



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

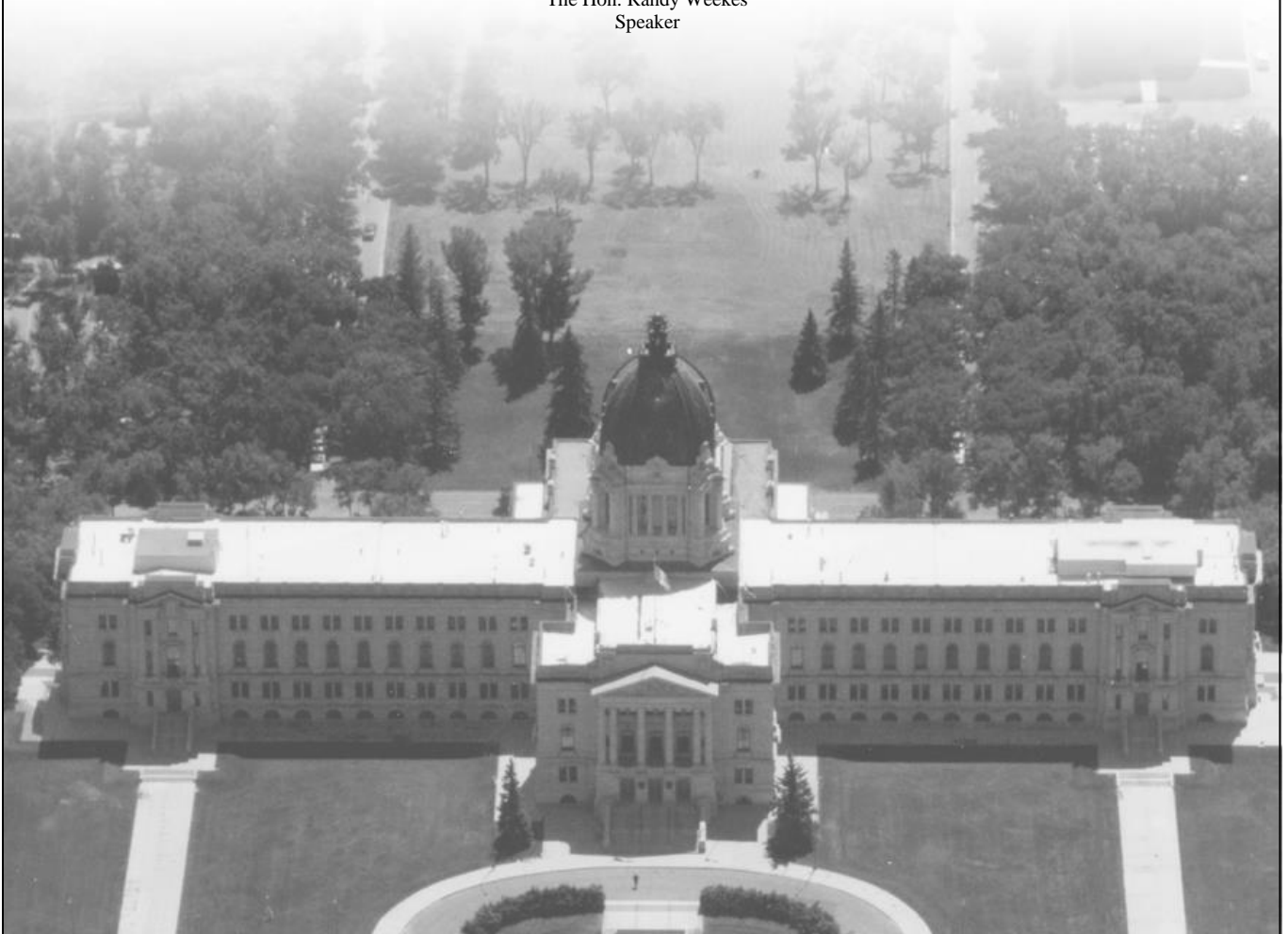
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)	McLeod, Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
Bradshaw, Hon. Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
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Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)	Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	
Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)	Vacant — Athabasca

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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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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Legislative Assembly are available
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CONTENTS

TABLING OF REPORTS	
The Speaker.....	1085
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS	
Jenson	1085
Hindley	1085
PRESENTING PETITIONS	
Sarauer	1085
Bowes	1085
Conway	1085
Beck.....	1086
Nippi-Albright.....	1086
STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS	
Viterra to Build World-Class Canola Crushing Plant	
Grewal	1086
Indigenous Veterans Day	
Nippi-Albright.....	1086
Provincial Protective Services Branch	
Buckingham	1087
Recognition of Municipal Leaders	
Love.....	1087
Saskatchewan Landing Playground Built in Memory of Lori Stauber	
Francis	1087
Hiring of Continuing Care Aides	
Nerlien	1087
Medavie Provides Enhanced Emergency Medical Services	
Jenson	1088
QUESTION PERIOD	
Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic	
Meili	1088
Moe.....	1088
Merriman	1089
Love.....	1091
Management of Provincial Economy	
Young, A.....	1091
Harrison, J.....	1091
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 43 — <i>The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Amendment Act, 2021</i>	
Ross, L.	1092
Bill No. 44 — <i>The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021</i>	
Harpauer	1093
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
WRITTEN QUESTIONS	
Ottenbreit	1093
SPECIAL ORDER	
ADJOURNED DEBATES	
ADDRESS IN REPLY	
Meili	1093
Moe.....	1097
Recorded Division (amendment).....	1104
Recorded Division (main motion)	1105
GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 38 — <i>The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2021</i>	
Wyant.....	1105
Sarauer	1105
Bill No. 39 — <i>The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021</i>	
Wyant.....	1106
Sarauer	1106
Bill No. 40 — <i>The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021</i>	
Wyant.....	1107
Sarauer	1107

Bill No. 41 — <i>The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021/Loi modificative de 2021 sur la législation</i>	
Wyant.....	1108
Sarauer	1108
Bill No. 42 — <i>The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021 (No. 2)</i>	
Wyant.....	1108
Sarauer	1108

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — In accordance with section 28, *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, I table this progress report: *Someone to Watch Over Us*.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce this afternoon to the Assembly my constituency assistant, Whitney Friesen. Now Whitney is not just a constituency assistant; he's probably one of the hardest working, most knowledgeable constituency assistants that I know of. He's an excellent problem solver.

He is exceptionally knowledgeable when it comes of the province's history and he should be, because as far as we know, Mr. Speaker, Whitney is the longest serving constituency assistant in the province of Saskatchewan. Twenty-seven-plus years he has served the people of Martensville-Warman and the people of Saskatchewan, and for that I am eternally grateful. His time with the province began with Bill Neudorf in 1993. He has also worked for the late Ben Heppner as well as my predecessor, Nancy Heppner.

So with that I would like to have all of my colleagues in the Assembly welcome Whitney to the Saskatchewan legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce a couple of guests seated in your gallery, two young gentlemen from Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. Rhett Oakman and Taylor Hyde are here visiting us today, Mr. Speaker.

Rhett, I got to know about a year or so ago. He sent me a message and was interested in learning a little bit more about politics. He was in grade 12 at the time at the Comprehensive High School in Swift Current, and I invited Rhett to come join me during the election campaign for a little bit. So Rhett is now at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] studying political science. And his friend Taylor Hyde, Taylor is also from Swift Current and is in his first year at the U of R [University of Regina] taking music education. I understand the trombone is his specialty.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Rhett and Taylor to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas

Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the government calling on the government to protect contract workers from harassment, abuse, and exploitation. Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: contract workers are not protected by Saskatchewan's occupational health and safety standards; and contract workers, particularly women working in arts and culture, face disproportionate amount of abuse and are at higher risk of exploitation, assault, and trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, language in occupational health and safety standards to address mental illness would help contract workers targeted by harassment and abuse in the workplace. As well, other provinces' health and safety standards specifically address sexual harassment in the workplace. 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 Saskatoon and Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present our petition calling for pay equity legislation. Pay equity legislation requires employers to pay female-dominated jobs at least the same as male-dominated jobs if they are of comparable value. The value of jobs is determined based on the levels of skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions involved in doing the work.

The signatories would like to bring to our attention the following points: Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender wage gaps in Canada, which is the result of systemic gender discrimination in compensation for work, that must be corrected with pay equity legislation.

I'll now read the prayer:

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

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

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on

my feet presenting a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to restore direct rent payment for income support clients. I think all I'll touch on today as I present this petition is that the Saskatchewan Landlord Association have reported for a second month in a row that 30 per cent of SIS [Saskatchewan income support] recipients paid no rent at all. The camp in downtown Regina continues to be there as a biting winter approaches.

I'll read the prayer with that, Mr. Speaker:

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

The signatories of this petition reside in Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage.

Those who've signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a number of points, the first being the fact that Saskatchewan has the second-lowest minimum wage in Canada, and up until October 1st had the lowest minimum wage in the whole country; that many minimum-wage workers in Saskatchewan can barely make ends meet while working full-time; and that a \$15 minimum wage will improve health and well-being and lift Saskatchewan workers out of poverty; of the more than 16,000 minimum-wage workers in this province, Mr. Speaker, many of them have families and are disproportionately women, with over 65 per cent of those earning minimum wage being female; and also that a \$15 minimum wage would benefit local businesses and support local economies by putting money in workers' pockets to spend in their community, Mr. Speaker, something that is very much needed in these times.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to adopt a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Chief Piapot was an influential leader for First Nations on Treaty 4 who fought for the treaty rights to camp at Pile O' Bones. In 2018, Justice for Our Stolen Children camp stood for 197 days on the west lawn, bringing national and international attention to systemic discrimination of Indigenous peoples. In 2020, the group Walking With Our Angels walked 630 kilometres to the west lawn.

The west lawn has become a de facto site for Indigenous expression due to its proximity to the Legislative Assembly, and officially designating the site as such would facilitate the ongoing process of reconciliation.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government to recognize the west lawn of the legislative grounds as the Chief Piapot Cultural Learning Grounds, as a designated site for cultural celebration, education, Indigenous ceremony, and peaceful demonstration.

This petition has been signed by the good people of Prince Albert and Saskatoon.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Viterra to Build World-Class Canola Crushing Plant

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Viterra is building a world-class canola crushing plant in my riding of Regina Northeast. It will be the largest of its kind in the world. I was pleased to attend Viterra's open house last week alongside many of my caucus colleagues. The project was showcased, and they answered questions and concerns from the public. Mr. Speaker, I learned that Viterra is currently carrying out a feasibility study to finalize the plant's capabilities and design. And the plant has an initial targeted crush capacity of 2.5 million metric tons annually once operational in late 2024.

Mr. Speaker, the plant will also play a key role in supplying feedstock required for renewable fuel production. This is vital to help reduce our province's greenhouse gas emissions. This new plant will also have a positive and long-lasting economic impact in terms of employment for our province, and our province is the top canola producer in Canada, with five operating plants crushing about 5 million metric tons per year.

Mr. Speaker, this new plant will help meet our growth plan goal of increasing Saskatchewan's crushing capacity so that 75 per cent of canola produced in the province is also processed here at home. Mr. Speaker, I now invite all members to join me in congratulating Viterra on a strong start to their project and to thank them for their continued investment in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Indigenous Veterans Day

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. On this Indigenous Veterans Day, I rise to recognize all those Indigenous veterans that have served and continue to serve Canadian military efforts. November 8th has been observed nationally as Indigenous Veterans Day since 1994. It is estimated that over 12,000 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people served Canada in every major war.

Today thousands of Indigenous people continue to serve in war and peace efforts, representing Canada across the globe. Following the First and Second World Wars, Indigenous veterans did not receive the same support as non-Indigenous veterans. Many experienced discrimination and poverty, Mr. Speaker. Most were denied benefits that were awarded to other veterans.

I'd like to give special recognition to local Indigenous veteran, the late Howard Anderson from George Gordon First Nation. Howard served Canada and represented Indigenous people honourably through his service. I ask that all members join me in recognizing the thousands of Indigenous veterans on this national Indigenous Veterans Day. miigwech.

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

Provincial Protective Services Branch

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has taken many steps to ensure our communities are safe and, Mr. Speaker, our government recently announced the creation of the provincial protective services branch within the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. This branch, Mr. Speaker, will unite conservation, highway patrol, and safer communities and neighbourhoods officers, prisoner transport and court security deputy sheriffs, along with community safety officers with the Provincial Capital Commission under a single organizational structure.

This will ultimately ensure a more coordinated approach to enforcement services throughout the province. The move to the unified structure of the provincial protective services branch will increase the ability of provincial enforcement officers to respond to public safety incidents and concerns.

[13:45]

With this new approach, peace officers and special constables will be able to focus on delivering necessary services rather than spending valuable time and resources sorting out jurisdictional issues. The provincial protective services branch will also allow provincial enforcement agencies to work as one team and will free up other police agencies such as the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] to focus on protecting Saskatchewan communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognition of Municipal Leaders

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to recognize the many municipal leaders who have demanded more action from this government, the many who are met with silence or total disregard. These are the leaders who charted their own path when they saw that the path that the Sask Party government had set out was leading to the worst COVID response in Canada.

As critic for municipal affairs, I am responsible for holding the Sask Party government to account for all matters related to the hundreds of municipalities in this province.

Mayors of cities across the province were left to decide for themselves how to combat the fourth wave while the Sask Party government took the summer off. These incredible leaders were listening to the advice of their medical health officers. They implemented mask and proof-of-vaccine policies well before the province did because the evidence was there. They called on this government to take real action to slow the spread of COVID to keep Saskatchewan families safe and to keep our hospitals from becoming overburdened.

Mr. Speaker, these leaders deserve better from this government. Instead of combative relationships, they should have collaborative ones. This government has focused on protecting its own reputation when it should have been focused on working alongside elected municipal leaders to protect our communities.

Thank you to all elected municipal leaders who showed up for work to protect those who elected them and who continue to work tirelessly to protect Saskatchewan people. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Saskatchewan Landing Playground Built in Memory of Lori Stauber

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the last nine years, Lori Stauber has been our neighbour at Saskatchewan Landing golf club campground. Lori and her husband, Clayton, farmed close by and they took advantage of the great golf, boating, and fishing the Landing has to offer.

Three summers ago Clayton passed away from a rare infection that attacked and shut down his organs. He was only 50. This was Lori's second tragic loss, as her only child, Lyndon, had also passed away suddenly 10 years earlier. On top of all that, this past year Lori was diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer.

With every reason to be bitter and feel sorry for herself, Lori was anything but. She began what she called her journey back to her boys. This included making generous donations to two of her favourite things in life: her love for dogs and her love for the Landing. The SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] and the Sask Landing golf club were deserving recipients.

Part of the bequest was a plan for a wonderful children's playground just down the hill from Lori and Clayton's campsite. The rush was on to get the structure built so Lori could see it. The Minister for Parks and her staff did their part by getting the permit issued very quickly, but material and construction delays meant Lori wouldn't live to see the final product. She passed away this summer at age 58.

Mr. Speaker, the Stauber Family Farm Playground will honour Lori and her family's generosity and community spirit for years to come. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hiring of Continuing Care Aides

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The face of health care

is the continuing care assistant for tens of thousands of our residents. These incredibly dedicated individuals are the shoulder to cry on, the arm to lift, the kind word of encouragement, and yes, sometimes the personal needs caretaker.

Today I'm pleased to provide an update on our government's work to enhance staffing levels in home care and long-term care facilities across Saskatchewan as we are keeping our promise to hire more CCAs [continuing care aide] in communities all over the province. Our budget provides \$6 million for 108 new full-time equivalent positions this year as part of our commitment to hiring 300 new CCAs.

To date the Saskatchewan Health Authority has hired the equivalent of 85 new full-time CCAs in long-term care. Another five positions are posted or in the works and will be filled in the coming weeks, and will support long-term care needs in a variety of communities. The SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] has also filled 10 of 18 CCA positions for home care, with the remainder in the process of being filled.

This staff will support home care needs in rural and remote communities. Providing high-quality services is a high priority, and these extra staff will make a difference. We will continue to take steps to provide high-quality care that meets the needs of residents receiving home care and those living in our long-term care homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Medavie Provides Enhanced Emergency Medical Services

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As of this month, communities north of Saskatoon will benefit from enhanced ambulance service. Our government is following through on a \$6.57 million commitment to enhance emergency medical services in Saskatchewan. This includes almost 1.2 million in annual support to enhance ambulance services, address growing demand, and improve response times for Martensville, Warman, and other communities north of Saskatoon.

The SHA underwent an internal and external community stakeholder consultation process to determine which location would best serve residents in the area. Mr. Speaker, Martensville was selected as the base for this new ambulance service. I want to thank all communities and rural municipalities who participated in consultations for their collaboration.

Mr. Speaker, these resources will be phased in with initial ambulance service 12 hours a day. By March 2022, the new ambulance base will house a staffed ambulance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Mr. Speaker, Medavie Health Services West is the EMS [emergency medical services] area service provider that will step up and staff this new base. They look forward to getting to work with the city of Martensville to put resources in place and begin operations.

I congratulate the SHA and all stakeholders for this achievement. And I want to thank our medical first responders for continuing to provide the valuable services during this time. 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. For months we've called on the Premier to allow the COVID modelling team to release their information to the public. Thanks to excellent reporting, we now know for sure that this Premier saw modelling that showed the coming devastation to our health system, and still he chose not to act. Why did the Premier hide that modelling from the public? Why did he hide it from doctors? And why did he choose to ignore the expert advice from those health experts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the modelling that we have here in this province, Mr. Speaker . . . And there's been various versions of modelling that have been released since the early days of our COVID-19 pandemic ultimately and our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Speaker. Modelling is but one tool that our chief medical health officer, provincial chief medical officer as well as other medical health officers across the province utilize, Mr. Speaker. It's a point-in-time scenario, not a prediction. It is a point-in-time scenario as to the situation.

And, Mr. Speaker, our chief medical health officers take into account a number of other factors as well with the decisions and ultimately the conversations and ultimately where we land with respect to our public health recommendations, where we land with respect to our public health orders here in the province, Mr. Speaker. For example, the vaccination rates are taken into account, the case rates, and where those cases are in our province, Mr. Speaker — are they in rural and remote communities vs. our larger urban centres, as well as where our hospitalization rates are in the province, Mr. Speaker.

So there are a number of factors that go into ultimately the conversations that this government has with various health officials, Mr. Speaker, and most importantly, our chief medical health officer. Modelling is one of those.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why did the Premier hide the modelling, and why did he ignore the expert advice?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Neither of those is the case, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the public health measures that we moved on in the middle of September, that was through consultation with our chief medical health officer, Mr. Speaker. And I would put forward that the measures that are in place are working and they're working very well. Mr. Speaker, our case counts are declining. Our case counts are down now; our seven-day case average is down to 149. I believe Manitoba today is up to about 148, so we're in the neighbourhood of where Manitoba is, Mr. Speaker.

But that's down 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker, from where we were at the peak, and that's due to what Saskatchewan people are

doing, how they're adhering to the public health measures and recommendations that are in place. It's also due to the fact that 86 per cent of people in this province have went out and gotten their first shot.

I've always said, Mr. Speaker, that we expect that the vast majority, if not all of them, will follow up with their second shot, and that's precisely what we're seeing today. Today we achieved 80 per cent, Mr. Speaker, of this province are fully vaccinated. Since we made that announcement in the middle of September and actioned that proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy, we've had 180,000 people, Saskatchewan people that have went out and gotten their vaccine, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — He saw the data. He had two paths in front of him, and he chose the path with more death and more illness. Who does that? Why did the Premier hide that modelling? Why did he look at that modelling in June and still give up in the fight against COVID and allow so many people to lose their lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, again that's just not the case. Mr. Speaker, we did take action with respect to the recommendations, the conversations we had with our chief medical health officer, Mr. Speaker. And most of the province is aware, in the middle of September we had re-enacted the mandatory mask mandate here in the province, Mr. Speaker. September the 16th, I believe, was the date that I went out in the city of Saskatoon and re-enacted the masking mandate, Mr. Speaker. We also moved forward with the proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen some other jurisdictions go forward with mandatory vaccination policies in their health care sectors. They're starting to back away from that.

We've seen the Leader of the Opposition and the opposition party recommend mandatory vaccines in order for us to attend schools in the province, Mr. Speaker. We have not moved on that policy, Mr. Speaker, although it was recommended, in fairness, by a number of medical health officers across the province. The opposition party has adopted that policy.

But the most important thing, Mr. Speaker, through all of this, is the measures that are in place are working. Mr. Speaker, our numbers are down some 70 per cent. In fact just in the last week or a little better, since we introduced the Speech from the Throne here in the House, Mr. Speaker, our numbers have dropped from our seven-day average of 238 to 149. That's down 37 per cent just since we returned back this Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what Saskatchewan people is doing is working. Our numbers continue to drop, Mr. Speaker. Our hospitalizations are now dropping, Mr. Speaker. And I'd say through you to all of the people in the province, thank you for what you are doing.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On August 25th, the Premier was shown data that clearly displayed that a mask

mandate at that time would have cut the case count in half, and yet he chose not to take that action for nearly a month. Mr. Speaker, hundreds have died since that time. This was a step the Premier knew could save lives. Once again, a simple question for the Premier: why?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier outlined, the modelling is a point in time that we look at, Mr. Speaker, and we make our decisions based on many factors, not just the modelling. We can't just make our decision just based on one set of data. That would be very, very narrowly looking at a very big pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we moved on this the middle of September and we were able to move our health care system. And we had to change some programs and some staff, Mr. Speaker. We had to move them over because we saw the influx of people coming in to our hospitals — again, Mr. Speaker, I've said it many times, mostly unvaccinated people coming in to our hospitals — and causing some issues within our acute and our ICU [intensive care unit] care.

Mr. Speaker, we moved on our QR [quick response] verification of vaccination. We also moved on vaccine . . . masking for public places, Mr. Speaker, and we're seeing the results as the Premier outlined, Mr. Speaker. We've had up over 180,000 people vaccinated since that point in time, and also we're down to 149 people getting positive tests every day, Mr. Speaker. That's our seven-day average, and this is very good news for the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — The minister said it again today. He listened to other information than the modelling and the public health experts, while with cases, hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths all on the rise through August and September. Clearly that wasn't health information.

But no, the minister actually admitted on Friday when he spoke to doctors that he was hampered by "pushback," pushback in the form of anti-mask and anti-vaccine mandate protests. So to the Premier: does he regret pandering to those extreme views rather than listening to public health experts?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm glad to update the House that our active cases are now just over 1,500 active cases. Mr. Speaker, this is down 69 per cent since the last week in September, Mr. Speaker. And as the Premier outlined, this is accredited to not this government, Mr. Speaker, but to the people of Saskatchewan that are out there doing their job.

We've had 180,000 people that have been out there and got vaccinated since we've implemented this, Mr. Speaker. Our QR code is working. Our public masking is working. It's driving down the numbers, Mr. Speaker. We can continue to do this, Mr. Speaker, if the people of Saskatchewan, which they have done an

amazing job, continue to do what they're doing. We're still having well over 3,000 vaccinations done every day, first and second dose, Mr. Speaker, and we can continue to do this. We will get this fourth wave in behind us as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Aside from the hundreds of deaths that have resulted from this government's flagrant disregard for public health expert advice, we also have thousands of people who aren't receiving needed health care.

To the Premier: how many people right now are on the organ transplant waiting list and are not receiving care because of this government's fourth-wave health care lockdown?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as I've mentioned before, Mr. Speaker, these were very challenging situations that we had, Mr. Speaker. We had to move some of our workforce within the Saskatchewan Health Authority over to deal with the influx of people. So, Mr. Speaker, there were surgeries that were delayed, Mr. Speaker. There was programming that was paused, Mr. Speaker. But as we've outlined last week and again we'll reiterate it this week. By Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, we should have 50 per cent of those people back in their positions for the resumption of services and programs, Mr. Speaker. By the end of the month, we should have over 90 per cent, Mr. Speaker. This is what we're doing to restart our surgical side of things and also our programming.

We did this before, Mr. Speaker. We started this in May. And between May and September 15th, Mr. Speaker, we were able to get almost 95 per cent of the surgeries done. Mr. Speaker, we're going to keep working on our program because we understand, Mr. Speaker, these programs affect people in Saskatchewan. These are our friends, our family members, and our neighbours, Mr. Speaker, so we want to get that programming up and running as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a straightforward factual question we've asked a number of times. The minister continues to not answer. I'd like to also know, Mr. Speaker, how many people who have been waiting for organ transplants have died because they weren't able to proceed with that surgery, with that treatment due to this government's decision to suspend organ transplant care.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to report that the information that I have is that there are no deaths due to organ transplant, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Disappointing not to get any clear answers from this minister.

We are joined today by Jessica Bailey. We are joined today by Jessica Bailey . . . if the members would like to pay a little attention to the folks who are here on the floor with us today. Jessica has stage 5 kidney failure. When this government chose to suspend the organ transplant program, Mr. Speaker, Jessica has stage 5 kidney failure. When this government chose to suspend the organ transplant program, Mr. Speaker, Jessica already had a match. She was ready to receive that donor kidney, only to have that gift of life and the hope that goes along with it snatched away when this program was suspended. To the Premier: does the Premier recognize the absolute agony that he has caused families like Jessica's because of his decision to suspend care, because of his decision to ignore the advice that would have prevented this fourth wave?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would first of all like to welcome Jessica to her Legislative Assembly and thank her for coming here today to highlight really what is one of the most significant challenges that we have had in particular over the course of the last number of months here, last month or so, Mr. Speaker, where we have had to — and this is a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker — we have had to forgo a number of surgeries in this province, Mr. Speaker. We've had to delay those surgeries in this province, Mr. Speaker. We've had to do that because we have an inordinate number of COVID patients that are in our ICU, Mr. Speaker. And I would say even further, an inordinate number of those folks are not vaccinated, Mr. Speaker.

We have had to redeploy resources within the province, Mr. Speaker. And today what I would say is . . . And the Minister of Health had committed, had reiterated the numbers of our commitment to redeploy the services and programs across our health authority, Mr. Speaker, that is to I believe it's 50 per cent by this week, 75 per cent next week, and 90 per cent by the end of the month.

And I would just tell Jessica and all Saskatchewan people that the Ministry of Health is working very hard right now on ensuring as our numbers continue to come down, our hospitalization numbers continue to come down, that we are actively looking at how we are going to increase and bring our surgical capacity back up to where it was, Mr. Speaker. And then also come up with a plan on how we're going to clear the backlog of surgeries that we have here in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And those surgeries obviously are prioritized, Mr. Speaker, with those most urgent and serious surgeries to be moving forward as quickly as possible. Many of those have been moving forward, even throughout our most challenging times. But this is a priority of this government, Mr. Speaker. We have done this before, Mr. Speaker, and we're committed to doing it once again.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's be clear: Jessica's care was suspended because this Premier chose to put politics ahead of people's lives. There are 15, 15 donors ready to be tested, willing to help out Jessica. But they can't even be tested because this program is suspended. This Premier's choices have cost so many lives. Today he has a chance to save one.

To the Premier: will he commit today to doing everything he can — federal support, from other provinces, from anywhere here in Saskatchewan — do anything he can to get that program running again immediately and get Jessica the urgent life-saving care she needs?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, to Jessica and to all of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, this is the highest priority of the government, is to get our surgical capacity back up not only to a place where we are falling behind on the wait-lists that we have, but ensuring that we have a plan in place that is going to be able to clear that wait-list.

Mr. Speaker, this government, this Saskatchewan Party government, has done this before, Mr. Speaker. We had the surgical wait time initiative a number of years ago that allowed us to reduce our wait-list that we had here in the province, Mr. Speaker. We now have unfortunately that wait-list again as we find our way through the fourth wave of this COVID-19 pandemic. And it is of the highest priority, highest priority, Mr. Speaker, that we are able to get our surgical capacity up running sooner rather than later, and then clear our way through that wait-list.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Jessica is a constituent of mine, and just like many people in Saskatchewan, she finds herself in a helpless situation. This family wrote to this government pleading for help. They didn't get a response, and they didn't get the help that they need. It sure doesn't sound like it's much of a priority.

To the Health minister: why didn't he respond to Jessica and her family's request for urgent help?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And welcome, Jessica, to your Legislative Assembly. Thank you for travelling down from Saskatoon. I'm sure it wasn't an easy journey for you.

Mr. Speaker, again we've had to make some very, very difficult decisions over what processes and programs and services we had to pause. I'm not aware of that specific correspondence, Mr. Speaker, but I'll get my staff to prioritize it, pull it out. If Jessica would like to meet after question period, Mr. Speaker, I'd be more than happy to sit down and discuss that with her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, if the Health minister wants to claim that he didn't know about this case, it raises serious questions about his ability to do his job. Emails were sent to the Health minister, and a consent form was even sent in with very specific requests for the urgent health care needs that she has. This is on record. This was reported by Global News, CBC [Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation], and the *StarPhoenix*. For the Health minister to claim he doesn't know what's going on is literally unbelievable, Mr. Speaker. Jessica and her family have made the trip here today because the Health minister and that Premier haven't even bothered to respond to their emails.

This Premier's health care lockdown was preventable, and we now know it was predicted. It didn't have to be like this. We didn't have to be here, Mr. Speaker.

Will the Premier and the Health minister commit today to a private meeting with Jessica and her family to solve . . . Listen to the question, please. A meeting is nice; words are nice. Will you commit to action today to solve her urgent health care needs today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I did commit that I would meet with Jessica and discuss this in person, Mr. Speaker. I'm getting my staff to work on if there was correspondence sent to my office. I've sent a message off to my office to be able to pull that information so we could sit down and have a face-to-face conversation and specifically talk about what Jessica's needs are, Mr. Speaker. But I'm not going to have that very private discussion publicly on this Legislative Assembly floor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's remarkable to hear about the government's priorities when it got so little mention in the Speech from the Throne.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, in October, this past month, 6,500 jobs were lost in Saskatchewan, the worst job losses in the Dominion of Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, all the while, our province has the highest COVID death rate in the country and the lowest vaccination rate.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before the minister predictably stands up and rehashes a warmed-over list of investments that every member in this House is excited about, perhaps he would like to show his priorities and he'd care to show how he plans to get Saskatchewan people back to work and the pandemic under control.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And there have been a tremendous number of investments made into this province over the course of the last eight months — investments, Mr. Speaker, I would add, that would never have happened under a New Democrat government.

And the member opposite is factually incorrect, Mr. Speaker. There have been thousands of jobs added in this province over the course of the last year. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country. Exports are up 20 per cent so

far this year, Mr. Speaker.

And I would note that the Leader of the Opposition would have heard all of this, Mr. Speaker, if he had listened to the Premier's speech at our convention rather than skulking about in the hallways, begging the media to interview him, Mr. Speaker. He should have come inside, and he would have heard that great speech from our Premier and all the great things going on in the province. He would have heard about the \$10 billion of investment.

And he would have heard about something you will never, ever hear at an NDP [New Democratic Party] convention, Mr. Speaker: that is optimism, confidence in the plan for a strong and growing province. That's why a lot more than 72 per cent of our party endorse our Premier and why 72 per cent of our party want to keep him right there.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I'm at a loss for words. That is petty and low.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm actually on my feet today to talk about the thousands of Saskatchewan families who are looking for work today: 6,500 jobs lost last month, the worst in the country; over 12,000 full-time jobs gone since the spring of 2020, the worst in the country. Never mind the 7,700 people who have left the workforce altogether.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the minister try and care about people in this province, just for once? And will he admit, just for once, that whatever he's doing isn't working for working people?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know the economy has added thousands of jobs over the course of the last year. We also know the NDP's only economic policy, the only economic policy that they have promoted for 20 months. What is that, Mr. Speaker? Shut it all down. Lockdowns, shutdowns — that's all they have put forward, Mr. Speaker, for the last 20 months. We have an NDP leader opposite, Mr. Speaker, who needs to stand up for Saskatchewan's economy. He needs to stand up.

[14:15]

And, Mr. Speaker, you know what? We had Justin Trudeau just announcing an attack on this province's economy, on the energy sector. I'm worried he's coming for agriculture next. And you'd think the Leader of the Opposition would have something to say about that, Mr. Speaker, but he won't. And why won't he, Mr. Speaker? He won't because his party and Justin Trudeau are completely in alignment.

And we know that. Don't take my word for it; take their word for it. Take the word of the former member for Athabasca, their colleague who, Mr. Speaker, ran for the NDP. And I could read you quote after quote about that member saying, we are completely the same. You can vote for me as a Liberal, Mr.

Speaker, because we're exactly the same.

But I suspect that Leader of the Opposition would rather have Justin Trudeau leading this province than this Premier, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, there it is. They said yes. They agreed to it over there. They said they would rather have Justin Trudeau than this Premier.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, the delight that that member manages to quiver with when his record is losing jobs and losing people, Mr. Speaker. And fact: Saskatchewan's population has grown by 489 people since the beginning of last year, only 489 people, Mr. Speaker, and in that time nearly 900 people have died.

Another fact, Mr. Speaker: in the last two years alone, over 20,000 people have left for other parts of Canada. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's more than four Meadow Lakes' worth of people. So with the worst-of-both-worlds scenario that we're living through, Mr. Speaker, does the jobs minister even recognize why it might be hard to convince people to survive and thrive here in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you. I am very happy to talk about the remarkable record of this government on population growth: 170,000 newcomers to this province over the course of the last 14 years, Mr. Minister. And obviously in the last year there have been challenges because you can't fly and move to Saskatchewan in the middle of a global pandemic, Mr. Speaker. That's a challenge.

But what we heard just now from the members opposite, an unbelievable admission from those members opposite — Leader of the Opposition can stand right up and speak to this, Mr. Speaker — an unbelievable admission that they would rather have Justin Trudeau leading Saskatchewan than our Premier. That, Mr. Speaker, tells you everything you need to know about that opposition and why they're going to be over there for a very long time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 43 — *The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — Order. I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 43, *The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Amendment Act, 2021* be now introduced and read the first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 43 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 44 — *The Corporation Capital Tax
Amendment Act, 2021***

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 44, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021* be now introduced and read for a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 44 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to order the answers for questions 1 through 5.

The Speaker: — Questions number 1 through 5 is ordered.

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, and the proposed amendment to the main motion

moved by Mr. Love.]

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm starting to recognize you a little bit more too as the moustache grows back. It is an honour. Despite the rather appalling quality of the Throne Speech, it is nonetheless always an honour to rise in this House and respond to the Speech from the Throne. It's a very important moment in the year and one where one hopes that one is going to see some vision for the future of the province.

We'll get into the content — or lack thereof, lack of vision — shortly, but I will join others in making a few comments about some folks who are important in my life. I want to start by recognizing Mahli. Mahli Brindamour is my wife and a pediatrician in Saskatoon. Her work takes her to working with refugee populations at REACH [Refugee Engagement and Community Health], to the Sanctum clinic, to northern Saskatchewan, and recently she's taken on the workload of being part of the tuberculosis team which is very needed right now as Saskatchewan is facing in the North the worst tuberculosis outbreak in North America. And so really proud of the work that she does, gives her all to her patients but also to us as a family.

Our two little guys, Abraham and Gus. Abraham is in grade 5 this year. He's at the Caswell Hill school and he's taken on debate. He's become a debater and he's pretty good at it. And I don't understand where that comes from, but it's exciting to see him digging in and enjoying that really positive activity.

And Gus, Augustin is four. He's at pre-K [pre-kindergarten] at the École canadienne-française, and he continues to have no sense of self-preservation whatsoever, leaping off of everything he can and frequently employing the skills of his parents as family physician and pediatrician and not just as adult supervisors.

I also want to recognize two really important people in my life and supports in my life, my mom and my dad, Lea and Wally, who live in Moose Jaw. And I want to thank . . . I know members have reached out and asked how my dad is doing. As folks know, he had a stroke back in the spring, during the spring session. And we are so grateful he's received incredible care and he is at home. He's even doing his push-ups again. Still lots of changes with an injury of that type, but we're so proud and grateful to have Wally at home and care so much for him.

Along with others, I want to recognize some of the folks who work with us. Now I don't know if I should recognize my CAs [constituency assistant] because Vicki already did. Vicki and I . . . Pardon me. The member for Saskatoon Fairview and I, we actually share our CAs. So they split their time between our two offices which, given she's Health critic and a lot of the health questions that we get at our office, that works really well. And both Jason and Graham are just really stand-out guys who do incredible work on behalf of the folks who live in Saskatoon Meewasin and Saskatoon Fairview.

And here in the House, we have an incredible team, folks who've been with us for years like Cheryl Stecyk and Jannet Shanks who keep us operating and catch all of the things that we would definitely mess up and leave behind if they were not here with

us. Our issues management team with Mitch Bonokoski . . . Excellent guy. And yeah, he enjoyed his time at the Sask Party convention this last weekend. He did refuse the glass of Kool-Aid that was offered to him, however. And of course Nathaniel Cole, and our newest addition, Kelsey Morrison. Those two do incredible work on the research side and keeping us up to date on the bills coming forward.

On the communication side we have our communications director, Brock Bowman, who's recently taken over that role with Thomas Linner returning to Winnipeg. Really enjoying the work with Brock, and very grateful for our time with Thomas. And he works closely with Dave Bruce, who does a terrific job on social media, making sure that we share our story through every channel we can.

And of course we have our chief of staff, Sally Housser, who was a very excellent chief of staff. Our fiery Newfoundlander has moved on to new work, and now we have Katherine Norton. And Kat is just such a steady force. She's been with our operation for years and years, knows this place inside and out, knows all the history of all the members over there and all the things they've done wrong over the years, and is just an incredible support. And I want to thank Kat for taking on this new challenge as chief of staff for our team.

And it is a tremendous team — a tremendous team of MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly], the dozen of us hard-working folks. And I'm really grateful to be able to work alongside each of these MLAs, the enthusiasm that they bring, the fire that they bring to this House, and the passion. You heard it from the member from Eastview today, the way he connects with his constituents, with someone like Jessica Bailey.

You know, we have a political case to make, but we also are here to help people. And what an honour it is to have those moments where you find someone in your constituency where we can make a real difference by forcing this government to do what they would never do under their own steam.

So it's a tremendous team, but it's a team that shrank just a little bit. We had a member move on, and the member for Meadow Lake, the minister of the Economy wanted to chat a little bit about this fellow. Well so do I. Because that member wanted to disrespect the service of Buckley Belanger, but I don't want to do that. I want to value that respect. Twenty-six years that he was here in this House with us, 26 — an incredible record.

And I was thinking back a little bit. I think everybody's probably got a Buck story. I bet a lot of members on that side have got a Buck story or two as well. I remember the first time I met Buck Belanger. I was a medical student in 2003 up in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and you know, I was trying to fit in and have a good time. And so I found my way to the bar in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and I wound up at a table with a bunch of locals.

And I kept wondering who that guy was who everyone was paying attention to, with the admittedly ribald jokes and questionable tales of athletic prowess. And so I asked somebody, who is that guy? He's really funny. And they said, that's the MLA, and in fact I think he's a cabinet minister.

And it's true, there he was holding court. You know,

Ile-a-la-Crosse is not the land of the blind but nonetheless, the one-eyed man was king. And he was holding court in that house as he did, and I would see him do over the years, in health meetings, in meetings with the university, and of course here in the legislature where his ability to tell a story, to spin a tale is something that was unrivalled.

But Buck would often tell me — the member for Cumberland will know this one — he would often tell me that politics is the ugly man's Hollywood. And when I look around this building, I see a lot of people who find their way onto billboards and television and it's not because of their beautiful bone structure or their flowing locks; it's because of the work they've vowed to do.

And you know, it is something that as we do this work, we get a chance to meet so many people. People come up and say hello and they're happy to get to know us. And you know, that's a special part of this job, and it's the way that we end up bringing forth the types of stories that Buck would bring forward. He was an incredibly talented orator in this House, a committed social democrat, and a constant voice for northwestern Saskatchewan.

Buck started out in journalism. He helped set up media outlets across the North, was involved in MBC as it grew, Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation. He went on to be elected as mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse where he served for three terms, from 1988 to 1994, before he was elected to the House. Elected to the House in 1995, and he would serve until 2021. Longest serving Indigenous member in the history of this House — 26 years of service.

[14:30]

He was first elected as a Liberal. And then he stepped down from the provincial Liberals to join Roy Romanow's government. And he ran in a by-election. In that by-election, he won — and I don't want to get this number wrong — 93.64 per cent of the vote. We believe it's the second-highest margin of victory in Saskatchewan history in an election. And he went on to win that seat six more times.

He served in the cabinet of Roy Romanow and of Lorne Calvert. He served as Minister of Northern Affairs, of the Environment, of SaskWater, Community Resources, of Highways and Transportation. He even took a run for leader of the party in the 2001 leadership race that elected Lorne Calvert, and became a well-known figure across the province through that. That moment, where in the debates with all those members up on the stage with their stools, there would be many a moment where Buckley Belanger would steal the stage.

One of the great tributes to his legacy is one that I got a chance to enjoy. I worked as a medical student and a resident in St. Joseph's hospital in Ile-a-la-Crosse, in the old hospital, a hospital that was pretty run down and needed to be replaced, had some bad connections in people's minds to the residential school history of the area. It was time for it to go.

And Buckley worked with Mr. Calvert to establish the St. Joseph's Hospital, which is the hospital, the public health centre, the day care, and the high school. It's this beautiful yellow building on the shores of the lake at Ile-a-la-Crosse. And it was

truly a pleasure to work in that new building and be able to be part of offering care to a community that has too often been neglected by southern communities but now has that amazing facility, really an example of how we should build health and education facilities around the province.

He didn't spend all his time in government, of course. He was in opposition after 2007 and he had quite a talent in opposition as well. We were preparing for some second reading speeches today, and I was thinking of Mr. Belanger's incredible talent for second reading speeches. He always managed . . . You know, there was a guy by the name of Brad Wall who used to sit right there. And you know, most of the time when one of us was speaking over here, he wouldn't be too interested in what we had to say. He'd be turned around, chatting, like is going on over there right now.

But then Buck would stand up, and you would just see Brad Wall's ears perk up because he knew that something funny was coming, but also that Buck wasn't going to give an inch of space. It didn't matter what the bill was. It could be the Queen's Printer's legislation. He was going to find a way to weave it back to the history, the long-standing history of corruption of the Devine PCs [Progressive Conservative] that runs its way through the DNA of Bill Boyd that finds itself in today's Sask Party. He would find a way to light up the other side and remind them of all of the ways that they have put politics ahead of Saskatchewan people.

I'm proud to have served beside Buck Belanger. I'm proud to have known him as a colleague here and as a friend, and I know many on both sides of this House would say the same. But I also think Buck would probably say we've wasted enough words on him because he would want to talk about the North. He would want us to do what he always did, which is stand up for northwestern Saskatchewan because the truth is, too often in this House, the Northwest is completely forgotten. This government treats Saskatchewan as though it stops at Prince Albert, if they even get that far.

In recent weeks I've been travelling to northern communities, communities I had a chance to work in or study in during my time in medicine — Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Dillon, La Loche, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Beauval, Buffalo Narrows. And I heard the same story in every meeting, and I think you hear the same story in meetings in communities across the member for Cumberland's constituency as well. The story of how much wealth leaves the North and how little returns. How much northern Saskatchewan provides for the rest of us, and yet how little they see their quality of life, their standard of living improve. In fact, they face tremendous challenges all the time.

Drove the very bumpy roads of Highway 155 to La Loche and back, roads that are ignored. The Minister of Highways recently visited Ile-a-la-Crosse. He heard the story. He knows how bad those roads are up there and how much that's ignored. Heard about the need for seniors' care closer to home so that elders don't wind up in Lloydminster or Big River, but can be seen by their families right in La Loche, right in Buffalo Narrows, right in Beauval.

We heard about the ongoing scourge of unemployment, poverty, mental health challenges. We know how much the member for

Cumberland has spoken up about this, fighting as he has for a suicide prevention bill. We heard about the impact of crystal meth and alcohol on communities.

And we heard about the COVID response. We heard from northern communities how disappointed they've been with the response from this government when it came to COVID-19, a government that completely neglected them at a very difficult time. In the first wave in the spring of March 2020, and the former minister of Government Relations will recall, she'll recall that those communities and many First Nations and Métis communities across Saskatchewan, they asked for help. They asked to be able to choose who could come in and out of their community, keeping folks away coming from out of province, out of country, to protect their own communities.

But then as soon as La Loche got hit, as soon as the virus started to spread in those communities, what did they do? They locked them in. They wouldn't let them keep the virus out, but they were perfectly willing to lock those folks in their community, not even let them leave town to get groceries. No resources from the province. Resources from Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, resources from the federal government. Nothing from this province. And it didn't get any better. It didn't get any better.

As we hit the fourth wave, as the fourth wave started and we saw La Loche getting hit again, we saw the Delta variant of the virus spreading across northern Saskatchewan, what happened? This government had completely shredded all the public health orders. So you had mayors and chiefs saying, we want to enforce isolation, but we can't because they've eliminated all of the rules.

And then — and this is the kicker, this is the kicker — after the federal election, the Premier chose to stand up, as we were in the heart of the worst fourth wave in the entire country, as hundreds were dying, as northern communities were saying goodbye to elders and young people, this Premier stood up and blamed them. This Premier stood up and pointed the finger at northern Saskatchewan, tried to blame them for the fourth wave. That was the worst example of divisive dog whistle politics I've ever seen, I've ever seen from this Premier. But let's be honest, that's who he is. Divide, distract, point the finger at anyone else. That has been his MO [modus operandi] since he was elected.

And that brings us to the moment we're in today. Smack dab in the middle of this debate, we heard a Throne Speech from this government that had one goal, one goal in mind. While the world is watching, while the rest of the country, while the rest of the world are looking at the worst fourth wave in the developed world, watching Saskatchewan fail so miserably, the Premier had one mission in mind with this Throne Speech. The world was watching and he wanted to change the channel.

That is what he has done since he was elected. Every chance he can, point the finger anywhere else but his own responsibility. And that's cheap politics on any given day. But at the heart of a humanitarian crisis, it is unforgivable. Blaming the victims instead of taking responsibility is not the action of leaders. It's the action of spoiled children who've never had to deal with the consequences of their own actions.

So let's talk about those actions. At every stage of the pandemic, this Premier has downplayed the seriousness of the threat and

ignored the advice of health experts. In March of 2020 they laughed, they laughed that we dared to raise that you might want to be a little concerned about a global pandemic. They laughed.

The minister, the member for Melville-Saltcoats, screamed, when he was minister for Rural and Remote Health, he yelled, what if, what if. Well folks, what if happened. And we have dealt with a very serious, very tragic situation that this government did everything they could to avoid taking seriously.

Now we were fortunate that first wave. Geographic isolation, the fact that other governments and the peer pressure that went along with those actions, and that we didn't get hit as hard as other places. And I'm thankful for that. The problem is the Premier thought that's the way it was always going to be. He figured it just couldn't happen here in Saskatchewan. And it's that magical thinking that has caused the worst of our problems.

Think about as he headed into the last election with that magical thinking front and centre. He promised he'd balance the budget by 2024, a promise that didn't make it through the winter. He promised he'd staff up in long-term care which, seeing what had happened in Ontario and Quebec, how he hadn't done that already makes zero sense at all.

But let's be honest about what's happened in long-term care. More people have died in our long-term care homes from COVID-19 than this government has hired to help prevent that. Even with today's announcement, they're not even halfway up to getting to zero, let alone adding the 300 that this Premier promised he would hire — 300 new people he promised he'd hire by this coming March. Broken promise after broken promise.

Maybe the most dangerous promise of all, he promised no masked mandate. He promised no more lockdowns. And as a result, he did what he's always done. He ignored the modelling and took risks with Saskatchewan people's lives. Not only did that promise turn out to be entirely false, it gave people the impression, the impression that things were over, that they didn't have to be careful. Just as he'd given space to anti-maskers over the summer, just as he would give more space to anti-vaxxers in the months to come, he downplayed the real life-and-death consequences.

So instead of no lockdown, what did we get? Instead of the short-term circuit breaker the doctors called for, what did we get? A slow motion lockdown that closed businesses for months and months on end, the worst of both worlds. An economy in the dumps as this Premier firmly established his pattern. He downplayed the seriousness, ignored doctors' advice, and hundreds of people died — 281 people died between November 1st and February 1st, that terrible second wave.

Vulnerable seniors were among those people that died, 40 of them in one facility, the Parkside Extendicare, well known for years and years. This government had over a decade of information that that place was not safe, and yet with a pandemic that was raging through the long-term care homes in the country, they did nothing to protect seniors. Nothing.

And then spring came along and with it some hope. The vaccines were finally here. We were in a race between the variants and the vaccine. And what did the Premier choose to do? He said, let's

give those variants a head start. Relaxing restrictions just as cases started to climb, just as the modelling showed we were headed into a dangerous third wave, he downplayed the risk, ignored doctors' advice, and hundreds of people died — 232 people between February 1st and June 1st, among the worst third waves in the entire country. A Premier who once again put politics ahead of people's lives.

You know, you'll remember last session, all the members on that side, they bragged about how we were leading the nation in vaccination rates, which we were excited about. We talked about it all the time — leading the nation in vaccination rates. And yet you never hear the Minister of Health or the Premier today say, hey, guys we're dead last. Might be a reason for that. Might be a reason for that. People were excited. Every health care worker I know — I was out among them — giving jabs, signing up to vaccinate as many people as we could. We also knew it wasn't going to be enough, that we needed to do more.

And the Premier knew it as well. He had more information than any of those health care workers because they were hiding it from the doctors. He had that modelling in June. He saw what was going to happen. The health experts sat him down and said, Mr. Premier, if you don't do something now, we're going to have a terrible fourth wave in the fall. And what did he do? He downplayed the crisis. Heck, he gave up entirely. He scrapped every public health order. He said, let's take the summer off. We're done. It's going to be the best summer ever.

Well guess what we got instead? Guess what we got instead of a great summer? We got the worst fourth wave in the entire country, highest COVID death rate in the entire country, lowest vaccination rate in the entire country — by every single measure, a complete and total disaster. And this is the work of the Premier of this province, which is something I can't believe I can say out loud, that the Premier of this province looked at the evidence and said, yeah, we're going to let more people die. That's our plan.

[14:45]

The cases rose and rose through August. The voices for action became more and more desperate. The Premier was again shown modelling that said mask mandates and vaccine mandates would work. Public health experts took the extraordinary steps, something we've never seen before, all of those MHOs [medical health officer] signing a public letter, taking their case to the public. And still, what did the Premier do? He downplayed the risk. He ignored doctors' advice, and hundreds of people died — 372 people between July 7th and November 7th. Politics ahead of people's lives. Politics ahead of people's lives, that's what we see from this Premier every single time.

And it's not just the hundreds who died. We've sent dozens of patients halfway across the country because our own ICUs were so overwhelmed. We're burning out our health care workers. Nurses and doctors are talking about leaving the province or the profession, and thousands are missing out on therapies for kids, on organ transplants, on surgeries, on cancer care.

The worst fourth wave by every conceivable health measure, including economic measures. The worst of both worlds: 11,000 people out of work, the biggest drop in employment in the country. And still today, the Premier sits and refuses the advice,

ignores the health experts, because the Premier has got the wrong people in his ear. The folks that are calling the shots, the folks that are pulling the strings are the worst Health minister in the country and the worst jobs minister in the country. That's who's calling the shots.

And it's quite something to see the Minister of Health, you know, he told the reporters when they asked him about the modelling: the modelling's only one piece of information. We look to all kinds of information. Well that information couldn't be health information because throughout this time in July and August and September our case counts were rising, hospitalizations were rising, deaths were rising, ICU admissions were rising, every expert was telling him he needed to act.

But no, he admitted to the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] the other day, he admitted that that other information was pushback, pushback from folks like the people who protest on the steps of the legislature. The Premier is listening to a Health minister, a Health minister is listening to a jobs minister, and they're all listening to extremists, to the Buffalo wing of their own party, instead of listening to the experts who would do the work that would save our lives.

It's inconceivable. How do you look at two paths in front of you and say, one was going to cause me some political inconvenience, the other's going to result in thousands in the hospital and hundreds dying, and you choose the second path. Who does that? Who lives that?

But that's exactly, that's exactly what these geniuses have done, and the result is 873 people have lost their lives, 873. And these numbers start to numb you after a while, but these aren't just numbers. These are people with real stories, real lives, people whose families are missing them. These are the results of choices, deliberate choices in the face of evidence that said it was the wrong thing to do, choices this government has made. And we can't forget that. We can't forget those who have put themselves on the line in health care, and we cannot forget those who have been lost, whose lives were risked and sacrificed for foolish political reasons.

Now someday, someday this will end. The pandemic will be over, and the sooner the better. But we cannot forget what we needed to learn, because COVID did a whole lot more than expose the weakness of this Premier's pandemic management. It exposes the weakness of a government that says the word "strong" a lot but has spent a decade undermining the very things that give us strength, creating the conditions that left us so vulnerable to COVID-19. This is the record of the Sask Party.

This Premier, this Sask Party cut funding for our schools, redlined our health care system, and left seniors dangerously exposed. They failed to make sure that when we're building our roads, our hospitals, our schools, that we do so with our workers and our companies, keeping those jobs right here in Saskatchewan. They failed to bring in a decent minimum wage, pay equity, paid sick leave, choosing instead to attack the rights of working people to organize for their own benefit. They tripled our debt and crippled our ability to invest in ourselves, invest in what would truly make us strong.

And after all of this disruption and tragedy, it's natural people are

going to want to go back to the way things were before. We cannot forget that the way things were before wasn't working. We owe it, we owe it to Saskatchewan people.

We owe it to this generation and those to come, to learn the lessons of this pandemic, to commit to a common goal, the goal of a Saskatchewan where we lead the country not in COVID deaths, not in mortgage foreclosures, but in things we can be proud of. Where young people move from top-quality education into lasting, well-paying jobs. Where Saskatchewan small businesses can grow and thrive. Where farming families succeed. A province that takes the climate emergency seriously and harnesses the power of the Crowns to take advantage of incredible opportunities in renewable energy. A treaty land that does more than just talk reconciliation but takes real action to honour the relationships and obligations with and to First Nations and Métis people. A place that lives up to its history as the birthplace of medicare, that values health care workers and the patients they care for, and that keeps that health care public, not privatize it like the Premier plans to do.

Here's a premier who said that his top priority, he told someone in the House again today, that his top priority was cleaning up the mess in health care that he's created — he didn't admit that that's where it came from — but that his top priority was dealing with waiting lists. Well what an odd thing that that top priority didn't show up once in the Throne Speech. We need to be a place that lives up to that history as the birthplace of medicare and to be a province that welcomes with open arms all those who want to come here and be part of building a better future.

In older neighbourhoods, in new suburbs, on farms, and in small-town Saskatchewan, people are increasingly ready for a change. They won't find that change in this Throne Speech. This Throne Speech fails to acknowledge the gravity of the situation, fails to propose anything to clean up the mess this government has made. Nothing that will move us in the direction that this moment demands. It is a failure, the kind of failure that could only extend from the pen of a premier who is unfit for his job, the pen of a premier who's quickly surpassing Grant Devine as the worst premier this province has ever known.

So with that I'll make it clear: I will be supporting the amendment from the member for Saskatoon Eastview. I will not be supporting the Throne Speech because it is simply a tragic failure of a government that puts politics ahead of people's lives.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure for me to enter into the debate and ultimately to support the moving of the Speech from the Throne here over the . . . and to listen to all of the speeches over the course of the last week, Mr. Speaker.

And may I just say to all members and through you to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, and on behalf of what I watched of members of both sides of the House — however I may not have agreed with every reply that came through this House, Mr. Speaker — most certainly I think the people of this province can be very proud of the quality of members that are representing them in constituencies right across this province, Mr. Speaker.

We will obviously disagree on a number of items, Mr. Speaker, as we find our way through our debate in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. But if people go back and listen to all of the replies to the Speech from the Throne, I think the people of the province can be very proud of the debate that's in this House, Mr. Speaker, how they are represented in their particular constituency, Mr. Speaker, and how Saskatchewan people collectively by this House are represented, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is a great place, Mr. Speaker, and that is reflected, I think, in the replies that we saw over the course of the past week and a little bit.

A couple of thank yous, which is customary, Mr. Speaker. First to my constituency assistants, Mr. Speaker. I've added to our crew in Shellbrook. We've had Sally Jacobson that has been with me since I've been elected, Mr. Speaker. She has since gone to part-time over the course of the last few months, and we've added Cindy Painchaud to our staff. And I want to thank them for what they're doing in our constituency office day in, day out, Mr. Speaker, and for how they represent myself, represent the government, Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook.

I haven't had the opportunity, maybe I did last year, but I'll take the liberty again to thank the people from Rosthern-Shellbrook. Mr. Speaker, they sent me back here again for a third time to represent them in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I absolutely love our province. I absolutely love serving the constituents in Rosthern-Shellbrook, getting across the community to visit in many communities that I represent, Mr. Speaker. And they are, simply unbiased, but they're simply some of the very best people that I've met in the world, Mr. Speaker, and they provide me guidance virtually each and every day that I sit in this House. And so I want to just tell them how grateful I am to earn their support in yet again the last election.

My office in Regina, we have Rhonda Romanuk and Launa Birnie, Mr. Speaker. And honestly we have some tough days in government, but never is a bad moment when I walk in in the morning to each of their smiling faces, Mr. Speaker. They most certainly bring a spot of joy to each and every day. And I want to thank them for what they do each and every day, serving the people of the province in the Premier's office here.

Last but not least, and I always say this, Mr. Speaker, no member in this House serves alone. You only serve with the support, and really when your family allows you to. And so I want to thank mine, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's a position, as many know, in any position as an elected member, there are some sacrifices that your family does perform, does do, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly, you know, as you sit either in the Leader of the Opposition's chair or ultimately in the chair that I currently reside, Mr. Speaker, there's added scrutiny, not only on yourself but also on your family members.

And I want to say thank you to my family for supporting me, for tolerating me at times, Mr. Speaker, but also I want to just, you know, thank them for their love. And I think that's true with every member in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thought I'd open up with just a few comments with respect to what we have been discussing in question period each and every day, Mr. Speaker, and that's the COVID-19 pandemic and just, you know, walk through maybe a little bit of

a different view with respect to how this pandemic has been managed. And yes, Mr. Speaker, the fourth wave has hit our province, hit the people of our province quite hard, Mr. Speaker.

There's other waves that have hit other areas of Canada equally as hard, been equally as difficult. And we are now seeing, Mr. Speaker, in other areas of Canada increasing rates, Mr. Speaker. And I would just say that we most assuredly are watching very closely the trajectory of our rates here in the province with the current public health measures that we do have in place.

If we go back to the first 8 or 10 months of this pandemic prior to the availability of vaccines, we really only had one tool, really only had one tool to control the COVID numbers in Saskatchewan, and that was public health measures. And if you think back to last fall, late last calendar year, even early this year, Mr. Speaker, this government utilized that tool. This government had enacted significant public health measures.

The Leader of the Opposition had referenced they were different in various regions of the province, Mr. Speaker. We had taken some action early in the northern areas of the province, particularly in the Northwest. We'd taken some action in Regina later in that, Mr. Speaker, where we had increased measures that were present in Regina due to the increased numbers that we had in the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker.

But as we found our way into 2021 we started to have other tools that were available that could ultimately help us reduce our COVID numbers in our communities. The most effective of those then and continues to today is vaccination, Mr. Speaker. And we did, the Leader of the Opposition's correct, we did put forward one of the most ambitious and aggressive vaccination efforts here in this province.

And we did lead the nation for many months in particular as we . . . In the early days of those vaccines being available, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and oh, so many front-line health care workers really, Mr. Speaker, brought everything that they had to their job each and every day to ensure that as we received those vaccines, they were being made available to Saskatchewan people.

And we did lead the nation. We did lead the nation in making those vaccines available, and we did lead the nation in uptake in our communities as well, Mr. Speaker. And we're fortunate for that. For that we say thank you to Saskatchewan people. We see many of them coming back for their booster shots now.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, in just the last number of weeks virtually, there are some other initiatives and other tools that are increasingly becoming available, and more in the months ahead that we are going to also ensure that we make available to Saskatchewan people. But we've talked about the potential for monoclonal antibodies. We see now a number of companies coming out with a pill, an early-intervention pill that will also be helpful, Mr. Speaker.

All of these efforts and initiatives — and most among them is the vaccines, Mr. Speaker — are going to help us and not only increase our immunity across the population in Saskatchewan but

are going to help us ultimately keep people out of the hospital. And that is the goal, Mr. Speaker. That is the goal for that individual. That is the goal to ensure that we have that hospital bed for others who may need it for a different reason, Mr. Speaker.

And the statistics — and we've read this into the House a number of times, but I think it's incumbent for us to do it at least one more time, Mr. Speaker — the statistics are quite dire and they're quite impactful as to just how effective vaccinations are with respect to COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, for example, if you're unvaccinated, you're six times more likely to contract COVID. Does the vaccine ensure you'll never get COVID? No, of course not. But you're six times more likely to contract COVID if you're unvaccinated. Mr. Speaker, you're 13 times more likely to end up in a hospital and 28 times more likely to end up in an ICU bed. Those aren't numbers that are pulled from some other country or faraway place. Those are actually numbers using Saskatchewan statistics over the last number of months. Mr. Speaker, if you are unvaccinated and you get COVID, you are 28 times more likely to end up in an ICU bed than someone that's vaccinated. Very, very, very impactful numbers, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's those numbers along with yes, making life much more uncomfortable for those that have made the choice to not be vaccinated, Mr. Speaker, with our proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy, that we now see 86 per cent of Saskatchewan residents have went out, gotten their first shot. As we say, the vast majority of those we expect them to revisit, to become fully vaccinated for their second shot, and we are seeing precisely that happen.

We hit 80 per cent of Saskatchewan people are fully vaccinated here today. As of today, Mr. Speaker, we've delivered a little over 180,000 vaccines since we implemented that policy, Mr. Speaker, and it is working. It is working to increase our vaccination rate here in the province. Ultimately that is the goal, is to push that rate up as high as we possibly can. We've seen our seven-day average continue to decrease. We're actually 70 per cent down, Mr. Speaker, 70 per cent down from our peak on our seven-day average.

Mr. Speaker, again I say thank you to the people of Saskatchewan for ultimately what they have done in paying attention to not only the public health orders that are there, but also the public health recommendations, and to make the choices in their everyday life that are making a difference with respect to our COVID numbers.

Mr. Speaker, as discussed as recently as question period here today, there is slight differences, maybe significant differences some would say, between the policies of the government and the opposition members, Mr. Speaker, and those have been well discussed for a period of time. As we heard today, Mr. Speaker, the opposition has at many times called for sweeping lockdowns in every community, Mr. Speaker, across this province, multiple, multiple times.

Mr. Speaker, you see a governing party that is making every effort to ensure that people are, that we are making every allowance so that they are able to go to work, to earn a living, and to continue, Mr. Speaker, supporting their families. That's

why you're seeing, for example, a 98 per cent employment rate to pre-pandemic levels, Mr. Speaker. That's why you're seeing the economics of our province starting to rebound, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm going to get into that a little bit in a moment as to, you know, what the future holds for this province and why the decade that lies before us most certainly is Saskatchewan's decade. And I think, Mr. Speaker, when I'm finished that many will agree that it was likely the largest opportunity that this province has ever been poised to capitalize on.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, it's a policy of this government to ensure that we are making vaccines available, yes, and any other tools that are helpful in aiding in keeping people out of hospital, and we'll continue to do that. Mr. Speaker, we heard the debate over the course of the past week around the MHO letter that was written to the government and some of the recommendations that where a motion was moved in this House to accept that letter.

Mr. Speaker, one of those recommendations was for mandatory vaccinations in our schools for those folks that are students that are 12 and older. If they aren't vaccinated they would be unable to attend in-person classes. That was called for to be implemented by the NDP. For those that are 11 and under, Mr. Speaker, the letter indicated that those students, if their family members that they live with are not vaccinated, they ultimately would not be able to attend school as well, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we very quickly, we very quickly then saw, Mr. Speaker, members opposite, the Leader of the Opposition go out and start to distance himself from that policy, most recently when he attended in person at the Saskatchewan Party convention this past weekend. He also very quickly was starting to distance himself from his own policy, Mr. Speaker, where they had moved a motion in this House to adopt, Mr. Speaker. I think it's the, you know, without a doubt, likely the best example . . . We've all become familiar with the term "social distancing," Mr. Speaker, but this is the best example that I have seen of socialist distancing, Mr. Speaker, distancing from one's own policy.

Mr. Speaker, if we get back to the Throne Speech and not just have fun for a little bit, Mr. Speaker, you know, we had put forward really five initiatives in the Speech from the Throne this year. And that was to build a stronger Saskatchewan; to build a safer Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; to build a healthier Saskatchewan; a more educated Saskatchewan; and most certainly for Saskatchewan to flex our provincial muscles, Mr. Speaker, and build a more autonomous province.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to a safer Saskatchewan, in addition to COVID conversations and, Mr. Speaker, you can ask virtually any member on this side of the House or at least part of that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, as to some of the conversations that they've been having with their constituents, Mr. Speaker, and property crime has been on the increase, in particular in many rural areas in the province. I see it where I live, Mr. Speaker. It has been increasing. And there is a quote in the Speech from the Throne that I think is worthy of being repeated in my reply, Mr. Speaker, and it's from a Mr. Daniel Nagin. And it says this, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "... the certainty of being caught committing a crime is a vastly more powerful deterrent than the punishment."

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is part of what we have in this Speech from the Throne is to ensure that those folks that are thinking about committing a property crime in this province, Mr. Speaker, we're going to make every effort to provide them with that certainty that they actually will be caught, Mr. Speaker. And they'll find their way through our legal system. That is why we have added 60 additional police positions. Mr. Speaker, these are not just broad police positions; they are very, very targeted police positions. Added to that, a number of, oh about a dozen civilian positions, Mr. Speaker.

And we have brought together our provincial enforcement resources under one operation, Mr. Speaker, the provincial protective services unit so that they can better serve the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, while preserving their identity, Mr. Speaker. Because we have conservation officers, we have highway traffic officers and they have their identity, Mr. Speaker. But we also want to bring them under one banner so that we can better serve, from an enforcement prospective, the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and add these additional positions to ensure that we are looking, Mr. Speaker, looking for and actively seeking to bring in the people that ultimately are trafficking drugs and possibly people in this province, Mr. Speaker. Very specific, very specific teams that we are adding these resources to.

The warrant enforcement team. I would take note there was about 80 warrants that were exercised I believe up in the Lloydminster area as recently as the last 24 hours by one of the crime reduction teams that were operating there. Mr. Speaker, over 30 arrests that were made. Mr. Speaker, this is just the type of effectiveness that these investments, these very targeted investments, are ultimately going to make.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, you can ask the same members on both sides of this House about those conversations that they've had with their constituents. And they would tell you another thing: many of these property crimes are being fuelled by addictions. And so if you're going to give criminals in this province the certainty that they're going to be caught, you better give them a pathway, Mr. Speaker. If they are in that yard taking those items because they are supporting an addiction habit, Mr. Speaker, you better have a pathway for them to find their way out of that lifestyle.

And that's precisely what we are committing to in this Speech from Throne, as well, Mr. Speaker, with 150 addiction rehabilitation beds, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the next three years. We're adding to that the wellness buses that are going to operate in the multiple communities.

And here's an initiative, Mr. Speaker, that maybe hasn't brought about the discussion that, I think, often it deserves. And that's to do with our urgent care centres. And their primary focus is really to alleviate some of the pressure that we see under normal times in our emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker.

Often there's a, you know, an individual — and myself and our family have been in this situation — where you don't really have an ailment that requires you to be in an emergency room. It wouldn't be an emergency, but it's more urgent than making an appointment to go see your doctor in three, five, eight, ten days when you can get in to see him. More urgent than that, Mr. Speaker.

And that is what we are going to make every attempt to do is to alleviate some of those ailments that are landing in our emergency rooms that may be able to be dealt with in a much more expedient and in a better way, Mr. Speaker, with many Saskatchewan residents, to (1) alleviate the pressures in our emergency rooms, but (2) to also provide better service to Saskatchewan people. It's patients first, Mr. Speaker. It always has been, and it will continue to be under this government. That's the primary focus of our urgent care centres.

There is another part to that that hasn't been discussed as much, Mr. Speaker, and that is a part that is maybe not as focused on quantity but focused on those folks, Mr. Speaker, that may be having a mental health challenge, a mental health crisis, on a certain day, Mr. Speaker. We want that, the mental health side of our urgent care centres, mental health and addictions side, being open and accessible to Saskatchewan people so that we can take them and bring them in, ensure their continuity of care is seamless from there, Mr. Speaker. And they're getting in front of the supports as soon as possible, but getting in front of the supports that they actually require.

Mr. Speaker, all of this together, all of this together is really to address ultimately some of the — and we're going to talk more about this in the years ahead, Mr. Speaker — but some of the mental health challenges that we see in our communities, Mr. Speaker. Supporting those folks and those families that may be going through those challenges, and I don't know of a family that hasn't been impacted in some way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker, including mine.

Mr. Speaker, all too often those challenges can end up in challenges with addictions, Mr. Speaker. And that is what we are trying to do is to climb this chain to get to these people earlier, Mr. Speaker, to provide them with supports that they require earlier, Mr. Speaker, and to open up accessibility pathways for each and every Saskatchewan resident should they need it.

Just quickly on education. Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education, and this is his initiative and, Mr. Speaker, I think it's going to be a very good initiative as we move forward, about continuing to raise the awareness around mental health, Mr. Speaker. The challenges of students today are very, very different than the challenges when I was in school, or when I started school.

Mr. Speaker, our telephone at the farm where I grew up was one long ring, one short ring, and you could always hear the neighbour click on as soon as you got on the phone. There was no Facebook app on my rotary dial phone. There was no Snapchat, there was no LinkedIn — there was none of this social media and the internet, Mr. Speaker, that we see today and we see kids growing up with today. That is increasing very much, you know, the circle of challenges that our kids and the pressure that our kids are under in today's day and age.

And the Take a Break campaign is one that I think is not going to be an expensive campaign, but I think it's going to be a truly effective campaign for the youth in our communities, the youth in our province, our next generation ultimately. They're going to be sitting in this House in the very near future, ensuring that they understand not only the importance of taking care of yourself in your physical health, but taking care of your mental health, Mr.

Speaker. And that includes understanding social media, the positives of social media, yes, but also understanding the negatives of social media, Mr. Speaker.

And that's one example of a small item possibly that is in this Speech from the Throne but I think will be a very effective item, an initiative with respect to highlighting the importance of understanding the positives and negatives of the internet, Mr. Speaker, and the positives and negatives of things like social media.

Mr. Speaker, maybe just a little bit into the meat of the Speech from the Throne, and then I'd like to get to the most exciting part, which is the vote. Mr. Speaker, the best minister of jobs in the nation, Mr. Speaker, on numerous times with respect to the unemployment rate in the province, which is below the national average, he has spoken to the fact that our exports are — not so much in here because he doesn't get a lot of questions in here — but he has spoken to the fact that our exports in this province are up 20 per cent in the first eight months of this year.

[15:15]

That's up over last year, which was a record year, Mr. Speaker, where Saskatchewan led the nation in exports. And I often say that's the source of our wealth, and ultimately if our export value is climbing in Saskatchewan you're going to see the economy in Saskatchewan do very, very well.

But all of those aside, Mr. Speaker, the confidence that we are seeing grow in our province, Mr. Speaker, is, yes, due to, you know, our export value that we're seeing grow. But we're also seeing a growing confidence in the recovery that's occurring in Saskatchewan, the economic recovery. And this is where it gets to the opportunity that I see that lies ahead of us. The confidence that we see investors really putting their money where their mouth is, Mr. Speaker, but the confidence that we see and they are starting to see as to where this province is going in the years ahead.

Mr. Speaker, we've announced, over the course of the last few months, over \$10 billion in investments in Saskatchewan projects. This not only is construction jobs, not only is operational jobs. These are jobs, Mr. Speaker, that will have an impact in our communities for decades, literally decades to come.

You know, I've spoken many times with respect to Northern Nutrients. It's building a urea fertilizer manufacturing facility, \$25 million invested in around the Saskatoon area. We have Clean Seed that is assembling their new Smart Seeders in Saskatoon. Sixty-five million dollars invested in Delisle just down the road by AGT Foods, Mr. Speaker, as they continue to invest in this province as well as around the world.

One of the real highlights that isn't talked about a lot, Mr. Speaker, is the venture capital investment that's happening in Saskatchewan, where \$170 million invested the first six months of this year — \$170 million invested in the first six months of 2021, already surpassing 2020, which was also a record year in venture capital investment.

These are companies that we are all familiar with: Coconut Software, 7shifts, Vendasta, as well as a number of other

start-ups, Mr. Speaker, that are doing very, very well in the tech sector in Saskatchewan. And I would say that all of the industries and companies that are working in Saskatchewan are a part of that sector, and we're seeing that increasingly with the investments pouring into our technological sector.

Millions of dollars in our canola crush sector, Mr. Speaker. We had put forward a target to crush 75 per cent of the canola that we grow here in the province, crush it by the year 2030. We're going to obliterate that target, Mr. Speaker. We'll be beyond that with the four investments that have been announced this past summer. First was Richardson, doubling the size of their project at Yorkton, Mr. Speaker. And then we see Viterra and Cargill building north of a billion dollars worth of plants in and around the Regina area. And we see Ceres Global building a plant at their Northgate terminal just east of Estevan, another \$350 million investment, a number of more jobs, Mr. Speaker, down in that area.

This is most certainly climbing the value chain, increasing our opportunity to utilize the trade offices, the four that are operating now and the four that will be operating shortly, Mr. Speaker. And that is by no means not part of the reason . . . that is part of the reason why we are seeing this type of investment come into Saskatchewan, is because we are well represented in our markets abroad. Not only represented with respect to the exports that we're bringing to those countries, but represented in that investment attraction, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan most certainly has a bright number of years ahead of it.

In the energy industry, Mr. Speaker, substantial investment. We see Husky Midstream invested \$82 million in a gathering expansion, and they created 450 construction jobs out just northeast of North Battleford. Steel Reef is investing at their North Portal facility, all supported by targeted programs to attract that investment into this province and to provide the opportunity for those jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Most certainly this is an area where, yes, we have a growth plan target to increase our energy production, our oil production in this province from 450 barrels a day to 600, Mr. Speaker. And you know, some might say, why would you do that? Because it's what's best for the world, Mr. Speaker, to provide what is some of the world's most sustainable oil to other Canadians and to other people in the world.

Mr. Speaker, we just saw — and I'm going to get into this in a minute too — the Prime Minister making some commitments around capping the energy industry in the province. I'm going to say this now, I'm going to say it later, and I'm going to say it again at the closing, Mr. Speaker: in Saskatchewan, if the rest of the world produced energy, produced oil like we do here in Saskatchewan, greenhouse gas emissions from global oil production would drop 25 per cent overnight. That is the record of this province's energy industry. And I'm going to come back to that in a few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen over the course of the last 15 or so years now, we have seen a tremendous investment in our potash industry, about \$20 billion actually. Companies like Mosaic, companies like K+S, companies like Nutrien, Mr. Speaker, that have invested and invested heavily and created jobs, made our potash industry one of the most efficient, producing high-quality

product, Mr. Speaker, and the most sustainable potash industry in the world from an environmental perspective.

That's the potash industry as we know it today, Mr. Speaker — \$20 billion invested over the course of the last decade and a half. That is where we see BHP now starting with their decision to move forward with what is a \$12 billion total investment in their Jansen mine, Mr. Speaker. That is the largest single investment that this province has ever seen in our history. It's the largest single investment that BHP has ever made in a single project in their history, Mr. Speaker.

It signifies a shift, Mr. Speaker, in BHP's portfolio to potash because it's sustainable. Potash in Saskatchewan is the most sustainable potash that is provided, Mr. Speaker, that can be provided around the world. And if countries are concerned about greenhouse gas emissions, if they're concerned about the environmental impact of the products they're buying, like oil, they should buy their potash from this province, Mr. Speaker.

In Regina there's been many discussed throughout, Mr. Speaker, with respect to another 100 jobs that will be added by the wheat pulp facility here in Regina, Brandt Group of Companies, Mr. Speaker, increasing their workforce by 1,000. But one investment . . . well a few investments that add up to a large number that I just want to mention because it often flies under the radar, and that's the investments of over a billion dollars in the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker.

We see a number of companies investing and showing faith in our forestry industry here in the province, Mr. Speaker. We see Paper Excellence, for example, that are investing north of half a billion dollars to refurbish and ensure that the pulp mill is up and going in Saskatoon. That's been a long time waiting. I've joked that . . . I believe it was 2006 when the pulp mill closed in Saskatoon. And I often tell the joke that that's the last time my beloved Edmonton Oilers were in the playoffs. I believe we're 9 or 10 and 1 this year, so they should just give us the cup and we'll just carry it, you know. The rest of the season can just be for fun, Mr. Speaker.

But that's a long time to wait for the folks in and around Prince Albert. It's a long time to wait for the folks in around Prince Albert, in around that area, Mr. Speaker, and that wait now is over with that investment coming in, Mr. Speaker. We see Pivot industries coming in. They're building furniture, turning sticks into couches, literally, and sending them around the world, Mr. Speaker. And we see One Sky Forest Products also coming into the area. One Sky, Mr. Speaker, you know, I should note, is a significant investment with an OSB [oriented strand board] plant, but have over 17 partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Mr. Speaker, this is really part of the forestry story over the course of the last number of years. Thirty per cent, 30 per cent of the labour force in our forestry industry in this province, Mr. Speaker, is Indigenous. That is by far and away higher than any other province in the nation of Canada. In addition to that, 30 per cent of the government allocation of timber resources, also to Indigenous communities or Indigenous organizations, Mr. Speaker. And we're seeing success stories come out of the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker, as they continue to make that investment. In fact one of those success stories I highlighted to

the premiers when they were here a couple years on the Council of Federation, Mr. Speaker.

Most certainly it is a model that I think will be looked at and looked at in mirroring, Mr. Speaker, with our Indigenous finance corporation that we're bringing forward here. And ultimately, you know, when we talk about reconciliation, whether it be in Saskatchewan or across Canada, without economic reconciliation that can provide you that financial independence, there really can be no reconciliation. And that is what Saskatchewan has been a part of for over a decade now. And we'll continue to increase our efforts in the years ahead, Mr. Speaker. And that also was highlighted in this Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, not as much highlighted from the Speech from the Throne but it is worthy of a comment or two — and I will make them brief — but it has to do with some comments that were made this past week in Glasgow, Scotland by our Prime Minister around capping the energy industry. Mr. Speaker, there's no consultation with at least the province of Saskatchewan with respect to that policy decision. There was no details that have yet been provided to us. We don't know exactly what that looks like and what that impact would ultimately be.

But I had mentioned earlier that, you know, this is really going to create at the surface two results. One is where Canadians, including us in Saskatchewan, are going to pay more for our gas, not just a little bit more and not just for a little while. We're going to pay a lot more for a very long time, Mr. Speaker. Two, global greenhouse gas emissions are going to increase. That is the result of this policy that the Prime Minister has ultimately put forward.

I said earlier that when you compare Saskatchewan's production techniques in the energy industry, whether it be using carbon capture and storage, whether it be using the SAGD [steam-assisted gravity drainage] technology up in the Lloydminster area that's being invested in — one of the few places that the energy industry is seeing significant investment, Mr. Speaker — those technologies are not only more efficient with how they produce oil, but they are doing so at a much more sustainable, in a much more sustainable way than the rest of the world is. In fact as I said, if the rest of the world produced energy, oil, in the same way we do in Saskatchewan, global greenhouse gas emissions from oil production would be reduced by 25 per cent just like that.

Mr. Speaker, a cap or reducing the investment into that technology and into that, comparatively, most sustainable industry right here in Saskatchewan, what does that result in? That results in us buying our oil abroad from places that are, you know, known beacons of democracy and environmental sustainability like Russia, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela. That's where our energy, as Canadians, will come into. It'll come into our Central Canada, into the ports there, where it'll be processed and ultimately sold to Canadians at a much higher price, Mr. Speaker, and thereby increasing global greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, it should be troubling, not only for Saskatchewan but for all Canadians. These countries where we are poised to be buying our oil from have much lower, much less rigorous environmental standards than we do in this province. And I

would put forward that this government is going to make every effort, Mr. Speaker, to defend not only Saskatchewan's energy industry because it's the most sustainable industry that I'm aware of around the world, but because it supports 30,000 families, Mr. Speaker, that we ultimately represent.

So just with respect to that, Mr. Speaker — and I've made this comment in years gone by as well — if you think back a number of years, a few decades, Mr. Speaker, there was a program introduced by a prime minister at the time. His name was Pierre Elliott Trudeau. He had introduced what was likely, had been known as one of the most divisive programs in Canada's history with the National Energy Program. And I would put forward, you know, that that program was introduced ultimately to keep energy prices, oil prices, artificially low in Western Canada and then to provide that oil, that cheap sustainable supply of oil, to folks in Eastern Canada.

That didn't go over very well, Mr. Speaker, but I would say this with respect to that policy: at the very least, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the prime minister of the day, at least had some Canadians' best interests in mind. It wasn't all Canadians and it certainly wasn't Western Canadians' best interests, but he at least had some Canadians' best interests in mind.

This policy that we see coming forward today, this cap on emissions policy, does none of that. All Canadians will pay more for the gasoline, for the fuel that they will use, and global greenhouse gas emissions will increase. That is the outcome ultimately of this policy, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say that this attempt really to phase out the energy industry in Canada, and in particular, I would say, an attempt to phase out the energy industry in Saskatchewan, isn't going to work, Mr. Speaker. There's a Government of Saskatchewan that is going to stand up, like I said, for those 30,000 families. And I would invite the opposition members actually. And often we talk about opportunities to work together, and I would like to invite the Leader of the Opposition and all of the opposition members. They have an opportunity here as well.

We see with a minority federal government — a minority Liberal government, Mr. Speaker, that isn't going to last that long — we see now there's these backroom negotiations going on between Jagmeet Singh, the leader of the NDP, and ultimately the Prime Minister, Prime Minister Trudeau. And you know, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite to take this opportunity to stand up for the Canadian energy industry. Take this opportunity to ensure that in those negotiations, that Jagmeet is making an absolute line of no crossing, that, Mr. Speaker, that the new government, the new coalition government, whatever it looks like, will not, will not be disastrous to the Saskatchewan energy industry, Mr. Speaker — the most sustainable energy industry.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, this should be a condition. Mr. Singh could make this a condition of the coalition government, Mr. Speaker, that one, the carbon tax will be returned to the province of Saskatchewan; two, the cap will not apply to the most sustainable energy industry, the most sustainable oil industry in the world, Mr. Speaker. It should not apply, thereby protecting, protecting

30,000 Saskatchewan families that are working, Mr. Speaker, working to innovate the industry, working to ensure that we are going to have not only a sustainable supply, but a supply of sustainable energy here in Canadians, ensuring that we make this product available not only to Canadians, but make it available to people all around the world.

We've talked in this House at length that there's not an ounce of daylight between the NDP and the federal Liberals today, Mr. Speaker. That is a fact. We've seen, you know, a member that was talked about at great length here a short while ago, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Belanger, who quit the provincial NDPs, the New Democrats, actually to go run for the federal Liberals, Mr. Speaker. In fact, his words — his words — and I quote his words, Mr. Speaker. And I quote Mr. Belanger during . . . it wasn't that long ago. It was September the 17th, Mr. Speaker. And he goes on, and I quote, "Philosophically the NDP and the Liberals are not that far apart. You and I know there are a lot of federal Liberals who vote NDP provincially."

Mr. Speaker, I have put forward the opportunity that the opposition, as small as they are, Mr. Speaker, and the Leader of the Opposition have to do right and to stand up for Saskatchewan's energy industry workers. And that's to ensure that Jagmeet Singh puts in as a condition of the new coalition government that they're going to stand up for Saskatchewan energy workers, Mr. Speaker. And we'll see what the answer to that is.

Mr. Speaker, in closing . . . and then we'll get to the favourite part, which is the vote. I think a colleague of ours many years ago had said that that was always his favourite part because in opposition he realized how painful that was at times. But, Mr. Speaker, a couple of comments on Saskatchewan people over the course of the last number of months. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this: I've never been so inspired, in particular over the course of just the last number of weeks, Mr. Speaker, as to what Saskatchewan people have achieved and what they achieve collectively when they put their heads together.

If you look back a number of weeks ago, a couple of months ago, Mr. Speaker, and where we were with our COVID situation and the trajectory in this province, Mr. Speaker, that has markedly changed — down 70 per cent in our seven-day average today. And I can tell you I have never been, yet again, so inspired as I watch what the people of this province most certainly are doing.

I and them, I think, share a level of confidence, Mr. Speaker, a level of confidence that Saskatchewan's best days most certainly are ahead of us. And we've had a few good ones, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last 15 years. But our best days are ahead of us as we see record-setting investment landing in community after community, in industry after industry, creating construction jobs, creating long-term jobs, Mr. Speaker, going to make things better not only for our generation, but much, much more opportunity for that next generation, Mr. Speaker. And this province has every opportunity, and I would say every reason, to be very confident in where we're going over the course of the next decade. This is our province's decade. This is Saskatchewan's decade, Mr. Speaker.

And I would offer to Saskatchewan people that they can have faith in their government. They can have faith in their

government that we're going to continue to represent them. At times, yes, we're going to continue to stand up for what we feel is right for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. And that includes standing up for those 30,000 folks who work in the energy industry, that are right now as we speak under direct attack from a Liberal minority government, and very shortly, likely a coalition government, Mr. Speaker.

And that is precisely why I will be not supporting the amendment, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the main motion for the Speech from the Throne which was moved by the member from Prince Albert Northcote — and thank you for that — and seconded from the member from not armed river, Mr. Speaker, but from Arm River, seconded by him. And, Mr. Speaker, that's where I will be on the Speech from the Throne.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, order. The question before the Assembly is the proposed amendment moved by the member from Saskatoon Eastview and seconded by the member from Regina Douglas Park:

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.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the amendment please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the amendment please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — A recorded division has been requested. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 15:36 until 15:37.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour of the amendment, please stand.

[Yeas — 10]

Meili	Wotherspoon	Sarauer
Mowat	A. Young	Vermette
Bowes	Conway	Beck
Love		

The Speaker: — All those opposed to the amendment, please stand.

[Nays — 43]

Moe	McMorris	Reiter
Harpauer	Morgan	Duncan
Wyant	Tell	Bradshaw
Eyre	J. Harrison	Merriman
Hindley	Kaeding	Cheveldayoff
Docherty	Makowsky	Carr
L. Ross	Stewart	Cockrill
McLeod	Fiaz	C. Young
Hargrave	Ottobreit	Bonk
Grewal	Skoropad	Jenson
Keisig	A. Ross	Meyers
Dennis	Buckingham	Kirsch
Lambert	Goudy	Francis
Nerlien	Domotor	Friesen
D. Harrison		

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 10; and those opposed, 43.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment lost. The question before the Assembly is the main motion, moved by the member from Prince Albert Northcote and seconded by the member from Arm River:

That an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor:

To His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan.

May it please Your Honour:

We, Her Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Saskatchewan, in session assembled, humbly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech which Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — A recorded division has been requested. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 15:41 until 15:42.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas — 43]

Moe	McMorris	Reiter
Harpauer	Morgan	Duncan
Wyant	Tell	Bradshaw
Eyre	J. Harrison	Merriman
Hindley	Kaeding	Cheveldayoff
Docherty	Makowsky	Carr
L. Ross	Stewart	Cockrill
McLeod	Fiaz	C. Young
Hargrave	Ottenbreit	Bonk
Grewal	Skoropad	Jenson
Keisig	A. Ross	Meyers
Dennis	Buckingham	Kirsch
Lambert	Goudy	Francis
Nerlien	Domotor	Friesen
D. Harrison		

The Speaker: — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — 10]

Meili	Wotherspoon	Sarauer
Mowat	A. Young	Vermette
Bowes	Conway	Beck
Love		

Deputy Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 43; those opposed, 10.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried.

[15:45]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 38 — *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I'll move second reading of *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2021*.

The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, 2009 allows the director of civil forfeiture unit to seek forfeiture of properties acquired through the use, or used to commit unlawful activity. After appropriate processes are followed, the forfeited property or any funds resulting from its sale becomes part of the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund. Mr. Speaker, this takes the profits out of the hands of criminal organizations and uses them to support victims of crime, police operations, and community programming. The proposed amendments will enhance the civil forfeiture unit's ability to combat money laundering in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the first set of changes will allow the director to pursue a preliminary preservation order or preliminary disclosure order. With these powers, the civil forfeiture unit can take the

necessary steps to identify laundered assets prior to commencing the civil forfeiture process. Additionally the proposed changes will allow the director to require financial institutions to disclose certain information respecting a person's property and accounts if it's suspected that the property is proceeds of or an instrument of unlawful activity.

The proposed changes will also make general enhancements to the Act including updated provisions respecting investigation orders, new offence provisions for persons who fail to disclose information or disclose false or misleading information in contravention of the Act, clarified rules respecting the sealing of court applications, and allowing the director to settle disputed administrative forfeiture proceedings.

Mr. Speaker, these changes demonstrate the government's commitment to fighting money laundering, taking profits out of the hands of criminal organizations, and supporting Saskatchewan victims, law enforcement, and Saskatchewan communities. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2021*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill 38 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into debates around a various amount of bills today, but in particular right now, Bill No. 38. I thank the minister for his opening comments and his description of what's in this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say this typically was the purview of the former member for Athabasca, Buckley Belanger, who was . . . We've already spoken about this, other colleagues, about how great he was in the Chamber, how great he was in particular at these opening second reading speeches . . . Mr. Speaker, as the member for Regina Rosemont tells me, average on the hockey rink in terms of his abilities. I know that Mr. Belanger would say otherwise. I will not be able to do justice the way he delivered second reading speeches unfortunately. I'm not even going to try, Mr. Speaker, because my imitation would be not up to par, Mr. Speaker. I'm just going to do the best that I can.

I do want to say that having the opportunity to serve with Mr. Belanger was an absolute honour. I learned so much from him in his decades of service to this province, in this Chamber, both as an opposition member and government, in cabinet. Mr. Speaker, not only were his stories always entertaining and very wild, he also had a wealth of knowledge and wealth of information. And I'm lucky and honoured to call him friend. I'm lucky and honoured to be able to continue to reach out to him when I do need advice. And he is always apt to provide it to me.

But I did want to take a quick moment to recognize the true king of second reading speeches, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly not me. But I want him to know how missed he truly is.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation makes some changes to the criminal property amendment Act, as laid out by this minister. It's interesting because we just saw changes to this legislation about a year or two ago, and now we're seeing further changes. The

minister indicates that it's targeting, in particular, money laundering, Mr. Speaker. I'll be curious to hear more about the experience the ministry has seen in terms of money laundering in the province. I know we hear about it a lot in other provinces, BC [British Columbia] in particular.

We'll be watching closely to see if this legislation actually meets its need, if it does reach the intent of . . . When you think of money launderers, you think of fairly wealthy criminal organizations, Mr. Speaker. We'll be seeing if that's the actual outcome of these changes to this legislation, targeting those more wealthy criminal organizations rather than maybe someone of more limited means, Mr. Speaker.

And the minister's right that the funds from this go into the Victims' Fund, the victims of crime fund. I do want to acknowledge the importance of that fund, and over the years the ministry has moved more and more organizations into that purview, which has resulted in a decline in the amount of revenue that currently sits in that fund, Mr. Speaker. We continue to monitor that fund to ensure that it is properly maintained because all of the programs that are funded through that fund, Mr. Speaker, are incredibly, incredibly important.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be doing a lot of outreach and consultation, I believe, on this legislation. We're always soliciting feedback. The minister claims that he has done some consultation on this legislation. I'm always a little suspect when the minister tells me that he's done consultation. I often ask him, you know, who did you consult with? Who did you not consult with? You know, he has some great officials working for him, but you never know with the minister, so we always have to double-check, check his work. Mr. Speaker, someone's always got to check his work to make sure that his t's are crossed and his i's are dotted, and I'm happy and honoured to do that for him.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have a lot of other colleagues who are going to want to enter on this discussion, this very important discussion about this legislation. So in order to facilitate that, Mr. Speaker, I will be adjourning debate on Bill 38.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 39 — *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Justice minister.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I'll be moving second reading of *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021*.

Members of the Assembly will be aware that *The Saskatchewan Gazette* is the official publication of the Queen's Printer. The *Gazette* contains government and public notices and changes in regulations resulting from legislation, and it is frequently referenced in legal proceedings. *The Queen's Printer's Act* requires paper publication of the *Gazette* not less than twice in

each month, and the publication is currently produced weekly and posted on Fridays.

Mr. Speaker, while current legislation benefits the paper version of the *Gazette* as an official record, it does not extend that recognition to the online version. That means that only the paper version of the *Gazette* can be used as evidence in trials and legal proceedings. This bill will amend *The Queen's Printer's Act, 1996* to establish the online version of *The Saskatchewan Gazette* as the official record. Both the print and online copies will now be the official government record.

Printing and mailing hard copies of the *Gazette* can take up to a week from the date it's first posted so, Mr. Speaker, with this bill the delay will be removed. Citizens will now be able to officially reference the online copies as soon as it's posted, without further authentication of its contents, and rely on it in legal proceedings as the authoritative legal record.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 39 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate around Bill No. 39, *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act*. Members on this side of the House asked that I recognize the king of second reading speeches, Mr. Belanger, in a more visual way this time for this bill. So I am trying to do my best, although my collar isn't quite starched enough to stay. But hopefully it stays for the duration of this discussion, Mr. Speaker.

Now I was listening to my leader's remarks in his response to the Throne Speech this afternoon. It was a very strong, strong response, Mr. Speaker. I will criticize it in one small way, though. I feel like he maybe unintentionally denigrated Bill No. 39 and the importance of legislation like *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. I'm always honoured to rise and talk about the Queen's Printer.

I'm happy to see it move from a physical to a digital version. It happened a while ago, Mr. Speaker, that both are now accessible. However, as the minister said, only one is allowable for evidentiary purposes. This legislation seeks to change that. Mr. Speaker, it makes sense in terms of the world that we're living in, where we're moving into a much more digital age. As I look at my laptop, makes sense. I wonder why it took this long. I'm happy to see this move forward.

As always, we're seeking stakeholder feedback and consultation, Mr. Speaker, and I know that many of my colleagues are very eager to enter in on the debate around Bill No. 39. So to allow that, I would move to adjourn debate on this bill.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 40 — *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Justice minister.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my comments, I'll be moving second reading of *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021*.

Mr. Speaker, as reflected in the Throne Speech last month, the Government of Saskatchewan is committing to addressing rural crime. On January 1st of 2022, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2019* will come into force. Members will recall that that Act will require specific permission to access rural property. A change will also be made to *The Wildlife Act*, to *The All Terrain Vehicles Act*, and *The Snowmobile Act* to provide occupiers liability protection from owners . . . or owners from injuries incurred by trespassers, expressly authorize restitution for damage to landowners from persons convicted of trespass, and increase the general penalty under the Act from \$2,000 to \$5,000.

Mr. Speaker, we feel that a strong message needs to be sent to those who would repeatedly victimize Saskatchewan's landowners through trespassing. For this reason *The Trespass to Property Act* is being further amended by today's bill to do a number of things. It's going to provide that the recently increased maximum penalty set on the Act from \$2,000 to \$5,000 be increased to \$25,000 for repeat offenders on the same property; provide that imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months be added as an available penalty for first or subsequent trespass offences; introduce a \$200,000 maximum penalty for a corporation that counsels or aids and abets in the commission of that offence, including directors' liability; and provide for an expressed statutory tort of trespass in the Act to be brought by landowners or occupiers against a trespasser.

Mr. Speaker, these proposed changes are part of several steps taken this session to further government's commitment to addressing rural crime. Increasing penalties for repeat offenders and providing for specific penalties for corporate offenders should send a strong message to trespassers. Trespass will be taken seriously in Saskatchewan.

Establishing a statutory tort for trespass will codify that simple trespass is actionable, and that an action may be commenced without proof of damage. It will also create an onus on the trespasser to justify why they are on the property, rather than the owner to prove the trespasser is not entitled to be on the property. These procedural advantages and the expressed authority to impose damages are intended to make a successful tort action in Saskatchewan by Saskatchewan landowners more likely.

Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of recreationalists in Saskatchewan follow the best practice of seeking permission for access to property, and once on the land they behave respectfully. These changes will support and hopefully extend that prevailing ethic so that many people as possible can enjoy the living skies and extraordinary landscapes of this great province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 40 be now read

a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy to rise and enter in the debate around Bill 40, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we had a lot of concerns when *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act*, the original, came out, Mr. Speaker, the one that still hasn't even been brought into force. They were so quick to ram it through, Mr. Speaker, despite all the concerns from many, many stakeholder groups, Mr. Speaker. And yet still we're sitting here with legislation that maybe will get brought into force January 2022, who knows. But they seem to find time to make these minor changes, Mr. Speaker, to the legislation despite ignoring all of the stakeholder groups that came out and spoke loud and clear about their concerns about this legislation a couple of years ago, two or three years ago, when it was originally passed, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

The changes, like I said, relatively minor. There's now a fine, a fine or imprisonment if there's multiple offences. So they've upped the penalty clause, Mr. Speaker.

And then in 17.3, they codify what already exists in terms of common-law tort of trespass to property. Unless I'm wrong, Mr. Speaker, I think the minister just said that they've put this into the statute in the hopes that it will make the tort of trespass more likely to be successful for plaintiffs, Mr. Speaker.

Again, like I said, relatively minor changes here do not address the concerns that we had and we heard from multiple stakeholders about the trespass amendment Act from a few years back. It still hasn't even been brought into force yet.

Mr. Speaker, and again the government loves to talk about the things they're doing for rural crime, but there's nothing, nothing in the Throne Speech again, nothing last budget, very little last budget in terms of addressing the real addictions crisis, Mr. Speaker, and the root causes of crime, root causes of property crime which is largely the rural crime that we're seeing right now, Mr. Speaker. And if they really cared about addressing and bringing those numbers down, Mr. Speaker, they would address the real and serious addictions crisis in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have a lot of colleagues who want to enter into this debate, so to facilitate that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 40.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

**Bill No. 41 — *The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021*
*Loi modificative de 2021 sur la législation***

The Speaker: — I recognize the Justice minister.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my comments, I'll move second reading of *The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021*. This bill amends *The Legislation Act* to maintain consistency with other jurisdictions and to continue the ongoing modernization of Saskatchewan's legislation.

Mr. Speaker, *The Legislation Act* provides the rules for how Saskatchewan's laws are drafted, interpreted, published, and revised. The Act is based on the *Model Interpretation Act* from the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. While not all Canadian jurisdictions have adopted the model Act, they have all similar legislation governing these matters. Mr. Speaker, the Act came into force in 2019, and since then some of the provinces have updated their Acts and several other minor improvements to the Act have been internally identified.

Mr. Speaker, this bill contains several changes to maintain consistency with other jurisdictions, including changes to interpreting how enactments apply to one another, how it would refer to entities that both have French and English names, and how to define commonly used terms.

Mr. Speaker, standard definitions for the terms "criminal code" and "rules of court" will also be added to the Act. Those definitions will now apply in all Saskatchewan Acts without having to be defined each time. The section representing how Acts are cited is being revised to confirm and validate the current practice of courts and practitioners to cite Acts using abbreviations. Mr. Speaker, the amendments also include a provision setting out how to interpret and apply references to an Act once it has been repealed and replaced with a new enactment. The provision is part of the former interpretations Act and is now being carried forward into *The Legislation Act*.

One of the amendments will provide additional powers to permit more comprehensive consequential amendments when several regulations are needed to be amended at once. Currently a separate regulation package is required for each regulation that requires minor consequential changes such as changing a reference to a title in an Act. The new provision will allow for those amendments to instead be grouped together in one package, which will certainly be more efficient.

Mr. Speaker, this series of minor changes will ensure that Saskatchewan's Acts remain consistent as possible with other jurisdictions and that it continues to reflect current best practices respecting the interpretation, drafting, and the revision of Saskatchewan's laws. Mr. Speaker, with those few comments I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 41 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and speak a bit about Bill No. 41. And I appreciate the minister's comments about the outline of this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. There are a lot of important pieces in this legislation like he said, some very important updates to legislation in terms of language used and how definitions should be made.

Mr. Speaker, in particular, there's one section I wanted to flag for one specific person because there is a section in this legislation that deals a little bit with the change in sovereign and what happens when the tragic death of the Queen happens. I feel like even mentioning that will send me straight to the guillotine.

But there is a particular colleague in our office who's very keen about what's going to happen. When this happens, do those who are designated Queen's Counsel, do they automatically become King's Counsel? Is there going to be some website changes that need to happen? Are there going to be, you know, someone out quick with a placard, with a scraper on the placard at some of the courthouses to quickly get the Queen's name off of that?

I'm sure she would be quite upset to hear how many conversations this particular individual in our caucus office wants to have about her untimely demise. But it's always good to see that the ministry is thinking ahead and then making these important changes should that happen, Mr. Speaker. I know that I have a lot of colleagues who are interested in talking about this bill on subsequent days, Mr. Speaker, so to facilitate that, I am prepared to move adjournment on Bill No. 41.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 42 — *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021* (No. 2)

The Speaker: — I recognize the Justice minister.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my comments, I'll move second reading of *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021* (No. 2). I'll be brief, Mr. Speaker.

This bill will make housekeeping changes to numerous pieces of legislation in order to update and modernize their provisions. These include replacing references to the minister of Community Resources and Employment with the Minister of Social Services, removing reference to repealed legislation, correcting section reference errors, implementing gender-neutral language in a number of instances, and making additional housekeeping updates to modernize and standardize language used in legislation.

Mr. Speaker, these changes are all housekeeping in nature and will not have a substantive impact on the provisions of the legislation being amended. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021* (No. 2).

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 42 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and speak about Bill No. 42, *The Statute Law Amendment Act*. Another session, another statute law amendment Act. Often we

get multiple ones in a session. This is the first since the 2020 election, I believe. Oh maybe we had one last time. I can't remember anymore, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure it was just as enthralling as this statute law amendment Act was, though. I can guarantee you that, Mr. Speaker.

Like the minister had said, there's a lot of logistical changes in this bill. They're updating the language of some titles of ministries. They're changing to some gender-neutral language in various legislation, which I think is very important. I think I saw at one point there's legislation where it mentions, instead of the minister, they use "he," Mr. Speaker. So we obviously have to update that for when the current Minister of Justice maybe has to get moved for a female minister of Justice, or maybe in 2024 we'll have a female minister of Justice. You never know, Mr. Speaker. So it's good to see that the ministry is planning ahead for these very crucial things, Mr. Speaker.

There's also some interesting changes to some other legislation, Mr. Speaker: *The Agriculture Administration Act* and *The Global Transportation Hub Authority Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues are very keen to dive into this bill, to take a look at these changes in their respective critic areas and to debate the merits of these changes in this Chamber. To facilitate that discussion, I am prepared to move adjournment on Bill No. 42.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned till tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:11.]

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