadian Armed Forces personnel support was extended on September 24th. Why did it take weeks, weeks for this Premier to accept that help on behalf of Saskatchewan people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Again thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Mr. Speaker, again I have to thank the health care workers that were able to provide this help for us, Mr. Speaker.

They've been moving into other positions. We've had people that have been trained as just RNs [registered nurse] that have moved into ICU capacity and helped to backfill those positions. Mr. Speaker, this is a huge achievement by the Saskatchewan Health Authority to be able to address this. This is a very challenging time, Mr. Speaker, and the people on the front line — the doctors, the nurses, and all the technicians — have risen to that occasion. I can't thank them enough, Mr. Speaker.

And we will continue to work with our sister province in Ontario to be able to bring the people back, from Saskatchewan, that were transferred there. Again I want to thank the people from Ontario for helping us out in this challenging situation, and we're going to get them back here as soon as we possibly can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those workers don't want empty thanks. They want the help. And yet this Premier, this Premier went hat in hand to US [United States] states before he would accept help from our own national government, help that was available for over 30 days. U of S [University of Saskatchewan] epidemiologist Dr. Nazeem Muhajarine said, and I quote, "Had we taken that invitation that was given 30 days ago, we could have prevented some of those deaths." Why did the Premier delay accepting help? Does he recognize that that cost more Saskatchewan lives?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition to what I've already talked about, Mr. Speaker, we were also able to implement a provincial emergency operations centre, Mr. Speaker. Part of their process is to reach out. This is what they do, Mr. Speaker. They reach out to other provinces and other states to see if there's help.

Mr. Speaker, we were having ongoing conversations with the federal government. I was talking to the federal minister every other week unless they were in the writ, Mr. Speaker, to be able to find out what it is that they could supply us, Mr. Speaker, and what it is we actually needed, Mr. Speaker. We wanted to make sure that that lined up, that we weren't getting people here in Saskatchewan that weren't in the positions that we were requiring, Mr. Speaker. So we kept doing that all the way through, Mr. Speaker.

Part of the emergency response is to reach out to other provinces as well as other states, Mr. Speaker, to be able to see if there is help out there, Mr. Speaker. So we have reached out. The federal government, they have provided us with some resources, Mr. Speaker. But I'm glad to see that the toughest numbers might be behind us, Mr. Speaker, and we continue to hope for better days in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again the question was for the Premier. He had the opportunity to ask for that help. Was it his pride that got in the way? Was he unwilling to ask for that help because it would make him have to admit that his failures have cost Saskatchewan people their lives, have led to the worst

death rate in the entire country? To the Premier: why did he sit and wait and not ask for help that was readily available?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again I'll reiterate what I've already said, Mr. Speaker — because the Leader of the Opposition seems to be asking the same question over and over again, Mr. Speaker — is we did reach out to the federal government. I was in constant contact.

And I'll remind the House, Mr. Speaker, of the ongoing relationship since this pandemic started, Mr. Speaker. We've been working with them on vaccine deliveries. We've been working with them on needles. We've been working with them on all aspects of delivery, what we needed to be able to do that. Some of that, Mr. Speaker, I was very critical about the federal government being slow on that, but we were working together on that, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to do that now that we have some federal resources temporarily in our province, Mr. Speaker, to be able to help us out with our human resource side of things. We'll continue to use those resources as long as we need them, Mr. Speaker. But again we have been working with the federal government since day one of this pandemic, and we will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### Public Health Measures in Municipalities

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

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, to the Health minister: why is his government stopping the city of Saskatoon from taking the public health leadership that experts are calling for?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

[14:15]

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll inform the House that on a regular basis we've been meeting with the city mayors from across this province, as well as SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], and the New North. In fact, Mr. Speaker, over the last two months, we're on a weekly call every Tuesday hearing their concerns.

Not only am I hearing their concerns, but we have the Ministry of Health. We have the Ministry of Education. We have the business response team, and we have the Public Safety Agency. All those resources are there for those communities to ask whatever questions they have in the lead-up to the bylaw that the city of Saskatoon had introduced.

I've had lots of conversation with the mayor of Saskatoon saying that there are responsibilities of cities, responsibilities of government. The cities have the responsibility of their own facilities, such as Sask Place, and they can determine how many people could attend a concert, for example, in Sask Place. We have the responsibility, Mr. Speaker, on so many of the other

fronts such as health care. The city of Saskatoon knew what the response would be, Mr. Speaker, and I think that is reflected in their vote.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, on October 14th, the Health minister's own words: he said that if municipalities want to be able to add on to the health measures of the province, they were free to do so. What changed? What changed?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Health was very clear that cities do have responsibility. They can exercise that responsibility. I think you saw the city of Regina put in vaccine mandates for all their employees, as well as a negative test. That's city responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial government has responsibility, and we've taken that space as well, such as on our employees within the government, Mr. Speaker, proof of vaccination or negative test.

The city of Saskatoon wanted to move in an area that is not their jurisdiction. They knew it. And, Mr. Speaker, that's why the mayor had talked to me previously. We informed them that that bylaw would not be approved, Mr. Speaker. And that is exactly what the city council voted for, Mr. Speaker — not to move the bylaw forward.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, it would be comical if it wasn't so tragic to get lectured by this government on taking responsibility. Let's look at where this chaos comes from. In October, the Health minister said that you would support municipalities to bring in their own measures. In September, the Premier said the same thing. Will the Health minister admit that he was wrong? Will he end the chaos that he created? And will he let municipal leaders do the job, take the steps they need to keep people safe?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I just find it really interesting that the opposition is taking up a charge that the city council in Saskatoon rejected, Mr. Speaker. It would only be the NDP that would take up a charge that the council of that city rejected, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Health was very clear. There are responsibilities for cities; there are responsibilities for the provincial government. Our government has acted quickly, Mr. Speaker, by implementing mandatory vaccination policy for all employees, as well as a negative test, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government has also supported municipalities in areas that they have jurisdiction, such as gathering limits, Mr. Speaker, in their public facilities. Have they moved on that? No,

most haven't. But some cities have moved further than others. I talked to all 16 mayors, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you that the vast majority are satisfied with the measures this government has put in place.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Mr. Speaker, let's be clear about one thing. The only reason that Saskatoon was in this position is because this government doesn't have the courage to lead. To the minister: the only reason that they voted that motion down was because you intervened and told them that you wouldn't let them do it. The only reason was because you intervened. Mr. Speaker, why won't the Health minister just get out of the way and let the city of Saskatoon take the steps that they need, recommended by local medical health officers, to keep the people of Saskatoon safe? That's your job.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I won't get into detail as to through the Chair or not. Mr. Speaker, he's trying to get personal. That's what the NDP always do when it's not going their way, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Saskatoon council voted after consultation with me. The mayor is exactly right. We did have much consultation and they passed a motion. They talked about the bylaw on Monday. We were in contact the rest of the week, Mr. Speaker, and they pulled or voted against that bylaw on Friday, Mr. Speaker. That's the timeline of it, Mr. Speaker. But I can tell you that the cities have responsibility. And most of them or all of them have taken some of it, not to the extent, for example, that other cities have. That's up to the purview of the city, Mr. Speaker.

The provincial government has responsibility, and we've taken that responsibility by implementing mandatory vaccination or negative tests for all government employees, Mr. Speaker. That's a long step and it's strong restrictions, as well as a mask mandate. I think that's reflected in the numbers that we see today, Mr. Speaker, 60 per cent drop in so many of them, Mr. Speaker. We're not out of the woods yet, but we're on the right angle, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. A. Ross, seconded by Mr. Skoropad.]

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

**Mr. Love:** — It's me again. Here we go. You know, I wanted to

start by thanking the members opposite and all members on our side for the really strong engagement that we had on Thursday. You know, there was certainly a lot of good listening, which we don't always experience in here, and that was represented in the taunting and heckles that were coming back. In the classroom we call that a high level of engagement. People are paying attention and I appreciate that.

When I left off, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the situation in Saskatoon. And the situation in Saskatoon is not a good one. And when I mentioned that the member from Saskatoon Northwest has always been a voice of reason within his own caucus and I speculated about where that voice has gone, I was met with a series of taunts. And so while I recognize the members opposite don't see him as reasonable, I accept that he is a reasonable man. And I am curious where that voice has gone, as our city is in a terrible position.

And the other members from Saskatoon are witnessing it with their own eyes. I know they're getting calls from nurses, from doctors, from parents who want their kids to get care. I know they're getting these calls. I know the member from Riversdale, I know the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota, I know that they're getting these calls. I know that they see with their own eyes the heartfelt pleas from constituents. Where have their voices gone?

Now, Mr. Speaker, their silence has forced our mayor and council into an untenable position. They were told that they could bring in their own health measures by the Minister of Health, by the Premier. On two separate occasions at least, they were told that they were free to do so. And then this government changed their minds, and the city of Saskatoon is still struggling.

Our city council is listening to the advice of medical health experts. The medical health officials are being listened to by the city of Saskatoon. And what we are asking for — that was not represented in the Throne Speech — is that this government also listens to that same advice, that they listen to the same modelling from medical health officers, that they look at the recommendations from Dr. Shahab that they're unwilling to release, from the local medical health officers, and that they put those in place to keep people safe.

This is not an unreasonable request. Well I'm being heckled by the Minister of Health. As I'm talking about keeping people healthy, I'm being heckled by the Minister of Health. It's his job, Mr. Speaker. Instead he's choosing to heckle me. It's his job to keep people safe. And I'm now being called a whiner by a member opposite — this is unreasonable; people are dying — by the Minister of Social Services. This is the arrogance that Saskatchewan people are disgusted with, while people are being sent across the country for health care. This is what we have.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech used a word that I want to talk about just for a moment before I wrap up. The Throne Speech talked about independence. Our Throne Speech talked about independence on the same day that the Canadian Armed Forces doubled their presence in our province. On the same day that we sent more people across the country to Ontario, where now I believe there's 24 patients receiving care. We chose to talk about independence. Independence.

Mr. Speaker, the disconnect between the Premier's dog whistle messages to the far right and the realities facing our communities could not be more obvious than it was by talking about independence on a day like that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about one thing that was missing from the Throne Speech, and it was something that I think Saskatchewan people needed to hear. They needed to hear "I'm sorry."

And I want to talk about what makes a good apology, Mr. Speaker. A good apology is not just the words "I'm sorry," but it starts with the words "I'm sorry." And a good apology is followed up by taking responsibility: "I'm sorry. It's my fault. I'm sorry. It's my fault." But then there's the third step, Mr. Speaker, and the third step is just as important as the first two: "I'm sorry. It's my fault. What can I do to make it better?"

Now I'm not great at this, Mr. Speaker. In my personal life, I'm not great. I'm not great at this. It's hard to take responsibility. But that third step is key. "I'm sorry. It's my fault. What can I do to make it better?"

And if this government had the disposition of someone who is truly sorry, they would seek out what can be done to make things better. And then they would be forced to listen to those medical health experts, the same ones that are informing decisions in Saskatoon, the same ones that have written to this government two times and been ignored. If they had the disposition of "I'm sorry. It's my fault. What can I do to make it better?," people's lives would be saved. This pandemic would not go on for as long as the Sask Party leadership has allowed it to, and we would not have the worst COVID death rates in the country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the Speech from the Throne but I do move an amendment, and I will read it now:

That the motion be amended by adding:

And that the Assembly does not support the agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne because it neither recognizes the COVID-19 crisis in our province nor proposes measures to address it, which is a direct result of the Sask Party government's choices that put politics ahead of Saskatchewan people; and

That the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Eastview:

That the motion be amended by adding:

And that the Assembly does not support the agenda outlined in the Speech from the Throne because it neither recognizes the COVID-19 crisis in our province nor proposes measures to address it, which is a direct result of the Saskatchewan Party government's choices that put politics ahead of Saskatchewan people; and

That the Assembly has lost confidence in the motion.

And it was seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park.

[14:30]

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise here this afternoon and join with the member for Saskatoon Eastview in presenting this motion. He is a tough act to follow, to say the least, Mr. Speaker. He did a phenomenal job showing the passion that thousands of Saskatchewan residents are feeling, the anger toward this government.

Mr. Speaker, before I get started I do want to take the opportunity to thank my husband. He has started a parental leave last week for the next four months. He's home with the baby who I had to last session bring in here many times. He sent me a text this morning to say that Ronan has now crawled for the first time. And it's tough to miss those little milestones, Mr. Speaker, but we have really important work to do here because there are a lot of very challenging things going on in this province right now, Mr. Speaker, and you wouldn't necessarily see that or know that from hearing the government's Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech presented last week really ignores what is top of mind for most people in this province today. Right now people are seeing a government that has failed to do what it needed to ensure that our health care system can provide the care we need, when we need it, to all of Saskatchewan's residents. Mr. Speaker, right now 24 Saskatchewan residents have been flown to Ontario for care because their government has failed them. Their family can no longer visit them because they had to be transferred two provinces away to get care they can no longer receive in Saskatchewan.

This is a government that has chosen to pander to anti-vaxxers instead of controlling the fourth wave. And what do we have as a result? The highest death rate in Canada. Over 800 deaths, Mr. Speaker, 300 more since the last time we sat in this Chamber. Mr. Speaker, October's death rate alone was 151 Saskatchewan citizens.

Mr. Speaker, we heard the Health minister today thank health care workers for their service, their hard work, taking on extra shifts, and taking on new roles, Mr. Speaker, in their redeployments. What we didn't hear the Health minister say, who he didn't thank are the thousands of Saskatchewan residents who've had their surgeries, procedures, treatments postponed, cancelled indefinitely because of this redeployment. Mr. Speaker, like I said, there are thousands right now out there who've been impacted by these decisions.

I'm going to take my time to talk about the stories of five specific individuals impacted by this decision.

Mr. Speaker, first a woman, a resident of Regina Douglas Park who contacted my office, was scheduled for a biopsy at the Regina women's centre. Her case, she's been told by her doctor, is extremely serious. And he's informed her that if a tumour is in fact cancerous, it will need to be treated quickly. The week she reached out to my office she learned that her biopsy had been

cancelled because the staff at the women's centre had been redeployed. She was assured that her biopsy would be rescheduled within eight weeks; however she has still heard nothing. She is scared and worried, understandably, for her own health, but also very upset at a government who has not made women's health a priority.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you a little bit about Charlotte. Charlotte is five years old. Her mom describes her as a shy kid that, once she's warmed up to somebody, she's very gregarious and incredibly chatty. She's opinionated and knows what she wants as most toddlers are, and is not afraid to tell you. She loves to put on shows where she dances and sings. Charlotte loves an audience. She's been working through some separation anxiety now that she goes to school but she loves being there, especially loving arts and crafts time. Charlotte is also in martial arts and has been so for a year, and while she sometimes struggles to keep up with her peers, she absolutely loves it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Charlotte was attending physical therapy regularly since she's been 16 months old because of low muscle tone and hypermobility. She needs this regular physical therapy to be able to keep up with her peers. That's now been cancelled. Her mother now has to try to do her best to maintain it at home, but Charlotte is certain to now fall behind.

Charlotte's parents can't utilize private care physiotherapy because her parents' benefits have already been maxed out accessing occupational therapy. The wait list for pediatric occupational therapy before these cancellations — two years, Mr. Speaker.

Now Blake is two and a half years old, just a few months older than my daughter. She wanted to be a skeleton for Halloween, but her mom wanted her to be a mermaid. They settled on a costume that they called bones. It's sort of like a skeleton goddess. She looked absolutely amazing. She can count to 14 and likes to play with dolls and her baby brother Rowan. Her favourite foods are popcorn and macaroni, and she thinks sour candy are absolutely gross.

Blake has spina bifida. She's a regular wheelchair user. Her mom is incredibly frustrated to once again be another example of health services being denied to her daughter. This is not the first time she's had to advocate for her daughter's health. Blake's spinal cord clinic is halted indefinitely. This includes her physical therapy, occupational therapy, and her monitoring appointments with neuro, ortho, and uro. She is supposed to be getting another tendon surgery, but who knows when that will happen, Mr. Speaker.

Blake currently no longer has support with her mobility. Her braces are too small right now. They can't do anything about getting her refitted without the specialist appointments she currently doesn't have access to. Her kidneys and her shunt are monitored, and currently there is no preventative medicine plan. She has been told to just go to the ER [emergency room] if things go bad. And, Mr. Speaker, when things go bad, they go really bad. They have had three emergency brain surgeries already, and her mom says that it's nerve-racking not knowing what would happen if there was another shunt malfunction because of the state of our health care.

Blake's mom considers herself lucky. Unlike Charlotte's mom, Blake can go to private therapies while the public ones are halted. However this is an extra financial burden, on top of daycare costs, placed on a single mother of a disabled toddler and a newborn. And she knows many, many other medical families that aren't so lucky for their toddlers.

Mr. Speaker, Nash is four years old. Nash can be shy at first but he's full of adventure. He just started pre-K [pre-kindergarten] and he's absolutely loving it. He's making tons of friends and he's enjoying doing all of the crafts. It's great to see, Mr. Speaker, Nash being so involved with so many other kids, because there was a while when we thought this wouldn't be the reality for him. He was born with a heart defect and required a heart transplant, which luckily he received at 13 months old — 13 months, Mr. Speaker. His family just celebrated his heart day on October 24th.

Nash is a medically fragile kid, you can understand. He requires a lot of monitoring to ensure that his heart continues to function the way it should. He was supposed to have his tonsils and adenoids out in November. That has been postponed indefinitely. Pediatrics cardiology only has one part-time nurse currently on staff because of the redeployment. The other two, like I said, redeployed. Imagine what this means if an urgent medical situation happens with one of our province's youngest citizens.

All of the out-patient clinics that Nash relies on are all seeing reduced patients, meaning that their already long wait-lists are getting even worse. Nash's cardiac cath will likely be delayed at least a month. This is a huge issue for Nash and his family because this is how the doctors check for any signs of rejection of his heart transplant. Should there be a rejection issue, Nash would not be able to receive a new heart right now.

Mr. Speaker, August is four years old. He actually celebrated his fourth birthday last week. He was so excited to play with his surprise, which was a big-truck sensory pit. He had to celebrate his birthday, however, without cake because August only eats through a tube. August has Down syndrome and significant speech delays but was able to sign to his parents how excited he was for his birthday. He's into the typical four-year-old boy things: trucks, cars, animals — foxes and lions in particular — Woody and Buzz and the Avengers.

However, Mr. Speaker, his opportunity and ability to socialize with his peers has been dramatically affected by the pandemic and his current health status. August has achalasia which prevents his esophagus from opening and emptying into his stomach. He received a temporary fix, a nasogastric tube, that has allowed him to get adequate nutrition so he can continue to grow. Again, Mr. Speaker, this was meant to be a temporary fix, about six to eight weeks, until he could undergo surgery that would allow him to eat and live a healthy and normal life. The family has now been waiting three months so far. The longer August waits for surgery, Mr. Speaker, the more he is at risk of aspiration and developing pneumonia.

The tube stays in with tape on his face which has to be changed several times a day. The tube makes it trickier for August to breathe at night, so his breathing is quite loud. He's up coughing three to four times a night because any fluid in his throat cannot exit his stomach, and it moves back and forth in his esophagus,

which puts him at risk of aspiration. He's also very frustrated that he can only eat through a tube. He wants to eat and chew, and is constantly asking his parents to be able to do so. And their mom has to keep telling him, no, he has to wait for his surgery.

Augie's mother feels that the current situation has had a disproportionate effect on kids like her son. He was already behind, waiting for surgery, with not enough pediatric surgeons in this province. Then when the children's hospital cut down elective surgeries, including Augie's at the end of September, this has made a difficult situation even worse.

Mr. Speaker, all of these moms who've shared these stories with me are frustrated and angry. They are angry because all of these experiences that they've experienced could have all been prevented had the government bothered to take action against the fourth wave when the medical professionals had asked, not just asked, Mr. Speaker, but begged the government to do so, instead of dragging their feet, allowing surgeries and procedures for toddlers, potential cancer patients, and thousands others throughout this province to be cancelled before putting in vaccine and mask mandates.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier often talks about fairness. I'll tell you what's not fair, Mr. Speaker: every single thing these families have been going through for the last two months. Every day they spend anxious about the future of their children because of this government's failure to act. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank these mothers who've shared their stories of their littles with me in the hopes that the government would finally wake up and listen.

Mr. Speaker, because of these mothers, because of the 846 Saskatchewan citizens who have already died of COVID-19, because of the 24 Saskatchewan ICU patients who had to be airlifted out of this province by the military, because of those who are scared about their future because they can't access important medical procedures, because of Nash, Charlotte, Blake, and August, I will be seconding the amendment moved by the member from Saskatoon Eastview and will not be supporting the government motion. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a while since I've got up here and had a speech, so I'm going to take a little bit of my time to thank some very important people in my life. I want to start with my three boys: Geoff, Dylan, and Ryan. Now Geoff, he lives out on the coast, the life he wants to live. And I spent some time with him this summer. It was nice to get away. I hadn't seen him in two years because of COVID and the restrictions. It was nice to get to know him again. It's been a while.

Then we've got Dylan. He's my boy that lives in Moose Jaw. He's got three kids. He moved out at the beginning of September so I only get to see the grandkids for a couple hours on the weekends. So it's nice having my own place, but it's a lot more quiet and there's nobody to sit and have that evening coffee with and have that chat. So I do a lot of talking on Facebook.

Lastly but certainly not least . . . Oh yeah, and Dylan's kids. We've got Jordison, who's the oldest, Jordison is in grade 3.

Jaxton's in grade 2, and their little sister, Attica, is in grade 1. They are so much fun. They made it over to my place last night for Halloween. I think it was their last stop. I had their three bags made up for them, and then I had half a box of chocolate bars that certainly I don't need because I'm kind of a big guy. So I sent them home with their stepdad just to make sure they had enough chocolate in them to get them ready for school today.

[14:45]

And then there's my son, Ryan. Ryan has moved from Portage la Prairie back towards us here in Saskatchewan. He's only eight miles across the border into Manitoba, straight south of Melita. And if you remember a few years back, they wanted to separate from Manitoba and join our province. Well my son, he bought the family farm down there and he's on that family farm. And I'll talk to that a little bit later when we talk about my history and just the difference in families. And then there's mom and dad. And I've spoke about mom and dad many a time before in here.

And it goes back to one of my previous speeches I had. And there was a member from Saskatoon that had complained we had sent him a fax at 5 o'clock or 5:30 on a Friday afternoon, and what was he going to do with that on a Friday afternoon at 5:30? And I had to explain to him, as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], as an elected MLA, we don't have a 9 to 5 job. We don't have an 8 to 5 job. We've got a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week job. So yeah, occasionally I do get up in the middle of the night and check my email to see if there's anything going on.

Friends, family, constituents have my cell number and they know, if there's an emergent situation, to reach out to me. I respond to people that reach out to me with emergencies on Facebook. So yeah, it's important that we're in contact with our constituents, and not only our constituents but anybody out there that wants our help. And I'll get to that in a little bit too.

So the last person I really want to thank after mom and dad . . . And hi, Mom. I know you're watching, so this is where it's going to get fun if you want to turn it off. A little bit after this. I want to thank Mr. Speaker and his staff. I got to be part of a historic ceremony here in the legislature. We had Indigenous leaders and pipe carriers from treaties all over our province, and they spoke to us. And our Elder AJ, he was a great speaker and a great teacher.

And this is kind of where I want to go a little bit with this. So I've heard it mentioned from the other side before that they're the only ones with Indigenous members. Well sorry to say the Canadian government, our federal government and our Constitution recognize three groups of people as Indigenous. First of all there's our First Nations because they were here first. Second of all is our Inuit. Thirdly is Métis. And I know for a fact I'm Métis. I know we've got Métis on that side and I know I've got Métis members on this side.

And I'm proud to be a Métis. It's not like when I was growing up and you didn't want anybody to know you're Métis. I'm proud to be Métis. My boys are proud to be Métis. And one of the things we were taught, not just because we were Métis, because it's the right thing to do . . . And it goes more than just respecting our elders because I've got lots of elders in here. I'm certainly not the oldest, but I'm certainly not the youngest.

But what I was taught in an Indigenous pipe ceremony is for those that get up and speak, they're given tobacco. And when they're given tobacco, that's them being asked by the teachers to actually teach us something. And I feel that when our Indigenous leaders are teaching us, it is our job to do our best to pay attention and listen.

One of the other things I was taught growing up, by my parents and teachers and coaches in the Forces, teaching my kids that I taught in cadets, in baseball, was if you had a disagreement with the teacher, with an elder, with somebody trying to convey a message across, you don't stand up and correct them or try and correct them in front of a crowd. That is very disrespectful, in my own opinion. However that happened. And as a Métis and Indigenous person, I find that pretty tough to swallow.

Now I'm just a simple guy, and I've mentioned it many times before, I've always been a blue-collar worker. Closest thing to a white-collar job I had before this was working at SaskTel and working with the union, but I'm just a blue-collar worker. I'm not a university professor. I'm not a lawyer. I'm not a doctor. I'm just a guy who's worked hard to get everything that I have, and I've gotten lucky a few times.

Now one of the things I was taught as a youngster was common courtesy. And I will say that occasionally in this House we forget about that common courtesy, but outside this House that is something that we should pay attention to all the time. I do not like that a sacred ceremony, and I won't use the word "desecrate," but a sacred ceremony was walked all over by someone who thought they had something to add to what the teachers had to say. I found that very out of order.

Now our member from Saskatoon Eastview has had a very interesting line on his speeches. And again I'm just a politician, but maybe he needs to figure out how politics works. If he actually thinks we're pandering to a party that doesn't like us, chances are they're not going to vote for us. I'm not too sure about that. But that's like saying the NDP pander to the Liberals because they're trying to get the liberal vote, or the Liberals are pandering to the NDP. You're NDP. You're Liberal. You're Conservative. You're Sask Party. You're Green Party. And now there's a Buffalo Party, a PPC [People's Party of Canada] party. I'm sure there's a few other ones out there.

But it is absolutely amazing that the things people say in here that they won't say out there. After 10 years in here I don't find that very surprising, except people in here need to realize if they can't back it up maybe they shouldn't say it. It's not a show in here. We are actually here to hopefully lead the people of Saskatchewan down a road to better health, better prosperity. And that's where we go into the Speech from the Throne. We talked about it: a stronger Saskatchewan, a safer Saskatchewan, a healthier Saskatchewan, a better-educated Saskatchewan, and last but certainly not least, a more independent Saskatchewan.

It's been thrown a lot around in here. And you know, I missed something I was going to say earlier as a proud Métis. I'm proud to be standing up here in Treaty 4 land and the homeland of the Métis, my people. So it's a good day in Saskatchewan when we can gather here with people of all religions, all stripes. Doesn't matter your nationality. We're all Canadians. I was going to quote a line out of the Métis national anthem, but some people

may find that offensive, but I'm going to do it anyways. In there it says, we are the true Canadians. So that's the Métis national anthem. That's the national anthem that my people have developed to show us that we are a huge part of Canada.

So back to the speech. We talk about a healthier Saskatchewan, and it's been a tough run. And I know we talk about it quite often. We talk about the 52 hospitals that the NDP closed when they were in government, including the huge one just right over here. But we rarely talk about all the doctors and nurses and specialists they fired when they closed those hospitals. And yeah, they throw out, how many have we reopened? Well it's a lot harder now that you fired those folks and recruiting them to come back to Saskatchewan. You've done your best to run off some of the best and brightest.

And I'll talk about a buddy of mine that I went to school with in grade school and he's a neurosurgeon down in — where is it? — South Carolina. No, North Carolina. He's in North Carolina. He has his own clinic down there. He works in their major university hospital and he has seven other Canadians on his staff as surgeons from our province. He went to school in the '90s, graduated in the '90s. So who was in power in the '90s? Right over there. What were they doing? They were closing down hospitals.

It is absolutely amazing that after all this time they talk about us accepting responsibility. They talk about government taking responsibility for their actions or not their actions. I've never heard one of them apologize, not once, for closing down a single hospital, not once, or any of the long-term care beds, leaving our province in a state of disarray. We have to plan for the future, and that seems beyond the folks over there.

Yes, we have to deal with the crisis right now, which we're doing, and it shows that we're doing it in a better way and our numbers are going down. Slowly but surely they're improving. And I want to say my heartfelt condolences to all of those that lost somebody.

Better educated, well that'd be easier if we had another 176 schools. But I can point out right to Moose Jaw. We've worked long and hard and there'll be an announcement coming out soon. And I know my member from Moose Jaw North was on the school board when this was brought forward to create a new joint-use school in Moose Jaw with the Catholic and Prairie South, and they've done a fantastic job working with the city and moving it forward. And I want to thank the member from Moose Jaw North for all his hard work on that back in the day before he was here.

Also in Moose Jaw . . . Because the federal government does not recognize carbon capture as a science where we actually take the carbon of the coal-burning power plants and sequester it back in the soil, we have to shut down our power plants in southern Saskatchewan. So that's Boundary, and that's Coronach, and also the other one, Shand in Estevan. So we are building a natural gas dual-turbine power plant in Moose Jaw to pick up some of that load.

We do have a goal of being 50 per cent. And I believe it's 50 per cent by 2030. Isn't that it, 50 per cent renewable? Isn't that the number? Yeah, I think it's 50 per cent. I may be wrong so I stand

to be corrected. And I'm sure the Minister Responsible for SaskPower will correct me if it's way out of line. But baseline power is still needed. Yes, you can get power from solar. You can get power from wind, and it's somewhat efficient, but you still need that baseload. When it's 40 below outside and there's no wind blowing and your only light from, you know, 9 o'clock in the morning till maybe 4, 4:30 in the afternoon, we'll all see it here as we leave before the end of session. It'll be dark before we get out of these doors at 4:30. So that's there. And we're working towards that green . . . and we're working with our First Nations partners towards that green energy that's coming up.

For a safer Saskatchewan, I know one of the asks over and over and over again, working with the Moose Jaw police is, can we have some more government support with our policing? And this year we're moving ahead with some of that, although we've already done some work in there. We've put the PACT teams in the Moose Jaw Police Service. And I don't have the numbers right offhand, but the amount of touches those teams get and avoiding people going to our emergency rooms and stopping some of those mental health emergencies right in their tracks, getting the supports they need at that time.

[15:00]

Creating a Saskatchewan trafficking response team, that's very important because as we all know, even the members opposite, there is a crisis in this province also called meth addiction. And we've created new meth beds, and like we say, there's more to do. However if we can stop it at the source, that should be able to maybe stop some more folks from getting hooked on it. It is, from what I've been told, a horrible disease and very hard to quit.

Mental health and addictions is something we care about quite a bit on this side, and it's one of the things we continue building on on this side, putting more beds in place, doing our best to recruit more specialists so we can have the people in place to help those folks out in their darkest times.

So the new schools, not only is Moose Jaw getting one — or four, depending on how you look at it — we've got Regina, Saskatoon, Carrot River, La Loche, Blaine Lake, and Lanigan. So it's not like we're not taking care of our northern people as well.

Infrastructure, well, 360-megawatt Great Plains power station at Moose Jaw, I talked about that, and then talking about the contractors from the province that are working out there. If you happen to visit the construction site, on the side of one of the shacks or buildings, they're temporary office buildings. I call them shacks because that's what we called them in the oil field because they're temporary and you can load them on a truck and haul them anywhere. On the side of that, it's got to be 10 feet wide and probably eight feet high, the list of Saskatchewan companies that are doing work out there. And our minister in charge of Procurement is doing a heck of a job making sure that our Canadian or our Saskatchewan companies get a shot at doing this.

One of the things that I'm most proud of in my work here at the legislature is my work as a military liaison. Our veterans . . . And we're all wearing, just about all wearing poppies today, not to — contrary to some belief — not to say war is good. You talk to any soldier. They hate war. They hate the fighting. But it's to

remember veterans that have gone out and stood up for our right, for the right for us to come in here and hopefully respectfully disagree, and sometimes not so respectfully, but to take care of us.

And it's not just World War I and not just World War II. The RUSI [Royal United Services Institute] here in Regina has set up pedestals outside the cenotaph that commemorate and remember a lot of the important battles, a lot of the important battles that have happened outside during World War I, during World War II, before World War I, the first battles recognized, as well as recognizing our Afghan vets. And then we've got our Korean War vets, and then we have our vets that have served in peacekeeping all over this world.

Our Armed Forces are a lot like our Saskatchewan people. They punch well above their weight. And I want to thank all our serving members for keeping us safe. And I really want to put out a huge thank you to all those folks in the past that went away, sacrificed time away from their families, saw things that no human being should ever see. And I want to thank you for those sacrifices. And last but not least, I want to thank those that have put down the ultimate sacrifice and sacrificed themselves for our freedoms. I also want to thank their families for helping us remember them.

So what our government has done, my government remains committed to supporting our veterans and their families through the veterans service club program, which has nearly distributed 1.5 million to help sustain veterans' clubs in 65 communities across our province. And this is money that we give them and they have a board and they decide what it gets spent on, as well as it should be. They're the ones that know what we have to do and where their money needs to go.

For planning for the future, we've had a huge surge in capital investment in our province. We've got the BHP potash at Jansen. Now they've spent a lot of money up there already and they're going to finish it. When we went and did that tour, I was amazed at the amount they put into it, and they were still in the testing phase.

So we have one of the world's, if not the world's largest mining companies here in our province providing jobs for our First Nations, for our people, for our small-town folks, so our kids that live in rural Saskatchewan, whether they stay on the farm or go outside the farm, can take that expertise they learn in our Sask Polytech and their high schools, like welding, machine work, carpentry, can take it and use it right in our province, make a good living in our province so they don't have to run away like when I was a kid and everybody else packed a bag and moved to Alberta or BC [British Columbia]. You know, that's where the future was. But I was one of those guys that stuck out in the oil field working for my dad, so lots of stories there. Not for today.

And then we look at . . . We as a government have talked about this and we've had folks talk to us about it. And I have now just ultimately an urban riding. I've got maybe three square miles of rural between the two highways . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well they're all my friends in that part. Meeting with those folks and talking about processing what we grow here, that value-added side that my learned friend has mentioned. Value-added. Like I said, I'm just a simple guy. It's build it here,

package it here, and sell it everywhere in the world. So we've got the Cargill canola crush factory being built here in Regina. We've got the Viterra canola crush facility also being built here.

And for all those other companies out there, we've got two sets of train tracks, three actually, in Moose Jaw. We've got CP [Canadian Pacific Railway], CN, and then we got the Soo line straight to the US. So anybody else looking, we've got a new industrial park being built right alongside the new power plant there that the city of Moose Jaw is doing. So let's encourage some of you to look outside just the Regina area. Moose Jaw is still part of the greater Regina area, but it's the town I represent and I will help them sell as much of The Friendly City as we can. The friendly city that's surprisingly unexpected, I think that's the new one.

We've got the Ceres Global ag crush facility going up in Northgate, and that's back in my home country. I grew up down there where the Minister of Social Services is from. And Northgate, right on the north side of the border, there's some great white-tail hunting down along the valley down there. Just as long as you don't chase it across the border, there's no problems. And no, I'm not speaking from experience. My friends out Oxbow way, and you all know who you're talking about.

We've got the Richardson International canola crush capacity in Yorkton, which is . . . that's doubling? Oh the Whip isn't listening. They're expanding there. We've got the Red Leaf Pulp wheat straw pulp facility here in Regina again; Northern Nutrients urea fertilizer facility being built in Saskatchewan; Clean Seed Capital Group's Smart Seeder Max-S.

Pulp mills, saw mills, forest products, more forest products. Oh, of course Brandt. Brandt is expanding. And you take a look at what Brandt has done for our province. And we can't just forget about the other one. There's Hawks Agro. There's . . . they're up in northern Saskatchewan by . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . yes, Bourgault.

And you take a look at the manufacturing facilities that have been brought to the province, not because of government, because it's the right place to be to build these, to develop these. But government has to make it a friendly place for a business to grow. And we noticed when the opposition was in power, Saskatchewan wasn't a friendly place to grow. It was the place to be from. And we all heard the joke back when I was in high school, back in high school, and it was just last person leaving, shut off the light. And that's sad.

Yet two of my boys have moved outside the province and one stayed here. The youngest one, it's because he bought the family farm in Manitoba. And I'm going to end with this. He bought the family farm in Manitoba from his step-grandfather. Now his step-grandfather homesteaded that farm. It was a hundred years in the mid-'90s, somewhere in there.

So this goes back to what I was . . . I get emotional sometimes. I get pretty upset when I think about things. Just talking about it with my mom this weekend. Our family farm at Roche Percee is not our family farm because it wasn't allowed for Métis to buy it. So we have a lease. No permanent structures, none. Grandpa and Grandma's little house that I helped roof many a time is still there, pieces of it. We all go down there and camp in the summer.

But because we were Métis, we couldn't buy the land. Now we can. And it is important to remember that.

So with that, I will not supporting the members opposite's amendment, and I will be supporting our Speech from the Throne. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is once again my honour to stand in this House and address another Throne Speech. I'd like to open my remarks with a quote from our Premier:

Our government is working to build a better Saskatchewan — a stronger, safer, healthier, better educated and more independent Saskatchewan. That starts with a strong and growing economy that provides the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all Saskatchewan people.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, due to time restraints last spring, I did not get the opportunity to speak to the budget, which also did not allow me the opportunity to thank those who supported me. So with your indulgence, first off, to those who live in my constituency that took the time to go out and vote for me and this party that I'm so blessed to be a member of, I promise that every day I am in this job, to the best of my ability, I will advocate and work tirelessly for both my constituency and my province. And as usual, I'd like to thank my constituency assistants, my parents, my extended family, and of course, Bart. Also I could not do my job as a minister successfully without the staff I have here in the building, so I extend a thank you to them as well.

To our Minister of Finance, I had the opportunity to serve on treasury board with her again this year. It was a true pleasure to have her no-nonsense approach to the process as well as the years of experience she brought to our decision making. She always has an open mind to ideas and opinions from members that were brought forward, and I thank her for her leadership. I think I've said it in the House before, but when I grow up, I want to be just like her.

To Dr. Shahab, thank you for serving this province and our government. I know that you live, eat, and breathe COVID-19 and are continually researching and educating yourself on the most recent data and evidence. Thank you for the personal sacrifices you have made for this province.

And my last thank you is to our Premier. His strong, steady hand of leadership throughout this pandemic has been unwavering. His dedication to his province is evident. I am proud of the way he has worked very hard to try and find the right balance between the well-being of individuals and livelihoods. So for that I say thank you to our Premier.

Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to serve as Minister of Social Services, a responsibility I take very seriously. While I have only had the opportunity to be in this position for close to a year, it feels as though I've been here for longer than that. With the number of stakeholders, community-based organizations, and

individuals I've had the opportunity to meet with, I can clearly see that this province is served well by those who truly do care.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the previous minister, who is now our Health minister. He's built some very strong relationships with several organizations that we deal with in Social Services. On just about every call or meeting I have had, they would comment on how they miss the previous minister. They enjoyed working with him and respected him for the way they dealt with him, so pretty big shoes to fill.

Within our Throne Speech, I'd like to point out a couple of highlights which are very important to my ministry, as well on reconciliation. My ministry does their very best to ensure that the services it provides are appropriate to the clients and its needs. As part of that effort, the ministry is expanding Opikinawasowin program that offers culturally appropriate child welfare services to Indigenous families requiring support, otherwise known as Opik.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year we made an announcement that we would be ending birth alerts in the province of Saskatchewan. This was a request that had come forward from community-based organizations, from our First Nations groups, as well as from mothers who had been affected by birth alerts. Our stakeholders supported the ministry's decision to eliminate these and agreed that there would be an increased need for coordination of supports for at-risk mothers, which brings us to Opik.

Opik is an alternative, non-adversarial dispute resolution process for families with children who may become or are involved in child protection. The Opik process includes a council of elders, family, ministry caseworkers, and professionals to come up with a collaborative plan for the family. The key part of this protocol will be the ability to bring in elders when there appears to be disagreement on a plan, and plan ahead or if there is risk of apprehending a child.

Opik is an Indigenous culturally focused alternative dispute resolution process that is overseen and facilitated by a council of elders. They are an independent provincial group of elders representing all Indigenous ancestries and languages in the province. The province facilitates cultural interventions, discussions, ceremonies, and works efficiently with the family to establishing a plan of support.

While also in the view of reconciliation, this past July our government, along with the federal government, were privileged to take part in an historic ceremony celebrating Cowessess First Nation's official assumption of jurisdiction over child welfare for its members. This was the first of its kind in Saskatchewan, in fact the first of its kind in Canada.

Having the opportunity to work with Cowessess First Nation Chief Delorme and the ministry truly showcased the collaborative nature in which we can work together. This was the first time I have had the pleasure of dealing directly with Chief Delorme and I can say it was truly inspiring to see his commitment he has for his community and his people. I have no doubt that through his and his team's hard work, this will be a successful undertaking.

Within the Throne Speech, there are five main topics that will be

our goal for this session, but more importantly set a path for years ahead to help build a better Saskatchewan. Those are a stronger Saskatchewan, a safer Saskatchewan, a healthier Saskatchewan, a better-educated Saskatchewan, and a more independent Saskatchewan.

I'll start by talking briefly about a healthier Saskatchewan. Without a doubt, top of mind likely just about for every Saskatchewan resident is COVID-19. This pandemic has proven challenging for not only Saskatchewan but for every province and territory across Canada. We are seeing the fourth wave of a pandemic put a significant stress on our health care system. With that said, there's a clear path to the end of this pandemic and that is through vaccines. The evidence is clear. You are at much greater risk if you are unvaccinated, so if you haven't done so already, please go and get vaccinated.

Our government has added more in-patient addiction treatment beds. I believe that throughout the COVID-19 journey, there has been a highlight on mental health and addictions, and I'm happy to report that the services at the addictions treatment centre we have at St. Joseph's Hospital in Estevan have been expanded. We've added \$850,000 in this year's budget to add an additional 12 addiction treatment beds, as well as two new pre-treatment beds. This addition will increase the total number of beds in Estevan facility to 32 treatment beds and six pre-treatment beds. This will help make a healthier Saskatchewan.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Greg Hoffer who is the executive director at St. Joseph's Hospital, as well as the team he works with. Health care is not an easy field to be working in no matter what capacity you are providing those services in. Having said that, when Greg and his team are asked to step up and provide much-needed services for our province they are there. So I say thank you.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give a little history lesson on addictions services in this province and the Estevan area. There was a time a few years back when Estevan had a first-class treatment centre, but the New Democratic Party decided to close down those services. So while they find it easy to stand on the other side of the House and criticize where money is or is not invested, they should be cognizant that some of the investments we are making are replacing services that they actually closed. Mr. Speaker, first of all, reopening services that were closed by the NDP and now expanding those services are critical to the success of this province.

I had the opportunity to speak with someone who attended one of the graduation celebrations for people who had a successful journey at the centre and are now able to move on with their lives. There was a man who was going to be leaving that day. The person I was talking with was there on the day the gentleman had arrived at the facility. He told me the day he arrived he was a man who was in desperate need of help with his addictions issues. He resembled a man who was ready to give up on life. He was defeated. Fast forward 70 days, now the person standing in front of him is a brand new man. He is leaving, ready to take on the world on a positive note. This facility gave him a new lease on life.

It was very heartwarming to hear this success story. It is stories like this that prove the success of programs that are being run for

these individuals. Mr. Speaker, there is more work to be done and this government is committed to doing that work.

Mr. Speaker, this government is also building a healthier Saskatchewan by investing in long-term care facilities, which is why we have placed \$275,000 in this year's budget for planning dollars for a new long-term care home to replace our aging regional nursing home in Estevan. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the Chair of the committee, Mr. Don Kindopp, as well as the committee as a whole. Without their successful fundraising campaign, they would not be at the point we are at today. This committee worked very hard to secure donations from a very generous community. To all the surrounding communities and rural municipalities that have supported this committee, I say thank you.

On a quick side note, I'd like to add that Mr. Kindopp was my grade 6 schoolteacher. Don't know that he would have ever thought that our paths would cross in the way they have the past few years. I had the opportunity to sit on my health region board, and at the same time Mr. Kindopp was the Chair of the St. Joseph's Hospital board. As luck would have it, I was made the region's representative on that board, so I got the opportunity to work with Mr. Kindopp as a peer as opposed to a teacher/student role.

I remember at one meeting he said to me, you don't have to call me Mr. Kindopp; you can just call me Don. Well 13 years later and I still can't call him Don. So when I talk to him on budget day, which also happened to be his birthday, I said, "Happy birthday, Mr. Kindopp. We will be getting our new nursing home." He said it was the best birthday gift he had ever received.

But back to the Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, a more independent Saskatchewan in the short term as well as the long term is the goal for our province. In recent years our government has raised some very valid concerns about the unfairness of the equalization formula with the federal government, but those concerns have been ignored.

I know that I hear about this loud and clear in my constituency. Last week Alberta residents voted in a provincial referendum to remove equalization from the Canadian Constitution. What does that mean for us here in Saskatchewan? It means that the federal government is now compelled to enter into good-faith negotiations with the provinces on changing the equalization section of the Constitution. Our government will be a full participant of those negotiations, representing Saskatchewan's interest to achieve meaningful reform on equalization.

I'm truly hoping that our federal government takes the concerns that not just Alberta and Saskatchewan have with equalization and think of Canada as a whole when entering into these negotiations. We are the country of Canada, not the country for all eastern interests as our Prime Minister seems to believe. He is supposed to be the Prime Minister for all of Canada. It is about time he started acting accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working on a safer Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this comes in many forms. And there are so many initiatives listed in the Throne Speech, but I would be remiss if I did not take time and talk about the investments that are being made directly in my constituency. So I'd like to talk to the PACT

team that's going to be going in Estevan. This stands for police and crisis team.

The police and crisis team will be a partnership between the Estevan Police Service and the Saskatchewan Health Authority. PACT intervention is aimed to help create a better outcome for individuals and families struggling with mental health. An Estevan police officer is paired with a registered social worker to attend and defuse crisis situations.

The services that are included are: responses to situations requiring immediate attention; providing consultation to patrol members and offer immediate support and connection to services; when necessary and appropriate, the team may assist and attend to an emergency room for people in crisis. The emphasis is on stabilizing the situation in the community whenever possible. Mr. Speaker, the announcement of this team will be another tool to help protect people in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I've not managed to get to everything listed in the Throne Speech. If I were to talk about all the economic investments and activities happening I would need much more time than I'm allotted, but I know that some of my colleagues will cover that area very well. I will say one thing on the topic though: our government and people of Saskatchewan who believe in this province are setting all of us up for a very successful future.

In closing, I'd like to say that the past couple of years have not quite gone the way we would have imagined. We have been on a very uncertain journey and we have a bit more to get through. But together I know we can do it and we will be more resilient than ever before on the other side. We will meet the challenges before us as we always do with perseverance, courage, faith, and compassion.

As I was reading the end of the Throne Speech I was very encouraged by how it ended:

May divine providence continue to bless our province and guide this Assembly in all of its deliberations.

God bless Saskatchewan.

God bless Canada.

God save the Queen.

[15:30]

On that, I will be supporting the motion brought forward by the member from Prince Albert Northcote and seconded by the member from Arm River, and I will not be supporting the amendment brought forward by the member from Saskatoon Eastview. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me begin as always by thanking the people in my life that make a difference every day. To my wife, Giselle, and our family who are always supportive while always keeping perspective and balance in our

conversations, thank you. Of particular note, I became a proud grandpa for the first time this year as Ellia was born April 17th to Erik and Annie.

Mr. Speaker, as we approach Remembrance Day, I want to acknowledge specifically that in March of this year, mom lost her husband of 49 years, George Gaudreau, at age 102. George proudly served his country overseas and he staunchly fought for Canadian values and opportunities. He will be missed.

To my constituency assistant, Chris, and to all constituency assistants across the province, we thank you for the work that you've done in the last year and a half. It's been a very challenging time for all of you, and we know that you've been front and centre in a lot of it, so we thank you.

I also want to thank my constituency executive for the work that they do in supporting me and in working with our constituency.

To the constituency of Kelvington-Wadena: they've been honest, they've been open, and they have been largely respectful of the challenging times we face. The vast majority are not happy with the situation we are in as a global community, but they, without exception, wouldn't trade their jobs for ours any day. Thank you to all constituents for your feedback and input.

I want to single out and thank the health care workers across my constituency for their advocacy and for their dedication to their field. We have many family members in health care, and I'm particularly acutely aware of their service. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor delivered a wide-ranging Speech from the Throne on behalf of my government. Mr. Speaker, these are difficult times globally, in Canada, and in Saskatchewan. This is well reflected in the speech, as we outlined the challenges faced in a pandemic while fully recognizing the need to govern, the need to face realities of today, but always to have a vision of what we can be, what a positive outlook can bring, and what a committed team brings to the fore.

These are difficult times, but they are not hopeless times. These are challenging times, but they are not a time to run for cover. They are a time to be bold, to be visionary, and to have trust and faith in the people of Saskatchewan.

Today I'll touch on recent developments in my constituency, some important provincial developments that affect all of us, the Speech from the Throne in general, and I will touch briefly on COVID from perhaps a slightly different perspective.

Mr. Speaker, the Kelvington-Wadena constituency like many others is largely rural, largely agriculture, and above all filled with good, hard-working people. It's been an honour to represent them in this legislative building, and every time I put this pin on in the morning I reflect on the responsibility that I have in that role and the responsibility we have as government.

Mr. Speaker, our agriculture community had a particularly challenging year — early stages of drought, uncertainties around delivery contracts, cost challenges, and the COVID world have been unprecedented challenges — and we thank them for their dedication to sustainable practices, to the industry that has global value, and to their communities and neighbours.

Mr. Speaker, in the past couple of years while we faced the challenges of COVID, my constituents and their municipal governments continued to partner with us to build Saskatchewan. They want a growing Saskatchewan. They want opportunity for their children and grandchildren. They want a safe and healthy Saskatchewan. They want good schools and local services. Mr. Speaker, they want us to do the work necessary to be that good partner in a responsible government.

As a result, over the past couple of years we've been able to work with communities with the MEEP [municipal economic enhancement program] program, the ICIP [Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program] program, and a number of other grant and development initiatives. If I may, I'll highlight a few specific examples that are by no means exceptions, but are truly reflective of the communities' will to grow and build better for their citizens.

Mr. Speaker, last year's MEEP funding delivered 163,000 to Foam Lake, 185,000 to Wadena, 122,000 to Bjorkdale, 123,000 to Porcupine Plain, and similar amounts to many towns and RM partners to build new and replacement infrastructure. More recently, the Canada infrastructure program, a partnership between the provincial and federal governments, brought a provincial contribution of 294,000 to the Archerwill lagoon expansion through the RM of Barrier Valley. The Theodore water treatment plant received 194,000 from this provincial government.

Mr. Speaker, funding was provided to the Red Deer Nursing Home for much-needed capital improvements, and to the Wadena Hospital for significant improvements as well. Of particular note, this past year I was thrilled to announce the completion of Highway 38 resurfacing from Kelvington to Perigord and from Chelan to the provincial park boundary. In addition, significant repaving and road improvements were completed inside Greenwater Lake Provincial Park.

I would be remiss if I didn't add that Greenwater Lake Provincial Park truly is one of the great hidden gems in the province with a fantastic golf course under new ownership and management structure, with excellent fishing and hiking trails, great camping facilities, and spectacular scenery. Everyone should put it on their bucket list.

I'd also like to note a number of traffic safety initiatives funded through the SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] Provincial Traffic Safety Fund grant program. These initiatives will help save lives on our highways.

Mr. Speaker, we've had many announcements around new bridges, new culverts, and other new government-supported projects, but I want to highlight a couple of private businesses that prove confidence in our Saskatchewan. A small but not insignificant business opened in Foam Lake. Mid Prairie Truck & Trailer Repair is a welcome addition to their business community. In Wadena, one of the longest serving and larger regional ag businesses, Wheatbelt Sales, is in the middle of building a huge addition to their premises to allow them to properly assemble equipment for delivery.

I also want to recognize the work of our many partners in the care of those facing challenges in our communities. Programs like

Mallard in Wadena, POP [Porcupine opportunities program] in Porcupine Plain, and CARRES [community access — respite, rehabilitation, education services] in Wynyard, and many others make a difference in many lives and in the well-being of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have very entrepreneurial and supportive communities in the Northeast, and we honour them through our commitment to a balanced approach to our current challenges. One of the things noted in the Throne Speech that is, I believe, a game changer for our tradespeople and miners is the announcement by BHP to complete the development and to bring to production a mine, that while it's just outside my constituency, will be well-paying jobs for many of my constituents in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Speech from the Throne highlights a number of initiatives in addition to BHP that will be very important to my constituents. The \$2.25 million invested by our government in the CT [computerized tomography] scanner in Melfort will make a big difference to health care delivery in the Northeast. The coverage approval for Trikafta is a game changer for CF [cystic fibrosis] patients and families who have worked tirelessly to get approval and delivery of this innovation in care. New announcements in cancer testing and treatment affect every one of us, and we congratulate and thank all involved in these developments.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many pieces to the Throne Speech that it is difficult to touch on all of them, but I want to highlight just a few more. The commitment that SaskTel will work with private internet service providers is past due, and I'm looking forward to significant advancement of rural internet services.

Our investment in and support of value-add in agriculture is incredibly important and is clearly recognized by both major market players as well as small entrepreneurs in vegetable production, ethanol, and many others. I'd also note the significant developments in helium, in lithium, and in precious metals, all of which will make Saskatchewan a stronger global player.

Mr. Speaker, the work being done to bring new and innovative sciences to those challenged with mental health and addictions is a significant step forward. These initiatives matter.

Last year we announced our growth plan, laying out our vision for the next decade. The Speech from the Throne continues to put in place the necessary steps and tools to work with Saskatchewan citizens to be leaders, to be innovators, to be participants in a strong, growing, and more resilient province. The people of Saskatchewan are well aware of the challenges we face as we grow and build based on our natural resource, and ag, and now tech-driven economy. Our government will stand up for Saskatchewan producers and innovators.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to make a few comments about the COVID world we live in. Mr. Speaker, for many decades, Saskatchewan, Canada, and probably the Western world has grown to have certain expectations of not only our health care system but our social acceptance of what might be considered normal behaviour around all matters health related. Of course through our divergent views, always finding challenges, always questions about policy, but bottom line, we had certain expectations that the system was

responsive, responsible, and full of people who had a universal perspective on delivery priorities.

Mr. Speaker, almost two years ago that changed, not just in a nuanced, ponderous way. No. We were hit squarely with numerous unknowns. What is this that we're dealing with? What is the source? How does it spread? Why does it affect people the way it does? During this time we've seen nations become isolationists. We've seen a loss of faith and a loss of trust in governments globally, nationally, and at all levels. We've seen neighbour against neighbour and even family members challenged in their familial relationships. The fallout from COVID-19 pandemic has affected each and every citizen in ways unimaginable just two years ago.

No one knew the role social media would play. No one knew two years ago that there would be such societal division and polarization. No one could have expected the challenge to the health care system and in many ways the challenges presented with simply developing a mutual understanding of the issues, complications, and processes to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, let me be perfectly clear. I'm not advocating for any position on COVID numbers or theories. I'm simply dealing with the perspective on societal impact. In no way do I wish to diminish the individual impact of those who have lost loved ones to the COVID consequence. Remember in the early days, this came filled with distrust — racist, globalist conspiracies.

The question that I've asked myself is, why have we come to such a place and time when we have so much opportunity in front of us? In considering that question, Mr. Speaker, I've looked back through my life for guidance and wisdom of others, and I thought I might add a perspective to the conversation that may be a starting point for a different level of conversation. Mr. Speaker, during my career I had the opportunity to work in the field of corporate reorganization and change management. During that time, working with an international firm and working with senior executives on major international corporations, we were struck by a universal reality and it was expressed as change in culture can in fact be no different from dealing with death or loss of a spouse or child.

Mr. Speaker, in fact we are dealing with a certain level of societal change. Perhaps we should collectively take a leadership role in compassion for our fellow citizens, not unlike at a moment when they are dealing with a significant personal loss in their lives. I'm reminded of the Kübler-Ross studies done on the five stages of change management, dealing with significant changes in life, whether it's a career, disaster, personal circumstances, or death, and now, I would argue, a change in societal behaviours. It is widely recognized that we all deal with change differently, based on many factors, including our personalities, our backgrounds, and our trusted environment.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, arguably we are dealing with a level of change that I will compare to a loss of a partner, simply because it is of that certainty, of that consequence as we struggle to redefine our relationships with each other and with systems and processes in which we had reliability and trust.

Mr. Speaker, the five stages of dealing with significant loss are as follows. First, there's a level of denial. We see that play out in many ways: denial that the loss, or in this case the virus, is real. Denial that it exists. Denial that it will affect me. Denial that it has consequences in my life. Denial that it will have consequences to others. Certainly we have seen that level of denial within society at various times, as we have denied that anything like this could happen, and that it is not a conjured reality. We begin to surround and shield ourselves with people of like mind who support our distress.

The second stage is anger. We strike out at whatever we think the cause of our loss is. We create that singular phrase so often heard, "why me?" We blame others randomly and we point fingers at real and imagined causes of our pain and suffering. We criticize others and we strike out with every random belief of the moment. We blame foreign powers, the WHO [World Health Organization], Fauci, the elite, all governments, health authorities, whomever we can. They created this; they have a plan and they are the enemy. In war, we have a visible enemy. In pandemic, we have an invisible enemy.

The third stage is bartering. It's at this stage that we begin the "what if" scenario analysis. What if I had done something different? What if you had done something different? What if they did something different? What if the government did this or that? What if I just stay home? What if, what if, what if. Perhaps this would not have happened and my life would be secure in the past.

The fourth phase is depression. It's at this stage that we move to the present and grasp that we are deeply affected by what has befallen us. We see ourselves as the victim of the circumstance and we must carry the burden alone. We are hurt by the circumstance on a very personal level. Look at how this is affecting me. We withdraw. We are saddened by the state of our existence. This is an entirely normal reaction. It is at this stage that we grasp the situation and either find the will within, or reach out and find help in recovery.

The fifth stage is acceptance. It's in this stage that we begin to transition to an understanding that while there is significant loss in my life, I remain and I have value, and I have responsibilities to others and I matter. I accept that things may be different moving forward, but I have a role to play and I have relationships to rebuild and move forward.

Mr. Speaker, obviously time doesn't give opportunity to delve deeper into this perspective, but suffice to say that if you agree that as a society we are dealing with a loss of security in our lives and we as a society are grieving that loss, we can be a compassionate advocate for working through that grieving process for all of society.

It is normal. It affects everyone differently and we must be understanding that we are all in this together, and together we will find our way. Each of us might be struggling in any one of the phases and it is on us collectively to be patient and understanding.

Mr. Speaker, from time to time on a personal level, I reach back to a poem written by Max Ehrmann in about 1927 that I came across many years ago. The poem is titled "Desiderata" which is

translated from the Latin meaning "things desired." I'd like to quote from that poem as I think it provides further perspective on our current state.

And I quote:

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence. As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexatious to the spirit. If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter, for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not . . . [bind] you to what virtue there is; many . . . [people] strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism . . .

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself. You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here.

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is a still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion by the member from P.A. [Prince Albert], and I will not be supporting the amendment from the member from Saskatoon Eastview. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and water security.

**Hon. Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand and speak to the Throne Speech. I've done it once or twice before and it's always interesting to listen to the throne speeches and what's going on and what is happening within government and how our government has put out such a great Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, but first off, first off, very first thing I want to do is I want to talk about this poppy I'm wearing. This poppy I'm wearing is a 100th anniversary of the poppy. It's a special poppy. I see a few of the members have this special poppy on. But this is something that was put in back in 1921 where they commemorated the poppy. Of course, it all started out with John McCrae's poem, "In Flanders Fields." And I can't remember the

name of the woman who really pushed for it, but came up with the poppy.

And that poppy became a symbol, a symbol that we all recognize. A symbol of the people who put their lives on the line — some of them unfortunately didn't make it — so we could have what we have in here. What we have in here, we have a democracy where we have the different sides can argue with one another. Mr. Speaker, this is something that is very important. And let us all remember on November the 11th precisely what this poppy means to the people of not just this province, but this country and this world, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get into that first off as usual. We have to have a lot of thank yous. And I have to thank Shelley and Cindy, my CAs [constituency assistant] back in Carrot River who do a fantastic job. And luckily they do . . . I think they do a better job than me quite often, Mr. Speaker, because they actually know how to talk to people properly, which is something sometimes I have a hard time doing, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank the people up in my office and the Highways office. We have Ange, and Candace, and Linda. And they keep me on track, keep me on track doing what I'm supposed to be doing and telling me what I'm not supposed to say and what I should say. So you know, I really appreciate . . . They're great. All of these people are great staff. Like let's face it, we're all in the same boat. We have to have good staff around us. That makes everything work far better.

I'd also like to thank my wife, Terry, who's been supporting me through this. And you know, sometimes I honestly think she's happier when I leave than when I'm at home, so I want to thank her. And she always has lots of jobs for me to do when I get home. But she does a good job of looking after the household when I'm not around and keeping track of everything that's going on around there.

I also want to thank the good people of Carrot River Valley who elected me and put me in this position. And it's been, I guess — what is it? — 14 years now. Been quite a while. I'm getting old and senile.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank all of our health care workers who have worked so diligently, so diligently throughout this pandemic. It's been tough on them. And my neighbour's wife works in the home in Arborfield. And you know, these have been tough times, and it's not easy for them.

I want to thank our Premier for the great job he has done on leading us through here, and the Health minister, and Dr. Shahab. Like they have done absolutely fantastic work, and the hours, the absolute number of hours, that they have put in to lead us through this. And hopefully we're going to be over it pretty quick, but those have been tough things.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's easy for people to complain but it's not easy to fix. And in our office we get many calls. Like I mean they come in from people who are anti-vaxxers, then they come in from other people who say we're not doing enough. And actually it's running about 50/50 in our office. I guess we must be on the right track if we're running about 50/50.

You know, and it's hard. It's hard being an MLA at the present time. Like nobody's . . . You know, we all knew this was going to be a tough job when we got elected. Nobody ever expected a pandemic to come upon us to make it even tougher, and that stands for both sides of the House, not just the government side but the opposition side. These are kind of tough times. You know, COVID has really, really been tough. And it's something that's changed . . .

And I got a story though. And this is why I really want to see people getting out and getting vaccinated. We have the technology, the technology now to be able to limit this. Now my grandfather was a country doctor down in Holdfast after World War I. He was there during the Spanish flu. And of course at that time, you know, pretty well every farm, pretty well every farm was on a quarter section. And my grandfather would go out in a cutter and he would go to all these different farms. And wherever he ended up at at night, that was where he stayed.

But one story that always stuck with me was, he went out to one farm. It was a family of five. He got there and knocked on the door. Nobody answered. Went in, and the whole family was dead. The mother, the father, and three kids had all succumbed to the Spanish flu.

Luckily, luckily technology has come out and eradicated some of these things. And if people would just go out and get vaccinated, we can get this COVID behind us. And it's going to be there. But this is, you know, this is something I just can't believe: people not going out and getting vaccinated. I honestly can't. I've got four of them actually. I got two AstraZeneca to begin with. And then the US government said they wouldn't let me go down to the States if I were to so want to go so I got two Modernas, then got a flu shot at the same time. Heck, a mosquito won't even bite me. But the member from Canora is bringing up some other stuff that he probably shouldn't be.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to talk now about some of the things that are going on in our constituency. And I know everybody in here has probably, or a lot of people have never heard of our football team, the Carrot River Wildcats. But I did think that I would like to, you know, just kind of mention it. They played the Raymore Rebels. The member from Arm River, I believe Raymore's in his constituency. They played them last Saturday in Carrot River, and this is on a semifinal. And like I mean, I talked to our coach. He said, you know at the beginning of the year we . . . He didn't think we had much of a team. Well apparently Raymore doesn't either; 71-12 was the final score, six-man football. Anyway, this is a great way to, you know . . . Just thought I'd mention it, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

The other thing about Carrot River Valley we have to look at is we . . . Actually, you know, we had some pretty decent crops up there this year. They weren't good. They weren't what we're used to but they weren't crop insurance territory, so we were rather fortunate that way. We've also seen a lot of investments going on in Carrot River. You know, we have Dunkley Lumber of Carrot River Valley. We have Dunkley Lumber who is spending \$100 million improving their stud mill in Carrot River.

And the other thing — and I've mentioned this before — we're

getting a new school in Carrot River. Dunkley Lumber donated a million dollars towards that new school to enhance it. So I want to thank the minister for putting a new school, or having a new school coming up in Carrot River. You know, since we've formed government, speaking of schools, we have a new school over in Porcupine Plain which is right close to Carrot River, a new school in Hudson Bay which is in Carrot River Valley constituency, another new one coming for Carrot River. We're enhancing education.

You know, when I sit back and think how under the previous administration we didn't have those new schools going in there . . . The school in Porcupine Plain, I remember going there when my son was playing basketball in there, and the roof . . . They had 5-gallon pails set all over because the roof was leaking. The Hudson Bay school was full of black mould, and the original gym of the Carrot River school was . . . You couldn't use it any more because they felt the roof was going to fall in. This didn't just happen recently, Mr. Speaker. This came along throughout the previous administration that was there. Now we have three, or we're going to have three brand new schools sitting there.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to bring up is Premier Peat, for peat moss, who has been expanding up there. They just have a new bog set up just north of Hudson Bay which is going to be a 60-year bog. Mr. Speaker, there's trucks going in and out of that place 7 days a week, and most of that product is going to California, Texas, and British Columbia. These are things that we have going on around there.

We've got all the new plants starting up, the new lumber mills. Prince Albert is going to be an excellent place. They're going to be building a brand new strand board plant. They have got . . . the pulp mill is going to be going there. These are things, these are investments, that people look at Saskatchewan. I know I've talked to the owners of Dunkley Lumber and they said, Saskatchewan's the place to come and do business. They're out of British Columbia. They said that Saskatchewan is the place they want to come and do business. They find it a good place to come and do business, far better than the province that they're from, which just happens to be British Columbia. Let's see now, who's the government out . . . Can anybody tell me who the government . . . Anyway, I just thought I'd mention that, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing we've got going up there is we've got Ag-Vision. Now Ag-Vision — this is a little-known fact — Ag-Vision grass seed cleaning plant that is just on the outskirts of Carrot River, that plant is the largest grass seed cleaning plant in North America. They ship all over the world from that plant. It's one of those little things that's not known, that rural Saskatchewan is posed to be able to move on quite a few of those things.

You know, just a few other things that we've done recently is, you know, we've put the rink grant back up so that we can help our small-town rinks out there. You know, that \$2,500 per rink really counts for a lot.

Also in my constituency in Carrot River Valley we have two shortline railways. We're giving money to the shortline railways so they can improve their rail service and take trucks off the roads so our highways don't get so beat up. Which, speaking of highways, boy they're surely improving lately, especially the last

few months. Just thought I'd mention that.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Canora is beaking again. We just did an announcement down in his area. Mr. Speaker, that's it. He's done. He's got all the new highways he needs. We got to look at Carrot River Valley now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are so many different things that are within this Throne Speech when you look at it. You know, we have . . . And I'll get to the highways later on. But we have the talking about the small nuclear reactors. We're going to need that baseload power. We're going to need that to help out our power, even though we are world leaders in capturing carbon. And we're doing that, and we're enhancing oil production as we're doing that. And hopefully the federal government can realize that oil isn't going to end any time soon because so many things are made out of oil. It just . . . It's amazing.

Mr. Speaker, before I get too carried away, I better talk a little bit about the highways because let's face it. Let's face it. Time goes by rather quickly. And you know, you take a look at what we have, our commitment to upgrade 10 000 kilometres of highways in Saskatchewan. That's part of our growth plan. We have a plan. This side of the House has a plan to be able to improve quite a few things within Saskatchewan.

One of the things has to be transportation because if we're going to export products, we need to have good transportation. And our plan is to improve 10 000 kilometres of highways. Back to since 2008, we've already done 17 100 kilometres of highways through an investment of more than \$10 billion. Investing in highway projects, it improves the quality of life for the residents, improves the safety for them, and it keeps our economy strong and working.

You know, I've had an opportunity, being Highways minister, this summer to travel a lot of roads within Saskatchewan and open a number of completed projects. I'm just going to list off a few of them here. We have Highway 3, passing lanes north of Prince Albert. A portion of Highway 38 and the roads that was mentioned over by my compatriot from Kelvington. And Greenwater Lake Provincial Park, 23 kilometres on that same highway that leads up to Greenwater. Highway 2, passing lanes are opening between Prince Albert and Christopher Lake. Thirty kilometres of resurfacing on Highway 8 and Highway 308 near Rocanville.

Work has been completed on Highway 322 just north of Glen Harbour access road and its junction with highway 220, then on highway 220 west to Rowan's Ravine Provincial Park. Got bypassing lanes and resurfacing on Highway 14 between Saskatoon and Asquith — you know, this list is getting pretty long here — and passing lanes on Highway 3 west of Prince Albert. And I was actually out to Good Spirit Lake on Friday. I guess there was four of my colleagues there opening up that one too.

And also I went along with my colleague . . . I got to talk about some water security too. And, Mr. Speaker, this is another thing that this government is committed to doing. We're looking at to begin with, we're in the initial stages of our irrigation project. And I've gone out there, I've looked at this project. This is going to be something that could be a game changer for Saskatchewan

and could put a lot of money back into this province and keep our agricultural communities operating. And hopefully we can get some value-added products after this to be able to move Saskatchewan forward in the world so we don't have to ship all of our products outside of Saskatchewan to be processed, so we can process those products right here.

Now I got going there and we went out, like I said my colleague from Arm River, you know the one whose football team lost, and we toured Gardiner dam and potato operations at Barrich Farms. They can grow enough potatoes on 1,550 acres to be able to supply all of Saskatchewan with potatoes. Isn't that amazing? But they can't do it unless they have irrigation. You know, on the same trip I had the opportunity to stop in at the RM of Rudy and the town of Outlook and talk to them. And they all support the irrigation project.

Some other things I've done, and maybe some of you people saw this on TV, is our automatic flagger to keep our flag people safe on the highways. There is a product that was invented and is made right here in Saskatchewan, and that is for the safety of our flaggers for when we're going out there doing that construction. And that construction is just continuing on and on and on in Saskatchewan. There's a project that's made right here in Saskatchewan, and it is one good-looking project.

I also had the opportunity to go up to northern Saskatchewan, tour some of the airports, meet with the local leadership. And I was actually pleased that the member from Cumberland was there to attend, and we discussed one of the problems he had with one of his roads up there, Mr. Speaker. And we're working on 67.8 million worth of major projects in the North that will be done by the end of the year.

The largest project is a rehabilitation to the Fond-du-Lac airport, which will include upgrades to the runway, taxiway, and apron as well as the installation of new airfield lighting systems. This project is expected to be completed this fall at a cost of \$14 million. We have other airports that we're working on up there too: the Pelican Narrows airport; the Cumberland House airport, which was brought up by the member from Yorkton.

Spot improvements on the junction of Highway 106 and Highway 135 at Creighton, 135 gravel road upgrades approximately 14 kilometres south of Pelican Narrows. And actually the list just goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to start running out of time here, so I guess I better continue on. People are going to get tired of listening to me talking about all the good things that are happening in Highways.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there isn't a member out there, at least in the world that I know of, that doesn't have a highway they want fixed. And some of them, I hate to pick on the member from Canora, but just it's so easy. But a good example is that member from Canora that came along. Just after we make an announcement on one highway, he wants more. You know, it's like that little kid. Remember? What was it? *Oliver Twist* or something. He went up and he's, "More, please."

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, we've done a great job. You know, the \$300 million stimulus going into highways has helped out on all the highways within the province. It's helped out with the major intersections that we needed to do. It's done a good job, Mr.

Speaker. And I give credit to all of the highway crews that are out there working hard. They do a good job for us.

I especially want to thank my DM [deputy minister]. You know, he listens. He's very knowledgeable on highways. They've done a good job.

Mr. Speaker, I think my time is just about up. I could keep on talking about a whole pile of things here. But my time has . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What do you mean, don't rush? Mr. Speaker, I just thought of a couple of other things, amazingly. Amazingly I just thought of a couple of other things. And this goes right back into Carrot River Valley again with a new water treatment plant, a new water treatment plant. Of course we're funding a third of that in Arborfield. A new water treatment plant where we're funding a third of that in Carrot River.

[16:15]

Somebody is pointing to their watch, so obviously I better kind of take my time here and sit down. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, therefore I'm going to be supporting the Throne Speech and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you. Thank you, mister deputy speaker. It's an honour to enter into debate of the Throne Speech here on Treaty 4 territory, the homeland of the Métis at a historic time within our province, at a time where we face, where people face, where our province faces many, many challenges. It's an honour to enter into debate here this afternoon.

And as other members have, I want to recognize the support systems around us. I want to send my love and my thanks to Stephanie and William. They're both, as other members have identified, so involved in the work that we take on here as well and how we see the decisions of today. Stephanie's a school teacher. She's a teacher-librarian. She's immunocompromised. William is a seven-year-old. He's in grade 2, not yet eligible for the vaccine. We sure look forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to vaccinations hopefully rolling out in the coming weeks here, and the kind of peace of mind and security that that will offer. And he's a real partner of mine. He's ready for almost any adventure, and I sure enjoy trying to see the world through his eyes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to thank as well Jennifer Morin, the constituency assistant in our constituency office. She provides care and dedication and compassion to those that are reaching out. And often folks that are reaching out are doing so at a time of crisis and emergency in their lives, and I just want to thank her for her work and support of constituents.

I want to recognize all the good folks that I represent within the constituency, all the good people that I work for. And our community is strengthened by the efforts of so many, Mr. Deputy Speaker — all the community associations, the volunteers, the schools, the churches, the coaches. So many that make a difference.

I'd like to formally recognize a few folks, those that are locally

elected, our councillors: Shanon Zachidniak as well as Jason Mancinelli. I want to give a special shout-out to Councillor Zachidniak for her leadership in helping organize a very important fundraiser for Lulu's Lodge, Mr. Speaker, Walk the Walk. Also for her care and support to those over at Camp Marjorie right now, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to recognize our public school board members, Sarah Cummings Truszkowski as well as Lacey Weekes. I want them to know that I'll keep fighting for the resources and supports and funding that that division so desperately needs, those supports for students and classrooms, against the cuts of the current government. And I'll keep pushing for the resources and funding to put that board in a position to be able to rebuild Rosemont School, a school so important to the community, and ideally working with partners to make sure that it has dedicated, multi-use community space, Mr. Speaker.

As well as to support Dieppe School in its reopening, Mr. Speaker, a school that was closed during the funding cuts of this government but a school that's so important to the community and made all more viable by the growth in Westerra and very important as well to relieve some of the population pressure on McLurg.

Of course I'm there to work with our Catholic school board members. They're elected for the whole city and I work with all of them. And they know that I'll continue to fight for the resources and funding that their students and their schools so desperately need as well.

I want to thank our community associations, folks like the Rosemont Mount Royal Community Association, the Dieppe community association, the Prairie View Community Association, the Normanview West Community Association. And also good folks like those that work to support folks and ensure affordable housing over at Transcona housing, and those folks that make Benson Manor such a special place. I think of all those political advisors I have, those very fine seniors over at Benson Manor, Mr. Speaker, and I send my care and my thanks.

I want to give a shout-out to the Martin-Luther Kings, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This year both Martin Collegiate and Luther High School were struggling to field a football team. They decided to work together, and the coaches worked together and the school communities worked together. And they put a team on the field, a good-looking team, Mr. Speaker, and I want to give them a special shout-out.

I also want to recognize some individual community leaders that make such a tremendous difference. You know, the list could be real long on this front. There's so many people that contribute and offer strength to community. But I do want to highlight a few special folks. First off, a young, inspiring girl by the name of Ella McDougall who lives with cystic fibrosis, who together with her parents, Chris and Twyla, have successfully made the case for Trikafta's coverage, a life-changing, transformational medication for those living with CF.

Carol LaFayette-Boyd, a Masters athlete, a lifelong civil servant, a key leader in the African Canadian Heritage Museum, a push to enshrine Black History Month, our African Canadian Black History Month in legislation, Mr. Speaker, and a push to renew

curriculum to be inclusive of these experiences and these teachings. A tireless advocate for so many within our community.

The Rosemont Mount Royal Community Association and its leadership: Theresa McQuoid and project lead, Dan Riess, for the neighbour 2 neighbour program.

The dedicated service of Alex Tkach, including his recent innovation for public good, which is the West Zone's tech-lit and community hub, an incredible resource for children and for seniors and for the community, Mr. Speaker.

The Prairie View Community Association and Riley Nadoroznick, owner of Conviction Fitness, for working with the city to establish the Murphy Park Fitness Trail over at the corner of Murphy and Dorothy along the path over by St. Josaphat.

Amanda McCall for addressing the barriers for learning, as she organized backpacks filled with school supplies for 75 students that were in need, supplying schools with other bags and supplies as well, and then supplied 50 lunch kits with a whole lot of healthy treats and snacks as well, Mr. Speaker.

Alyssa Kirk, for her Giving Tree of supplies: socks, mittens, toques, toiletries. Right across the road from Rosemont School, there for the community, Mr. Speaker.

Alysia Johnson, volunteer Chair of Carmichael Outreach and a tireless volunteer supporting the most vulnerable. And this has really been on full display during this period of time of crisis for many over at Camp Marjorie, and her supports for people and her fight for change. A crisis that's been, of course, made so much worse by the choices of this government.

I wanted to recognize Mike O'Donnell, of course a long-time city councillor, a long-time teacher and principal. But he was recognized by the Sports Hall of Fame, appropriately, with a Builders Award. He's long been involved in sport. He's a coach and a volunteer, and he served as the commissioner of the Regina High School Athletics Association for two terms, Mr. Speaker.

I want to recognize Darren Piper, a long-time and legendary local football coach. This year, together with his sons Tanner and Parker, they coached the Bantam Stampedeers to another city championship. I think Darren has a few titles to his name as coach.

To a real hero, Gwelda Hales, whom at 69 years old, learned that a 4-year-old child with autism who had serious risks around water had gone missing. She immediately got onto her bike along with her husband Ken, and she found that child floating in A.E. Wilson Park in the creek. She parked her bike and hauled into the water and rescued that 4-year-old. EMS [emergency medical services] attended to the scene and saved that child's life. So folks like this.

Bevann Fox, a public servant, a survivor of residential schools, and author of *Genocidal Love: A Life After Residential School* that's been awarded with two Saskatchewan Book Awards. A YWCA Woman of Distinction.

To Gloria Patrick, who leads Ehrlo services within the

community and the Sport Venture library which supports leagues like the Outdoor Hockey League, reducing and removing barriers to sport and recreation.

To all those students at McLurg that wrote letters of thanks to health care heroes just recently, or to those parents and community and teachers and students over at Walker that painted the Pride flag all the way up the entrance, all the way up the walkway to the entrance of Walker School.

To my fellow volunteer Outdoor Hockey League coaches over at the Rosemont site for our Rosemont team, we're looking forward to ice in just a few more weeks.

These are but a small but very fair representation of the kind of leaders that I represent. And I've identified some folks individually, but I think of all those folks: all those health care heroes; all those that have been working on the front lines in health care, in child care, in long-term care, in grocery stores, in our schools; working in transportation and so much more during this past year and a half through this pandemic. These folks are amazing and I'm very proud to represent them all. Make no mistake, I serve and work with very good people.

Now if we want to look at the realities in the situations that we're facing, we need to identify that right now these are often dark, heavy, hard days for many throughout our community and across our province. Thank goodness for the efforts of community builders like the folks I just identified and those in communities all across Saskatchewan, folks that at a time of hardship have brought light in face of that darkness, hope in face of that adversity, love in face of loss.

A Throne Speech should respond to the realities of people, the realities of a province. It's not what happened this week. Let's look at some of what folks are facing right now. Of course there's the battle with COVID that has stolen far too many Saskatchewan people from their loved ones with inexcusable failure demonstrated by this provincial government, a government that has led us to have the highest COVID death rate in Canada, and so much suffering. But I'll come back to the COVID situation and the inexcusable failures of that government.

I want to identify this summer, this spring, this summer when we had the uncovering of unmarked graves at residential school sites across Saskatchewan, many that are still going on, many discoveries yet to be found. Children that were stolen from their families, never to return. Survivors that were scarred for life.

These uncoverings of unmarked graves seems to have woken up a nation to a horrible reality, illuminating indescribable cruelty and injustice. But this hasn't been a secret for many in this province. This wasn't a surprise. And I read the word "shocked" in the government's Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, this shouldn't have been shocking for any government that's been walking as a partner in reconciliation and listening to the voices of survivors and those that have been so dramatically impacted by the intergenerational trauma.

These horrible truths have been spoken for years. The problem is many people have not been listening. Many governments have not been listening. We need to listen. We need to all listen as we work to address injustice, work to end racism, and as we walk the

path together towards reconciliation. This requires all of us of course, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

We have far too many in this province, Mr. Speaker, that are suffering in silence without the services and supports that they need when it comes to addictions, when it comes to mental health supports, Mr. Speaker. Far too many lives that are being ravaged, of those lives that are in the grips of addiction, those that aren't able to access the treatment and services that they so desperately need, when they need them, Mr. Speaker. All too often it's long, long delays that cost people their lives.

We need to do so much better on this front. We see the reality within our community and in our province right now. We see the numbers with respect to the record numbers of overdoses, Mr. Speaker. We see how that contributes to loss of life. We need to act on these fronts. And I know this impacts the entire province.

We have so many people that are facing the horrors of poverty, that are being pushed into homelessness and further despair by the deliberate actions, the choices of this callous government, Mr. Speaker. We see this through the deep cuts to already inadequate social assistance rates, to a program overhaul that has left so many without adequate funding to make ends meet, have pushed people literally out of their homes. Mr. Speaker, we have a government that has had no interest in hearing the arguments from across Saskatchewan on this front that this crisis was looming and now lives are at stake, Mr. Speaker.

The crisis is real. We have folks living in tents. We have folks sleeping in cars. We have folks without adequate funding for basic food and necessities because of deliberate choices of this government. And of course this kind of action comes at a horrible, human cost. But it comes at a greater fiscal cost as well — a cost of that poverty, of that poor health, the cost of jails, the cost of addiction, the cost of hospitalization, and so much more, Mr. Speaker. The actions of this government are indecent on this front, and they need to step up and fix this program. And it's not as though there's not a way to fix this. A path has been laid by our critic for Social Services, the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and so many community advocates.

And this past year as well, this past summer, our province and its producers — farmers and ranchers — have endured a horrible drought, a drought that caused devastation for many within this province, creating incredible stress and uncertainty, putting many in a position that they may go under, Mr. Speaker.

I know as we got out listening to producers on this front and ranchers who are so generous with their time and sharing of their experiences, many shared that this drought, a historic drought, was worse than those historic droughts that we know, that are carved into the minds of so many producers across Saskatchewan — droughts like that in 1988 or that in 1961. Crops that were literally burned off that were non-existent, yields that were devastated, feed and water that was non-existent and livestock and animals to feed, Mr. Speaker, horrible stress for so many Saskatchewan producers and ranchers this summer, and so much pain and uncertainty that continues.

We listened and worked with those producers and ranchers

across Saskatchewan. We learned from them and we'll continue to. We put a spotlight on the crisis that they were facing, and we called for the government to step up, both the provincial government and the federal government, recognizing this drought and its devastation for what it is — a crisis in agriculture.

This government was slow to respond and ultimately inadequate with the response with respect to the scope of challenge that was faced. I want producers and ranchers across Saskatchewan to know that as the official opposition, we're going to continue to fight for protections and supports. There's so much to celebrate in agriculture and that food economy and all those opportunities to value-add and diversify. But we need our producers, we need our ranchers to be in a position to do so, Mr. Speaker.

And as we faced all these challenges, we've had an absent government when it comes to leadership. And of course as we faced this historic COVID-19 challenge, Saskatchewan people have done their part and more. They stepped up. They sacrificed. They've worked long hours. They've put themselves at risk. Saskatchewan people have put on full display our province's motto, "from many peoples, strength." They've demonstrated incredible humanity, hope, hard work, compassion, community, and entrepreneurial spirit. But when it comes to that Sask Party government's actions, they fail to show up for Saskatchewan people. They failed Saskatchewan people. They've been missing in action. They put politics ahead of people's lives.

This Sask Party government has abdicated a most basic responsibility of any government: to protect people, to save life — a sacred duty of any government. And this government has failed on these fronts. History will record that this Sask Party government looked the facts in the face and chose to do nothing. They failed to take the most basic actions, most basic measures in a timely way that would have controlled COVID, that would have saved lives.

The Sask Party government chose a path of more suffering, more loss, and more death, Mr. Speaker. They chose that because they had the facts and the modelling before them. They chose that because they failed to listen to those medical professionals and doctors that were laying very clear what the reality was. They chose a path to overwhelm our health system, our ICUs, our ability to provide care to those in emergency.

They chose a path of cancelling surgeries and treatments for Saskatchewan people. This includes young children that were described by the member from Douglas Park. It's impacted folks that were awaiting to have their life saved by organ transplant. This includes folks that have been waiting years for surgeries that had debilitated them, Mr. Speaker.

They chose a path, if you can imagine, that forced them to shift ICU patients outside of Saskatchewan, away from their loved ones, away from their communities, away from their support systems. This is nothing short of intolerable, inexcusable malfeasance by this government, disgraceful choices by this government that defy common sense and that are absent of basic humanity and decency. Incompetent is far too generous of a word to attach to this government.

And we see the arrogance from this government day in, day out. We saw that entitled arrogance as they faced the reality or were

presented the information of the reality that we faced, and we see it here today in this Assembly once again. We see it in this Throne Speech that's absent of any meaningful leadership or recognition around their COVID failures and the need for action to get it under control and to save lives.

They put our health system on its knees, caused horrible, preventable loss and suffering. And of course, they knee-capped our economic recovery costing people their jobs, costing people Saskatchewan opportunity.

From a fiscal and economic perspective, there is serious damage that's been exacted by the failure to manage COVID, by the approach of this government. So they've failed to protect lives, and they've failed Saskatchewan people when it comes to our economy and the jobs they deserve. The cost of prolonged, out-of-control COVID are so costly for people who are facing increased costs and looking to pay the bills, who deserve jobs. And for our province, because they're choosing a path that's more short-sighted, more costly in the long term, kinds of approaches that we've seen from this government all too often. The kind of approach around mental health and addictions where they think they're saving a dollar but they're costing several more with the more costly response. The same kind of short-sighted, callous approach that we see with the deep cuts to social assistance.

So not only are their choices callous and come at such a horrible human cost, they come at a horrible financial cost, a fiscal cost, costing the public more, costing our finances more, hurting our economy, which hurts our sustainability of our finances moving forward and hurts the opportunities that people deserve.

I just want to touch on a little of the theme of independence before I wind 'er up. You know, if the actions of this government weren't so tragic right now, it would be a complete joke to see this sort of reference from a government that's done anything but make Saskatchewan more independent, a government that couldn't manage during the best days, that didn't save a dime for times where we need a fiscal cushion, a government that acted to weaken and erode our economic diversification and our economy and the opportunities and jobs that Saskatchewan people deserve.

It's a government trying to distract when they talk on these fronts, distract from their horrible, inexcusable failures. And they're talking about independence at a time where this government through its choices has put our health system on its knees and we actually have the Canadian Forces flying in medical professionals. It's farcical and a joke for this government to suggest in any way that they're pursuing a more independent Saskatchewan.

And when it comes to fighting for a fair deal on equalization, Mr. Speaker, it's a mockery again from this government. Of course we know their history. We know that they rolled over to Stephen Harper many years ago, didn't put up a fight, dropped the court case for a fair deal on equalization, didn't say boo for years. But now when the polls are plummeting and people are losing their lives and their failure is evident, they're pretending that somehow they're now going to fight for a fair deal on equalization. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan New Democrats and this official opposition have always, in a steadfast way, pursued a fair deal for Saskatchewan in equalization.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has failed Saskatchewan people at our most desperate hour. When the chips are down and the stakes are high, you can assess a government and you can assess leadership. This government has failed that test. This government has not stepped up in this Throne Speech to address the issues they've created and to build that stronger, more secure future for Saskatchewan people, so I certainly won't be supporting the Throne Speech. I'll be supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

[16:45]

**Mr. Meyers:** — Thank you, Deputy Chair. And wow — now for something really completely different. I do thank the doomsday dozen over there for the crisis and the failures and everything. Wow. That was a . . . It was definitely something to listen to.

Always a pleasure to rise in the House on Treaty 4 territory here. I truly respect the chance and the ability to come and speak on behalf of the people from Regina Walsh Acres and for Saskatchewan and for my entire family.

I want to take a second to send out my condolences. I think everybody in this House has been touched by COVID in one way or another. We've all lost friends, family members, and I do want to send my condolences out to those people.

Before I dive into the meat of my response, I've got to take a moment and reflect on what this last year has been like for me personally, my first as an MLA. I just want to say that I've been on a lot of teams before. People always ask me, you know, do I enjoy what I'm doing? It's been a difficult time. It's been a difficult time for people on both sides of the House. They say, do you actually enjoy it? And I said, you know what? I really do, more than I actually thought I would.

Over my lifetime I've had a chance to be on several great teams. I think back to the days when I was on the Atom AA Royals in Weyburn and we went 64-2-2, beat every team across this province from Moose Jaw to North Battleford to everywhere. We had a great team.

I worked on a great team at Global. We had great leadership there. But I've never had the chance to work on a team quite like this Saskatchewan Party caucus. You know, this has been some of the most difficult times of certainly our generation. And I'm proud to work with this team. And that starts at the top and it starts at leadership. And I'm very proud to be on Premier Scott Moe's team and work with the Health ministers and everybody in our caucus. It has been truly one of the honours of my life.

I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about my team: Danielle Rodgers, my CA. And as we know on both sides, the CAs are our front-line workers and they take all the calls and a lot of emails. She's done an amazing job over this year. So thank you to her. And thank you to my team at home. This isn't a 9 to 5 gig as I heard was mentioned earlier. This is 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And without my partner, Laurie, and my kids Dayn and Sebastian and Eisley, you know, we wouldn't be able to do the job we do. So thank you to them.

This last year has been dominated by the pandemic as we've clearly heard in this House day in and day out. But that doesn't mean that the work has stopped or that the world has stopped and that there's other things going on. In Walsh Acres when I was fortunate to be elected, one of the things people talked about was they wanted faster internet up there. Kids were at home taking school, doing online streaming, doing all sorts of things. They didn't have Infinet. But with the work of SaskTel, we were able to get that in. And if you'd have been up in Walsh Acres this summer, they were busy all over the place. There was spools going in. There was backhoes. There was workers. Just one quote from one person. She says, "I thank Derek for all his hard work and appreciate his willingness to listen to my concerns to best address this." They now have internet. And it takes a team, and I just want to thank SaskTel for getting that in there. And it was a great win for us.

"From many peoples, strength." That's the motto of our province. In 116 years our province has had its share of battles. There have been world wars. There have been droughts. There's been pandemics. Each and every time the people of this province they've faced adversity, they've stared it down and they did what they do. They rolled up their sleeves. They worked hard and they fought. And that's what they're doing right now as we go through this global pandemic. Saskatchewan is tough. Saskatchewan is strong. We always have been, and we always will be.

Now the theme of this Throne Speech is "Building a Better Saskatchewan." I thought about that over the weekend and what that meant to me. There's some that just want to focus on this pandemic, nothing else. And granted, dealing with COVID is our most important and immediate battle right now. But we have to look to the future. It's incumbent on us as a government to look to the future.

When I was about 13 years old — many of you could probably relate — my grandma was teaching me to drive. We were going out to the field. It was harvest time, I think. Probably taking a meal out there. She had this little blue Ford Escort. And so, yeah, I was underage driving, but as we know in Saskatchewan, that happens. But I was driving, and it was just this little goat trail.

And I was looking at the end of the hood and trying to steer and stay in the ruts. And she said, Derek, you've got to look down the road. You're never going to drive properly if you don't at least look down the road. You glance in front of you. Look down the road. That way I could see what I was doing and have a much smoother ride. And that's what this Throne Speech means to me — keeping an eye on what's in front of us, but looking down the road, looking to our great future as a province.

So the themes are a stronger Saskatchewan, a safer Saskatchewan, a healthier Saskatchewan, a better-educated Saskatchewan, and a more independent Saskatchewan. Well a stronger Saskatchewan — hey, over \$10 billion in investments being announced and thousands of jobs coming to our province. We're already well on our way towards our government's growth plan of creating 100,000 new jobs by 2030. And we've heard them in here before: the BHP Jansen potash mine, Viterro, Cargill, Richardson, Global Ag, Red Leaf Pulp, Brandt Group, and on and on and on. These are just a few companies that are seeing a bright future right here in our province. That's the vision of this government — crushing more canola, mining more

resources, investing in new technologies.

And just last week a number of us had the good fortune of seeing the launch of Economic Development Regina's agriculture and food innovation strategy. Very exciting times. Their vision, and I'll quote them, is that:

The Greater Regina Area will be the ag and food hub for Canada and the world: we will start, grow, scale and attract companies in agribusiness, drive agtech innovation through an integrated and sustainable supply chain.

Imagine that. The world needs what Saskatchewan has, and now the Regina area is even more well positioned to be there for the globe.

Growing up in Midale, one of my favourite events of the year was coming into Regina every June and going to the Farm Progress Show. I'd come with my grandpa, Ervin, and my dad. And one of my favourite things there was the new inventions, the new innovators' displays. And some of them were, you know, some farmer had kind of haywired a lid together so he didn't have to climb to the top of his bin, or you know, save things.

Imagine now though. It's the modern day and the new Saskatchewan. Our new inventors are setting up shop here. In the first half of this year alone, venture capital investment was \$171 million, eclipsing the record for the annual investment in just the first six months of this year. And in fact I think I heard today that 7shifts is bringing their headquarters back to Saskatoon. So that's really exciting to have them back. It's another great Saskatchewan success story ending up in Saskatoon.

Now our government is committed to continuing to support the technology sector through such programs as the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive, the Saskatchewan Advantage Innovation Fund. We also continue our backing of Co.Labs and Cultivator, another success story right here. They've combined for 175 start-up companies, created nearly 500 new jobs and nearly 30 million in revenues.

Now a stronger Saskatchewan is for all of us, and it has to be for all of us. This government will further strengthen the Indigenous business sector by creating the Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation. Now this new corporation will provide up to 75 million in financing to Indigenous communities and organizations interested in making equity investments in resource developments.

Now earlier I spoke about learning to drive with my grandma. You got to keep your eyes down the road. But you got to check your rear-view mirror once in a while as well just to make sure that you're on that right road. Now I got thinking about that, and I thought what might this pandemic look like 15 years ago? Might have been no social media. That might not have been a horrible thing. We also would have been short 50 hospitals. We would have been short hundreds of doctors, thousands of nurses. What would have that looked like? The members opposite want to talk about the doom and gloom. We would have been short a number of ICU beds.

Over the last 14 years this government has invested in nearly

1,000 physicians, 4,000 nurses, and we're not done there yet. We know more than ever now we need to focus on our health care. And that's why in Regina and Saskatoon, engineering is under way on new urgent care centres, construction to begin early next year. These centres will reduce emergency wait times, and they're also going to provide care for mental health and addictions issues.

We're pursuing further opportunities to increase the number of addictions beds here in the province, adding another 150 treatment spaces over the next three years. Here in Regina, our government is moving forward with a plan to develop approximately 600 new long-term care beds. All great news. You'd never hear it coming from the other side though. Our government is also providing more funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency in support of a new oncology drug program, something that I benefited from.

Now the children, they're our future. Whitney Houston sang it. And we got lots of new members on both sides, little ones running around on both sides. Well since 2007 the number of child care spaces in this province has gone up 77 per cent to over 16,000. And in August I was at an announcement with our Education minister where we signed a \$1.1 billion child care agreement with the federal government.

Now this Saskatchewan plan will reduce child care costs to an average of \$10 a day by '25-26 and create thousands of new child care spaces. By the end of next year, child care fees will be reduced by 50 per cent, and we will also increase the wages for child care workers by up to \$3 an hour.

There's new school projects going on all over the province. I think there's about 16 of them, including right here in Regina. It's part of our ambitious capital plan in education. Our government is also planning to create a new funding pool to enhance class supports for teachers working with the greatest number of students. This will include new funding for hiring educational assistants.

We have ICIP funding going on right here. Our government is beginning intake on infrastructure projects through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program. Just a couple of those success stories. Our government committed \$9 million towards the Globe Theatre renovation project, another million to the Science Centre — places where families can go, learn, enjoy the cultures and the arts.

When I grew up here, as many of us did, and in the '90s and the 2000s I always looked west. I thought that was the land of opportunity. And I eventually moved out west. When I came back here in 2008 — and I've talked about this in this House before — this was a different place. There was a different vibe. There was an energy and there was a positivity. Quite a change from the last speech, I would say.

But it is an exciting time in our province, and I think our Throne Speech captures that. Yes, we are dealing with some very difficult times. The world is dealing with some very difficult times. It is our most important and immediate battle. But we need to look to the future. We need to invest in our people. And I can promise you that this government is the one that is doing that, day in and day out.

I'm going to just close here if we've got a couple of minutes left with a poem from one of my favourite authors. Some of you may know this. Hang on here. And I've kind of taken a few of the verses out just for shortening it up. It goes like this:

Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to great places.  
You're off and away.

You have brains in your head.  
You have feet in your shoes.  
You can steer yourself any direction you choose.

You won't lag behind because you'll have the speed.  
You'll pass the whole gang, and you'll soon take the lead.  
Wherever you fly, you'll be the best of the best.  
Wherever you go, you will top all the rest.

Except when you don't.  
Because sometimes you won't.  
I'm sorry to say, but sadly it's true  
That bang-ups and hang-ups can happen to you.

But on you will go  
Though the weather be foul.  
On you will go  
Though your enemies prowl.

You'll get mixed up, of course,  
As you already know.  
You'll get mixed up  
With many strange birds as you go.

So be sure when you step,  
Step with care and great tact.  
And remember that life's  
A great balancing act.

Just never forget to be dexterous and deft  
And never mix up your right foot with your left.

And you will succeed,  
Yes you will indeed.  
(Ninety-eight and three-quarters per cent guaranteed.)

Kid, you'll move mountains.

You're off to great places.  
Today is your day.  
Your mountain is waiting,  
So get on your way.

We will stumble. There will be obstacles. But this government will continue to pick itself up and fight forward and look to the future for a better Saskatchewan. That, of course, was from Dr. Seuss and I was reading it to Sebastian the other night and I thought, man, how perfectly does that encapsulate where we are in the world and in Saskatchewan today.

There will be stumbles. We are going through hard times. But we need to look to the future for a better Saskatchewan. So when I woke up this morning, I put two feet on the ground, I looked up,

I felt blessed to live in a province that I love. It's up to us to choose the places we will go, and I am really proud to be a part of this government that will keep us moving forward to building a better Saskatchewan.

So with that, I would like to say that I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — It being now 5 p.m., this Assembly stands recessed until 7 p.m. today.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

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**President of the Executive Council**  
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