



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes

Premier — Hon. Scott Moe

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McLeod, Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)

McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

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Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

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Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Athabasca

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

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Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery is Marie Digney. Marie is a lawyer who was in private practice and has been working since April 1st, 2021 in the office of LCPC [Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel]. Our Law Clerk, Ken Ring, is looking forward to mentoring Marie as she learns the unique role of providing legal advice in the public sector to elected officials.

Marie is no stranger to the Assembly. She was a legislative intern in the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program in 2016. She also worked as a bilingual tour guide here from 2012 to 2015. Marie was called to the bar in 2020; graduated law school 2019 from the University of Saskatchewan with a French common law certificate from the University of Ottawa; also graduated from the U of R [University of Regina] French Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Arts, 2015; grew up in Regina and graduated from Luther College in 2011.

Please join me in welcoming Marie to the Legislative Assembly in her capacity as a parliamentary counsel with the Legislative Assembly.

I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to you, I'd like to introduce some very special people, some very close friends of mine in your gallery. Lou and Linda Van de Vorst are joining us today to observe the introduction of Bill 50.

On January 3rd, 2016 Lou and Linda lost their son Jordan and his wife, Chanda, and their children, Kamryn and Miguire, when an impaired driver tragically took their lives. Since then Lou and Linda are tireless advocates against impaired driving. They received the first MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] Canada Robert M. Solomon Award for Excellence in Public Policy for their advocacy work. They continue to share their story, help with ad campaigns, work checkstops, speak at schools, really just give and give and give of their time to educate people to stop impaired driving.

I had the honour of being the minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] when a number of legislative changes and ad campaigns were put in place to tighten impaired driving rules. These changes along with consultations with families, including Lou and Linda, are why we still have the lowest number of fatalities on record in 2019 and why we keep working harder to lower the numbers even further. Mr. Speaker, I know with the holidays approaching that they'll be busy volunteering their time and efforts that ensure that everyone has a safe holiday season.

When the time comes and I no longer have the honour of sitting in this Chamber, one of if not the biggest honour of my political

life will be that I got to meet Lou and Linda. And that amazing friendship came from an unspeakable tragedy, as I mentioned, and that's a friendship that will last the rest of my life.

Lou and Linda, it is truly an honour to introduce you here today and to thank you for all the work that you do. I'd ask all members of the Assembly to give Lou and Linda the warmest of welcomes and our sincere thanks for all they do for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you and to you, I would like to introduce a young and successful business owner sitting in your gallery today, Ali Stajniak.

Ali is the owner of Podium Executive Club here in Regina, just celebrating their one-year anniversary. And Ali has taken this business, started it in the middle of a pandemic, and has grown it to now having over a dozen employees working for her. They have a fitness facility. You can get a massage. You can get a haircut. Indoor golf. You can get a pizza and a pint. It's really a co-workspace and a great spot for executives and young executives in our city and really around our province to meet at.

It's a dream of hers — she's a fitness trainer by trade — to own her own business and she's doing it right here in Regina in the middle of a pandemic. So I would just like to ask all members to give Ali, one of our new and future business leaders in this province, a warm welcome.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition for a private bill on behalf of petitioners from the Mennonite Union Waisenamt.

The prayer of the petition requests: amend an Act, the Mennonite Union Waisenamt, to amend restrictions on the holding of real estate; amend the power of the corporation; and amend and add other provisions dealing with the governance structure of the corporation.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to amend *An Act to Incorporate the Mennonite Union Waisenamt*, being chapter 39, the *Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1917* accordingly.

And, as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petition is signed by the chief executive officer Cory Regier, chief financial officer Daniel Unruh, and chief investment officer Russell Willems. And I am pleased to present this petition on their behalf. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 101, this petition is referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned Saskatchewan people as it relates to the devastation being caused by the Sask Party government's cuts to SIS, the Saskatchewan income support program, which really represent deep cuts to already inadequate assistance rates within our province.

These cuts are heartless. They lack basic decency and humanity. They defy common sense, Mr. Speaker. Beyond the horrible human costs, these changes, these cuts will cost Saskatchewan's public finances far more in the long run. This government was clearly warned by Saskatchewan people and those that know best and have lived experience, how devastating these cuts would be, these changes would be. But they chose not to listen and they rammed forward.

In so doing they've created a crisis. We have Saskatchewan people that have been pushed out of their homes and into homelessness. We've got people across Saskatchewan that are sleeping in ravines and in parks and in tents at a time where it's freezing. And as a bitter winter approaches, lives are at stake.

The prayer reads as follows:

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition for a private bill on behalf of petitioners from Collège Mathieu. The prayer of the petition requests to amend an Act, *Collège Mathieu, Gravelbourg, Sask., Incorporating*, to clarify the purpose and objectives of the college and to update the Act to reflect its current administrative practices.

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to amend *Collège Mathieu, Gravelbourg, Sask., Incorporating*, being chapter 75 of the *Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1917* accordingly.

And, as in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

The petition is signed by President René A., General Director Francis Kasongo, and Vice-President Roger Gauthier. And I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 101, this petition is referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to fix rural health care and the staffing crisis. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that recruitment and retention of health care professionals is a particular issue in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities, leading to many emergency rooms, acute, lab, and

X-ray service disruptions.

The ongoing pandemic has created burnout and led to early retirements and resignations, which has had rippling effects for smaller cities and towns. Health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies. And at the 2021 SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, over 94 per cent of rural leaders voted to support a resolution acknowledging the nursing and health care worker shortage across Saskatchewan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

This petition is signed by individuals from Sedley, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again today to present a petition on improved access to midwifery services. Mr. Speaker, currently there is no midwifery training program in our province. Establishing a local training program has been identified by the Midwives Association of Saskatchewan as a key component to sustainably expanding midwifery services.

Those who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following points. Midwifery provides a model of care that is individualized, community centred, and cost effective. Wait-lists for midwifery care in Saskatchewan are extensive, and many people who wish to access midwifery services are unable to do so. Midwife-facilitated births amounted to only 2.9 per cent of babies born in 2019, with demand far exceeding the limited supply of midwives in our province.

According to the Canadian Association of Midwives, 53 per cent of people seeking midwifery care in Saskatoon are turned away due to lengthy wait-lists. Expanding midwifery services makes sense for pregnant people and families, and it makes sense for our province's fiscal well-being.

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 a post-secondary midwifery training program in the province.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Regina and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present a petition for a private bill on behalf of petitioners from the United Church of Canada.

The prayer of the petition requests to amend *An Act respecting the Union of certain Churches therein named* to reflect the new governance structure of the United Church of Canada.

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your honourable Assembly may be pleased to amend *An Act respecting the Union of certain Churches therein named*, being chapter 64 of the *Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1924* accordingly.

And, as in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray.

The petition is signed by the general secretary, Reverend Michael Blair, and legal counsels Cynthia Gunn and Kathy McDonald, and I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 101, this petition is referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

[10:15]

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be on my feet this morning to present a petition calling for this government to stop the closure at Broadview Union Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I was out yesterday in rural Saskatchewan, speaking with rural health care workers, citizens of Indian Head, Milestone, Moosomin, listening to their concerns. And the refrain was the same everywhere that we went. They're disappointed. They're disappointed in this government's handling of the pandemic, and the disappointment goes back a long way, as they recognize the way that this government has let down and betrayed our valued health care workers in rural areas.

The undersigned residents who bring this forward want to make a few things known to this Assembly. They would like us to note that according to the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority], it is an inability to provide reliable and consistent physician services in Broadview. They would like us to note that the emergency department, along with acute care services, has been regularly closed for extended periods of time. They want us to know that along the busy Trans-Canada Highway, a highway that many of us travel, the Broadview Union Hospital provides crucial emergency services in case of motor vehicle accidents. They would also like us to know that several rural communities — not just Broadview but many communities in that area — rely on this hospital for health care services, and that the hospital is a key component to the economic vitality of the whole region.

I'll read the prayer, 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 stop closing the emergency department and acute care services at Broadview Union Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by residents of Whitewood, Grenfell, and Broadview. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour Recipients

Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today we recognize and thank Saskatchewan's dedicated men and women serving in Canada's Armed Forces, through the Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour. Mr. Speaker, this annual scholarship provides a one-time award of \$5,000 to returning Canadian Armed Forces members as well as the spouses and children of fallen members.

Currently Saskatchewan is only one of two provinces to offer this type of scholarship. And, Mr. Speaker, this is just a small token of our gratitude and respect for the brave men and women who protect our country. And since its inception in 2009, 248 scholarships have been awarded, totalling over \$1.2 million.

This year we celebrate 14 recipients, including 11 Canadian Armed Forces members and three family members to support their pursuit of post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the following recipients of this year's Scholarship of Honour: Landon Albert; Eric Berkelaar; Kenneth Bridges; Austin Knittel; Sebastien Lepage; Kurt Luchia; Kimberly MacLean; Dyllan Miller; Robin Mowat; Wenshuang Nie; Wade Sapara; Nicole Collins, child of Antone Collins; Jessalyn Scarrett, child of Jayson Douglas Bickerton; and Danielle Valiquette, spouse of Paul Valiquette.

I would like to ask all members to join me in showing our appreciation for the contributions and sacrifice the recipients have made to our country and wish them the best of luck in their post-secondary studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognizing Service in the Canadian Armed Forces

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to remember and recognize the service of our veterans and those currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. Every one of these members, past and present, has made sacrifices for us to protect our freedoms and the democracy of our great country. Saskatchewan has a long and proud history of service to our nation. Individuals from all corners of our province have served courageously in every branch of the Canadian Armed Forces.

As a retired captain in the Cadet Instructors Cadre, I am fortunate to have spent a great deal of time participating in Remembrance Day services over the years. Everyone has a connection to someone who has served. This year, I specifically think of those serving on the front lines in Saskatchewan's Operation Laser, currently saving lives by providing nursing and aeromedical support throughout the fourth wave of the pandemic.

While we can't join together in Saskatoon on November 11th to honour the service of those past and present, let us all take time to reflect in our own way. Mr. Speaker, it is with that in mind that I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in extending our thanks and respect to those that serve, have served, and those

we've lost. May we never forget them. May we continue to strive for peace. Lest we forget.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Remembrance Day

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the mission in Afghanistan and the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Hong Kong. This Remembrance Day, Canadians everywhere will stop to reflect on these conflicts and many other battles of the past. These were battles in which young Canadians fought, not only for our security and freedom but for the freedom and security of those abroad.

Mr. Speaker, the contributions of these women and men from Saskatchewan, from Canada and abroad, do not go unnoticed or unappreciated. We remember their service, as well as those who continue to serve today.

For as long as Canada has existed as a country, Canadians have stood to defend it, and in doing so, Mr. Speaker, many of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice. We remember their sacrifice. We remember the parents who have lost a child, the spouse who has lost a partner, the child who has lost a parent. This is a sacrifice we need to remember not just on November 11th but every single day. No greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends, Mr. Speaker.

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

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

University of Saskatchewan Convocation

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, today the 2021 fall convocation is taking place virtually to celebrate the hundreds of new graduates from the University of Saskatchewan. As both the member for Saskatoon University and the official opposition critic for Advanced Education, I would like to take this opportunity to commend all graduates and award recipients, as well as the honorary degree recipients, Drs. David Mulder and Wilfred Keller.

A total of 926 University of Saskatchewan students will graduate with 939 degrees, certificates, and diplomas. These new graduates will join an impressive network of nearly 165,000 alumni, some who are in this Chamber with me today.

Mr. Speaker, the pandemic has presented significant challenges for post-secondary students in our province. For many the sudden and prolonged shift to remote learning has been isolating and stressful. For the majority of the pandemic, on-campus facilities and services have been limited or completely unavailable, further contributing to the barriers students have had to face. Students have also lost jobs and income during the pandemic, in some cases experiencing significant financial hardship while navigating their studies. The perseverance and commitment

shown by those graduating, particularly during such a time of upheaval, is truly outstanding, Mr. Speaker.

I would ask all members to join me in applauding the University of Saskatchewan's class of 2021, and send well wishes to all those recognized at convocation today.

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

Saskatchewan Veteran Service Club Support Program

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Remembrance Day we honour our veterans and keep the memories of our fallen heroes alive. Our government has made significant strides providing support for veterans, their families, and communities through the veteran service club support program. Introduced in '19-20, the Saskatchewan veteran service club support program provides grants for improvement projects, facility repairs, upgrades, special events, programs, and activities to engage the community.

In the first two intake periods for '20-21 and '22, a total of 77 registered non-profit military service clubs, Legion branches, and Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans units based in Saskatchewan received funding grants in excess of \$1.2 million.

Mr. Speaker, a third intake program was just opened on a first-come, first-served basis until March 31st, 2022. The program is administered by the Royal Canadian Legion Saskatchewan Command who also sits on the education committee with the Saskatchewan ANAVETS [Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans in Canada] and the Government of Saskatchewan. The third intake will be subject to a maximum annual amount per club for the '21-22 program of \$25,000. Registered non-profit veteran service clubs based in Saskatchewan are eligible to apply for these grants.

Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the Saskatchewan Command and ANAVETS for their tireless work on behalf of our province's veterans, their families, and our communities. Thank you.

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

Montgomery Place, a Unique Saskatoon Neighbourhood

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since 1946 Montgomery Place has been a home for returning veterans of World War II and the Korean War. In 2021, Mr. Speaker, the neighbourhood celebrates their 75th anniversary. Named after Field Marshal the 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, it was created by the federal government as part of the *Veterans' Land Act* settlement plan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to mention the names of three of our veterans, two of which still reside in Montgomery: Bill Schmidt, who served in Burma; Dorothy Harder, also known as Robbie, who worked in supply depots; and Bob Atkinson, living in a retirement home.

Street markers pay respect to the battle sites, military personnel,

a bomber, and a destroyer of the Second World War. In 1989 a memorial was erected by veterans in Montgomery Park to recognize and honour the contributions of residents to the war. In 2016 Montgomery Place was designated a national historic site, a designation that salutes the unique history of the area. In 2020 Montgomery Place received a Municipal Heritage Award.

Mr. Speaker, as a new resident of Montgomery, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the veterans and residents of Montgomery Place who make this community a special and unique place. Without their efforts, Mr. Speaker, this would not be possible. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Recognizing Contributions of Canadian Armed Forces

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to read excerpts from a British, from a British newspaper article I received last year. The article is about our Canadian Armed Forces. The article begins:

As always, Canada will bury its dead; and as always, the world will forget its sacrifice. Just as the world does always, they forget nearly everything Canada does. It seems that Canada's historic mission is to come to the selfless aid of both its friends and of complete strangers, and then once the crisis is over, to be well and truly ignored.

Canada's contribution to the cause of freedom in two world wars was perhaps the greatest of any democracy. Almost 10 per cent of Canada's entire population of 7 million served in the Armed Forces during the First World War, and nearly 60,000 died.

The great Allied victories of 1918 were spearheaded by Canadian troops, perhaps the most capable soldiers in the entire British order of battle. The Canadians proudly say of themselves, and are unheard by anyone else, that 1 per cent of the world's population has provided 10 per cent of the world's peacekeeping force.

Canadian soldiers in the past half-century have been the greatest peacekeepers on earth.

We will remember them. 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. As we head into Remembrance Day, all of the members' statements talked about the service of our military and how important that has been. But not one from this government has mentioned the military service right now in Saskatchewan. The Premier has yet to thank the military. Why is he showing them this level of disrespect for service that his inaction has forced them to take?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

[10:30]

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is just not correct. I have, multiple times out in the rotunda, Mr. Speaker, I have thanked the federal government for them providing a number of professionals that are helping in our ICUs [intensive care unit] and for some air transport that they provided. I believe we have 12 professionals that are working in our ICU departments here in the province. They're added to I believe about 350, 400 of Saskatchewan's staff that are working hard — some of them redeployed from other areas in our ICUs here in the province, Mr. Speaker — to provide the care that's required in our hospitals, Mr. Speaker, the care, the expanded care that has been required due to the inordinate number of COVID patients that we've had in ICU, and really the inordinate number of those that have been unvaccinated, Mr. Speaker.

I've said in the rotunda, a number of times in this House . . . If you look at October's numbers, Mr. Speaker, I believe we had 98 people that were admitted into ICU in Saskatchewan. Thirteen of those were vaccinated; the rest were not vaccinated, Mr. Speaker. And that is a real testament to the effectiveness of these vaccines that are available and have been available for a period of time in Saskatchewan.

I believe we have 350,000 of those vaccines that are waiting on shelves, Mr. Speaker, waiting for folks to make that decision to go out and get their first shot, get their second shot. They're effective in ensuring that you do not experience the severe outcomes of COVID, Mr. Speaker, and they're also effective in driving our numbers down. We've seen over 180,000 vaccines be delivered since we introduced the proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy. It's helping drive our numbers down. And to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, again through you I say, thank you.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunate that the Premier would have to be forced to thank the military for this exceptional and important service at this crucial time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, recently we heard the Premier and the Health minister say something that I thought was quite offensive to those who have been working hard providing modelling and advice. The Health minister said that if we'd followed that expert and accurate modelling, that we would have extreme restrictions all the time. That's what he said.

Now in August, that modelling showed that if we had a simple mask mandate, simply wore these masks we're all wearing today, that we would have cut case counts in half — including the hospitalizations and deaths, in half.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: in the words of Dr. Susan Shaw, does he think wearing a mask is extreme?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to allow on the floor of this Assembly for the Leader of the Opposition to politicize Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day is a time for all of us across this province and across this nation,

Mr. Speaker, to remember those that have fought for our freedoms and fought, quite frankly, for our ability to come into this Assembly and have debates, Mr. Speaker. And we will not be politicizing Remembrance Day.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to modelling and ultimately the actions that this government did take in September, yes, the Minister of Health has said numerous times that modelling is but one tool that the government, the chief medical health officer, utilized, Mr. Speaker, in making their determination, Mr. Speaker, of which we did in the middle of September. We moved forward with a public health measure to mandate indoor masking in this province that is still in effect today, Mr. Speaker. We moved forward with a proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy as well as a recommendation around the gathering sizes, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

Mr. Speaker, those measures have proven to be effective. Our seven-day case count is down now, over 70 per cent. Our hospitalizations are dropping. And that is due, Mr. Speaker, to the effort that Saskatchewan people have made, and again through you, Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to each and every one of them.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again shocking, shocking to hear this late admission that this support from the military has been so helpful and so important, but no admission, no admission that it was never required if this Premier had taken action, if this Premier had listened to the modelling that was put in front of him — this modelling that the Health minister and the Premier have disparaged, the experts that they have disparaged.

Let's listen to one of those experts. Listen up for a moment here. Dr. Nate Osgood, when he heard what the Health minister had to say about the modelling he said, and I quote, "That again is balderdash. It's rubbish. It's untrue and it does a disservice to the scientific evidence that was captured there and that guides many jurisdictions." Why did the Premier choose to ignore the experts, and who was he listening to instead?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition needs to keep up with what I have been saying over the course of the last number of weeks. We did listen to the experts, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have a mandatory masking policy in place. That's why we have a proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy in place, Mr. Speaker. That is why — with what Saskatchewan people have done in adhering to the measures that are in place, adhering to the measures that are in place as well as the recommendations that Dr. Shahab, our chief medical health officer, has made, Mr. Speaker — we are seeing our case counts in this province drop by over 70 per cent since our peak.

Hospitalizations are down, Mr. Speaker. Our ICUs thankfully are starting to drop here in the province, Mr. Speaker. That is the effectiveness of the measures that we have in place here in the province, Mr. Speaker. But that is only part of our success. The real, the real part of the success, the part that matters, Mr. Speaker, is that Saskatchewan people have been adhering to not

only the public health measures that are in place, but they are adhering to the recommendations that are there as well. And for that, Mr. Speaker, I thank each and every one of them.

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

Mr. Meili: — The highest death rate in the entire country, and he's trying to spin it as though it were good news. Dr. Shahab, he mentioned Dr. Shahab. On August 28th Dr. Shahab said that a mask mandate and vaccine requirements were his professional recommendations, his technical recommendations, and yet the Premier refused to implement those measures. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Shahab, Dr. Shaw, Dr. Osgood, these are the experts he should be listening to. He ignored them. Who was he listening to instead?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, in the middle of September we moved on a number of those recommendations, Mr. Speaker — some as public health orders, some as recommendations for the people of the province — and they are having an impact on our situation today. Mr. Speaker, what we didn't move on was there was some recommendations, yes, in a letter that we received from medical health officers from across this province that were going to force vaccines on students, Mr. Speaker, in order for them to attend school.

The Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite, the NDP [New Democratic Party] have adopted that as their policy, Mr. Speaker. They've also adopted the recommendation that if you're too young to receive a vaccine that they would force the vaccine on all of your family members, your household, Mr. Speaker, in order for you to attend school. That's the NDP's policy. The government did not move on that recommendation, Mr. Speaker. We have not moved on that recommendation. This is where Saskatchewan people are going to see a marked difference between the policy of the government and the policy of the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, it is beyond embarrassing. At a time when we're waiting, when we're waiting for the vaccine to be available for kids from 5 to 12 that this Premier, his Minister of Education, his Minister of Health are trying to ramp up hesitancy, trying to make parents and families afraid of the vaccine. That's what we see happening right now.

Mr. Speaker, we're joined today by one of the people who is suffering the results of this Premier's inaction, the results of his refusal to listen to experts. In your gallery is Jessica Edie. Jessica Edie lives in Prince Albert where she's studying correctional studies. She's 22 years old. Jessica Edie's been waiting for a surgery, as so many are because of this Premier's fourth-wave health care lockdown. She's waiting for that surgery and doesn't know when she's going to get it.

That surgery was cancelled because of his choices. Does the Premier think it's fair that she has to wait with such uncertainty with the risk of losing her leg if she doesn't get the surgery? Does he think that's fair that she has to wait just because he put his politics ahead of her health?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. And I'd just like to welcome . . . Sorry, it was Jessica? Thank you very much for coming to your Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said before in this Assembly, as I've said outside this Assembly, these were very challenging choices. We hope that Jessica can get that surgery done as soon as possible. And it's a clinical decision where she's prioritized in the queue, Mr. Speaker.

We're making sure that we have brought 50 per cent of the people that were reallocated because of the influx of COVID-19 — again people that are mostly unvaccinated, Mr. Speaker — we are moving them back to their original positions. That's happening today, Mr. Speaker, 50 per cent. Another 25 per cent is going to happen next week, and then we're going to have 90 per cent of them done by . . . so we can resume these surgeries. But, Mr. Speaker, it was absolutely critical that we move those people into the positions because we had an influx of unvaccinated people, Mr. Speaker.

But as the Premier outlined, what we are doing is working, Mr. Speaker. Our numbers are down. Our vaccination rates are up. I don't know why the opposition is so disappointed that the action that we took in September is working, Mr. Speaker. Maybe they can explain why they feel that this is not going forward. This is absolutely what Dr. Shahab has recommended, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to listen to that. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — The lowest vaccination rate in the entire country because this government took the summer off. The highest COVID death rate in the country because this government took the summer off. And thousands of people waiting for care. Jessica waiting for care. Jessica, who is waiting for a CT [computerized tomography] scan that she can't get for compartment syndrome testing that she can't get. Jessica, who had her surgery cancelled four days after it was booked because of the choices of this government.

Now she wrote to the Health minister a few months ago. She got a brush-off letter. She wrote to the Premier, got no response at all. To the Premier: does he think it's fair that people have to wait too long for care because he waited too long to act?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thanks again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm really hopeful that she can get that surgery done right away. But that's why we're moving people back, Mr. Speaker. That's why I've met with the surgeons. That's why I've met with the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Mr. Speaker, is to be able to talk to them about what our plan is. We did resume surgeries. Eighty-eight per cent of the planned surgeries this year were done, Mr. Speaker. When we were able to accelerate that through May and September, we were able to get up to 95 per cent of those surgeries done.

Now that things are calming down in our hospital, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we accelerate the surgeries and the

programs that were paused, not cancelled. Mr. Speaker, we will get those done as soon as we possibly can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, Jessica Edie wrote to the Premier. No answer. Jessica Bailey wrote to the Premier. No answer. Why do patients, why do people who are sick and struggling, have to come into this House before they will get any response from this Premier? Why does he have to be dragged kicking and screaming, and shamed into doing his job? Why doesn't he answer in the first place?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, as I'm sure the member doesn't understand this, but when a letter comes in jointly to the Premier and a minister, Mr. Speaker, the minister responds to that because it's their file, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier is copied on everything. Maybe we can have a correspondence seminar for them, Mr. Speaker, but this is how things happen, Mr. Speaker, is that I respond to that.

And I read every one of those letters, Mr. Speaker, that come in. And I can tell you those are hundreds of letters that come in supporting what the government is doing but also asking for some of the challenges that they're receiving in their personal health care, Mr. Speaker. We continue to do this. I read every one. My colleague, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, reads every one of those letters that come in, Mr. Speaker, to be able to understand how we can best adapt our restart program on our surgical side of things to be able to make sure that we're meeting the needs out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Rural Health Care

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, we see on display again the incredible arrogance that is constantly on display from the Sask Party — from ministers, from MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who don't answer their phones, who don't answer letters, and who had nothing to say while this Premier and this Health minister led us into the worst and deadliest fourth wave in the entire country, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that's happening everywhere. It's happening in rural Saskatchewan. Yesterday the member for Eastview and I, we were in Indian Head. We were in Broadview. We were in Kipling. We were in Montmartre. And we heard from health care workers. We heard from health care workers about the inability to access emergency services, the lack of ambulance services, and the tragic stories of long-term care workers working 16-hour days but still unable to give seniors the dignified care they deserve, because this government is not staffing up those facilities.

[10:45]

Does the Premier think it's fair, as rural facilities have been hit harder, closed down, or having to redeploy more of their staff, does he think it's fair that rural residents are having to pay the

cost of his failure to prevent the fourth wave?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, we know that there are several rural service disruptions. Mr. Speaker, we are aware that there are a number of service disruptions in rural Saskatchewan, temporary service disruptions, in this province. And we are working very closely with the community leaders to try to resolve those issues.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have been working very closely with the MLA for Moosomin, who's been a strong advocate for his community. We've had numerous conversations and meetings with community leaders over the past several months to get these rural facilities staffed up, Mr. Speaker. And we're working very closely through the ministry and the SHA to do that. In a number of these instances, Mr. Speaker, we have plans in place to resume services as quickly as we can, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Wolseley, Canora, Preeceville, Wilkie, Lanigan, Climax — they all have Sask Party MLAs but none of them have open emergency rooms. This Premier closed 13 hospitals in the middle of a pandemic. Why is this Premier taking rural Saskatchewan people for granted? Why is he leaving rural residents without health care when it's so key?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite, the member for Meewasin, listed a number of communities. I don't think, Mr. Speaker, I have enough time to list the 52 communities where rural hospitals were closed by the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the government has built nine community and regional hospitals across this province since 2007, 15 long-term care facilities, more long-term care facilities that are in the process of being built in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have made a concerted effort to support health care in rural Saskatchewan.

We have added 40 seats to the College of Medicine. We've provided incentives for doctors to practise in rural Saskatchewan. Created a regional rural locum hub program for rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Created the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program which has welcomed over 200 physicians to this province, nearly 80 per cent of which are working in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Added 300 more RN [registered nurse] and RPN [registered practical nurse] training seats. Doubled the number of nurse practitioner training seats.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but this government's commitment to rural Saskatchewan should not be questioned.

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

Support for Education during COVID-19 Pandemic

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, people are simply looking for health care and instead they get tired rhetoric, lines, and spin from that government every time.

Mr. Speaker, this year's enrolment numbers are in for our schools. Weeks ago we asked the Education minister to commit to not clawing back funding from any school division in the middle of a pandemic. He refused to do that. Mr. Speaker, I ask him today: will he commit to not clawing back any funding from school divisions in this province in the middle of a pandemic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we're working with school divisions as we have their enrolment numbers and what that means for the school year. We know that school divisions had \$20 million of the COVID contingency fund that was to be spent in this school year, Mr. Speaker. As well, we know that \$15 million of what they were to spend last year went unspent, so that is added to the \$20 million, so they have \$35 million in additional funding for this year, Mr. Speaker. So we haven't made a decision when it comes to the enrolment.

But I would note, Mr. Speaker, that it's interesting to hear in this place from members opposite when it comes to recommendations from public health officials, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite to be criticizing the government for not accepting all the recommendations, and they seemingly now are walking away from accepting all those same recommendations. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the gaslighting that we are seeing in this House is unbelievable.

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

Ms. Beck: — I guess that sounds like a no, Mr. Speaker.

This government decided to treat the school year like any other, as if we were not in the predicted fourth wave of a pandemic. It's absolute madness, and we see the consequences of that choice now. Physician town hall slides from last week show that outbreak rates in schools are four times any other setting in the province — 156 schools have had outbreaks with more than 38,000 students impacted. Three children under 12 have died in our province.

We haven't heard anything from that minister since August when he got up and suggested that we don't need a mask mandate. Will the minister recognize that his business-as-usual approach has failed? And what, Mr. Speaker, is his plan to fix it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we're doing is working with school divisions across this province to ensure that they have the resources that they need, Mr. Speaker. That's why they have \$35.9 million. 11.9 million is going to be spent for interventions for grade 1 students who missed kindergarten; seven and a half million to support mental health; 6.1 million for sanitation; 3.4 million for

PPE [personal protective equipment]; and \$7 million to engage families and students who experienced attendance issues last year so that they can get up to speed and fill in the gaps that they had missed, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of our back-to-school plan, we listened to the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] and the school divisions around this province who wanted that flexibility, Mr. Speaker. And I'll quote Shawn Davidson: "That provincial-level guidance is there and it wasn't particularly strong and restrictive for this return to school in September, and that's exactly what we wanted," Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our schools are doing a great job. Our teachers and our administrators and all the staff in our schools are doing a great job of keeping students in class and safe in the midst of a global pandemic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I will repeat: four times the COVID outbreaks of any other setting currently. And that minister has nothing but rhetoric and lines to offer to those parents.

In fact all we've seen from this minister is a ramping up of rhetoric at the expense of kids' safety, and again we see it today. We see the Health minister heckling from his seat when we're talking about children dying in this province. Mr. Speaker, we don't need games. We don't need wedge and spin. Every day, every day — and we heard it here again today — this government claims that the way out of this pandemic is through vaccinations. But instead of creating an effective plan to address lower vaccination rates and get ready for the rollout for those children aged 5 to 11, we see games, dangerous games, and spin.

Maybe I need to ask this question, Mr. Speaker: does the minister actually support vaccinations for kids? And if so, what is his plan to get that necessary protection out as soon as possible? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as has been said time and time again from members on this side of the House, the way out of this pandemic is vaccinations. Vaccinations, vaccinations, vaccinations, Mr. Speaker. And that is why the SHA and the Ministry of Health and Dr. Shahab and all of those officials are working very hard to ensure that we have a proper rollout when it comes to being able to immunize children under the age of 11, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of wedge and spin, it was the members opposite who tried to move an emergency motion on the very first day of the sitting of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. They were trying to wedge. They were trying to spin, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll say this: if all I have is rhetoric and lines for school divisions, then I guess they don't need the \$35.9 million, Mr. Speaker. I guess they don't need that money. But they do, and that's why we are providing it, and that's why we will continue to provide support for school divisions right across this province.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 48 — *The Public Health (Safe Access to Hospitals) Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 48, *The Public Health (Safe Access to Hospitals) Amendment Act, 2021* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 48 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 Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 49 — *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Sask Gaming.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 49, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2021* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Sask Gaming that Bill No. 49 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 Sask Gaming.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 50 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SGI.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 50, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2021* be now

introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of SGI that Bill No. 50 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 SGI.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 45 — *The Health Shared Services Saskatchewan (3sHealth) Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill 45, *The Health Shared Services Saskatchewan (3sHealth) Act*. Mr. Speaker, this Act provides much-needed updates to legislation for 3sHealth [Health Shared Services Saskatchewan]. 3sHealth is a health system partner agency that delivers a number of shared services across the health care sector, including payroll benefits administration, shared contracting and procurement, and third-party contract to deliver a provincial linen service to Saskatchewan Health Authority, Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, and other health care organizations.

Mr. Speaker, 3sHealth is known to be collaborative and responsive. They have demonstrated the effectiveness through this pandemic by redeploying employees to help the Ministry of Health and SHA in critical areas of need such as urgent PPE procurement.

After amalgamating and restructuring health care organizations over the past few years including the SHA in 2017, 3sHealth now only has two voting members — the SHA and the SCA [Saskatchewan Cancer Agency]. The SHA receives 46 of 48 votes which creates an imbalance and must be addressed. Mr. Speaker, accounting rules mean that 3sHealth currently functions as a subsidiary of the SHA. The provincial health Act, the PHA Act [*The Provincial Health Authority Act*] does not allow the SHA to have subsidiaries. Mr. Speaker, this Act is required to properly authorize the relationship between the Ministry of Health, the SHA, and 3sHealth.

Mr. Speaker, this Act would transfer responsibility and accountability to the Ministry of Health and therefore the Legislative Assembly. 3sHealth's role in employee benefits plans or trusts will continue to involve legal-trust relationships,

independent of government, Mr. Speaker, to help address potential health-sector unions' concerns. Mr. Speaker, this Act will begin to align and update 3sHealth's mandate, governance, and structure and accountability to government.

Mr. Speaker, this draft legislation will not impact the public. 3sHealth will continue to operate as a not-for-profit corporation that is publicly funded by the health system. 3sHealth will become a public agency subject to *The Financial Administration Act, 1993*. Mr. Speaker, 3sHealth's financial statements will be listed as a separate government reporting entry in the provincial Public Accounts, which is more appropriate. There will be no impact to the government's financial position.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Health Shared Services Saskatchewan (3sHealth) Act*. Thank you.

[11:00]

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to rise and enter into this discussion around this legislation. I appreciate the minister's comments about the changes that are in this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, 3sHealth has been around for a while now, but as the minister said, there is some updates that are needed to the legislation. As indicated, some of these are rather what would be described as housekeeping I believe, Mr. Speaker. But there are a few other pieces that I think should be talked about as well.

I think what's important in the legislation here is a discussion around the stated purposes of 3sHealth as indicated in section 2-4. And they should really be looked at carefully, Mr. Speaker. In particular it states that the purposes of 3sHealth are to:

offer and provide shared and other services to the health sector and other prescribed sectors;

... [as well as creating] enhanced value to the health sector and improve the safety, service quality and cost effectiveness of the health sector;

promote improved standards in the health sector;

collaborate with the minister with a view to correlating the work and aims of the health sector; and

conduct and coordinate courses of instruction in health care administration.

The legislation moves further to talk about what the corporation or 3sHealth is allowed to do to further those stated objectives. In particular, in subsection (2)(a) the corporation is allowed to "establish, operate, administer, support or manage," and I want to highlight these in particular, "procurement programs; standards programs; promotional programs; [as well as] training programs," Mr. Speaker.

3sHealth does a number of important things, as mentioned by the

minister. In particular during the pandemic there was a redeployment to focus on procuring PPE for the health care sector. I think any sort of centralization of things that can be centralized could potentially be beneficial for the health care system. While at the same time, we need to make sure that we're watching this government who has overseen the worst COVID death rates in the country, the highest COVID numbers during the fourth wave, the deadliest fourth wave in the country, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time the lowest vaccination rates in the country.

We've seen the minister a few times talk about looking toward privatization as a solution to some of the pressures we're seeing in our health care system, directly a result of this government's failure to handle the fourth wave appropriately, to act on recommendations from officials in a timely manner, Mr. Speaker. So we're watching the government very closely to ensure that privatization of our health care system is watched closely, that flags are raised at a time when we see concerning things happening.

So I expect that those in the public will be interested in this legislation, and the critic will be very interested in this legislation. And we're always interested in hearing from stakeholders about any concerns they may have with respect to this legislation moving forward.

In order to facilitate that work, Mr. Speaker, and allow some of my colleagues to also have further conversations with respect to this bill, I am prepared to move adjournment at this time on Bill No. 45.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 46 — *The Legal Aid Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I will be moving second reading of *The Legal Aid Amendment Act, 2021*.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends *The Legal Aid Act* to provide the Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission with more authority in determining who can sit on the panel of lawyers who provide legal aid in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to supporting the Legal Aid Commission and its role of providing legal services for persons who are financially unable to pursue or defend their legal rights in civil or criminal matters. *The Legal Aid Act* provides for a legal aid panel that's made up of both staff lawyers who are employees of the commission and private bar lawyers who are paid under a tariff of fees. The Act currently states that a member of the legal aid panel can be removed for just cause.

Mr. Speaker, this just-cause wording was considered in a recent

Court of Appeal decision. The Court of Appeal ultimately held that because the Act limits the reasons for removal to just cause, the commission cannot remove a lawyer from the panel for any other reason. This limitation reduces the ability of the commission to effectively manage the panel membership and means that it's not possible to remove some members who should no longer be on the panel for various reasons, including change of employment.

Mr. Speaker, at the request of the Legal Aid Commission, these amendments will clarify the panel provisions in the Act and make it clear how a lawyer can withdraw or be removed from the panel. The Act will now explicitly confirm that an employee who leaves the commission does not automatically continue as a panel member. The lawyer would be eligible to reapply for admission as a private bar member of the panel, but his or her membership on the panel would not automatically continue.

The amendments will also give the commission specific powers to make terms and conditions respecting the appointment and removal of lawyers from the panel. Examples of other reasons for removal would include the departure of a solicitor from Saskatchewan or the movement of a solicitor to a new position or practice area. The amendments will also confirm that a lawyer who ceases to be authorized to practise law in Saskatchewan will cease to be a member of the panel.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, the amendments will revise the process for a legal aid lawyer to withdraw from a file. Before withdrawing, the lawyer will now need to make an application to the CEO [chief executive officer] or designate. The amendments will also include some minor housekeeping updates.

Mr. Speaker, the lawyers on the legal aid panel provide a valuable service to the people of this province who would not otherwise be able to obtain legal services. These modifications to the Act will ensure that the legal aid system in Saskatchewan will continue to serve its clients effectively and efficiently. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Legal Aid Amendment Act, 2021*.

The Speaker: — It is being moved that the Bill No. 46 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 discussion around Bill No. 46. I appreciate the minister's remarks about the changes with respect to this legislation.

I just want to speak for a quick moment about the massive importance of Legal Aid in the justice system and the work that they do, the work that both the staff lawyers do of Legal Aid as well as management and those who are panel lawyers, private bar panel lawyers — or, as we call them, on the farm-out list, Mr. Speaker — how important they are in maintaining the justice system as it is, Mr. Speaker.

Legal aid is crucial in terms of providing a full service representation in this province to individuals who are of incredibly limited means, Mr. Speaker. The need for legal aid seems to grow and grow. Unfortunately, it hasn't been met with a corresponding influx in their funding. And as a result we see

more and more individuals falling through the cracks in the justice system, trying to do their best in representing themselves, you know, re-mortgaging their homes if they have a home to be able to afford legal counsel, Mr. Speaker.

There's a real access-to-justice crisis in our province, and across the country I will say to be fair, Mr. Speaker. And I think not enough attention and respect is paid to Legal Aid and those who work for Legal Aid. So I wanted to take the time to just thank them for their work, their tireless advocacy for their clients, and also their tireless advocacy for enhancing and improving the justice system in Saskatchewan.

I also want to welcome Legal Aid's new CEO, Jayne Mallin, who recently was appointed that role, Mr. Speaker. She comes to us from Ontario — decades of service, working at Legal Aid there in various capacities. I believe she started in more of a front-line role and then moved on to more management positions. Mr. Speaker, from all accounts she's very passionate about the work she does. She's very passionate about advocating for the importance of legal aid, speaking to the needs of the clients, and providing the best service possible with the very limited means that they have, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the bill, as the minister mentioned, this legislation will allow, empower the Legal Aid Commission to better be able to deal with their panel of lawyers. Mr. Speaker, I wasn't aware that they were having this problem before. I wasn't aware of the Court of Appeal decision that spoke about the just-cause-removal piece, Mr. Speaker. It makes sense to me to have the Legal Aid Commission have that sort of power to be able to deal with their roster of lawyers.

I know from about a decade or so ago the list of folks who were on the panel were sometimes a bit outdated, because it was difficult to add or remove individuals from that roster. Everyone would sort of know who was still in town and who wasn't. But the commission should be able to be empowered to update that list as needed, Mr. Speaker.

Another important provision I think needs to be highlighted in this legislation is section 18, which requires a lawyer who wishes to withdraw their services from a client to make an application to the CEO prior to withdrawing, Mr. Speaker. I'll be interested to see what this means once, you know, boots are on the ground, so to speak, in terms of whether there has been a problem with quick withdrawals of services and what this might mean as well for the health of the panel, if this might cause some individuals to decide they don't wish to be a part of the panel. Mr. Speaker, there's just some real-level practical implications that I'm interested in learning a little bit more about, Mr. Speaker, that I think we'll be quite keen to hear from officials on.

Mr. Speaker, like I said, legal aid is incredibly important. This government needs to be doing a much better job in terms of ensuring that it's adequately funded, ensuring that those who are in our justice system, whether they're dealing with a criminal law, family law, or a child apprehension matter, have access to legal counsel. We of course are always pushing for the need for the expansion of legal aid: ensure that legal aid is better funded, ensure that more people qualify for legal aid than do now.

I think people are always quite surprised when they've

encountered a legal question, to find out that they don't actually qualify for legal aid. Essentially you have to be on social assistance to be able to qualify. Anything else, anything more than that . . . If you're working at Tim Hortons and you got a couple kids, you're working minimum wage, you think that you qualify for legal aid services. You don't actually, because the bar, the threshold is in fact that low. You're expected to retain, you know, come up with 5 or \$10,000 for a retainer to be able to hire counsel.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are a lot of other colleagues who are interested in this legislation. I'm curious to hear from any stakeholders and members of the public who might have feedback on this legislation. And in order to facilitate that work, I am prepared to move adjournment on Bill No. 46.

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. 47 — *The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move the second reading of Bill 47, *The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act*. This bill will modernize the operation and management of Saskatchewan highways. The amendments align with the government's plans to promote economic growth and create jobs.

Removing regulatory burdens and costs like unnecessary licence fees for auto wreckers better supports our Saskatchewan businesses and citizens. We have also introduced clearer guidelines around new roadside developments to improve both safety and growth opportunities in our province. This bill will ensure Saskatchewan highways continue to meet the needs of travellers, shippers, local governments, and the province as a whole.

[11:15]

Over a period of several months our stakeholders and partners have had the chance to review proposals and suggest improvements. One important example was to ensure we maintained the collection of vehicle identification numbers to help prevent the trade of stolen vehicles. We also clarified authority for municipalities to establish official signs and enforce speeding limits on provincial roadways. I want to thank our stakeholders for their participation and input to strengthen these changes.

I'd like to list a few of the changes we are proposing. The first is the freedom-of-passage provision which requires municipalities to get consent from the province before restricting or closing access to a public highway. The second gives the province the right to clear trees and other obstructions to improve safety at intersections. The authority will be used only if discussions with the landowners have reached an impasse.

The third important amendment will enhance the government's authority to control development around intersections to ensure public safety. The fourth key amendment will enable commercial vehicle enforcement through automated technology, such as weigh in motion, once it is reliable and readily available. The final amendment will introduce the authority to create monetary fines for some violations of the Act. Fines can more quickly encourage compliance while reducing the need for costly and time-consuming court processes.

Mr. Speaker, these changes will ensure a modern framework for the safe movement of people, goods, and services. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 47, *The Highways and Transportation Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 47 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. I know the Government House Leader doesn't want to hear my remarks on this bill, but it's very . . . I've got great, well-prepared remarks that I really want to give, so I appreciate that you recognized me standing, Mr. Speaker, and gave me this opportunity to speak in this Chamber. That means a lot to me.

Mr. Speaker, first I want to start by thanking the Minister of Highways for providing the commentary and opening. It's always a pleasure to see him stand up in the Chamber and give some remarks. It's an even bigger pleasure when he walks into the legislature with baking, preferably butter tarts. I'm not sure why they haven't made their way to my desk in recent months, but I thought I would provide this opportunity to, you know, give him a chance to rectify his ways. It seems like he's straying from, you know, the good man he once was, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has a variety of changes that I know the critic is going to be very interested in. In particular the ones that I want to highlight, Mr. Speaker, are around first the section 12.1 that's being added to the legislation called . . . titled "Freedom of passage," Mr. Speaker. And from what I see from the explanation notes, this amendment is being added to address incidents where local governments are restricting access, for example, using gates, chains, or other barriers to public highways in a manner inconsistent with the provincial interest.

It goes on further to state that "The provision will have appropriate exemptions for temporary construction and public events such as parades," Mr. Speaker. So I'll be interested to hear more about if there were specific instances that have caused the government to add this section to the legislation and why it was deemed necessary and what sort of consultation with municipalities has gone on prior to its implementation, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's also interesting to note the changes in section 16. So the old section 16 was repealed; this new section 16 is being brought in. In particular it's providing clear authority for the government to enter private land to clear trees and other obstructions to ensure public safety at intersections. I think that will be a particular section that will be of interest to the public to know about.

I believe those were the two main sections that I wanted to highlight. I know there are a lot of interesting pieces in this legislation, but I wanted to particularly bring those to the attention of the public, because I think those are two in particular that stakeholders and community groups and individuals, landowners, will be interested in knowing about and perhaps providing some feedback on, Mr. Speaker.

I know I have several colleagues who are very interested in entering into the debate on this bill. And in order to facilitate that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 47.

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.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 38

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 38 — *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in briefly here today with respect to Bill No. 38, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2021*. I've read the minister's remarks. I've read some of the brief remarks of our critic as well. I know our critic was entering in at second reading and not with the time that I know she'll have to be able to consult with folks, with stakeholders and all those impacted.

What I understand is that this new section gives the director of civil forfeiture additional powers to make preliminary orders with regard to preservation of property disclosure and investigations. I understand that it also requires a financial institution to disclose certain information about a person's property or assets if it's suspected that it was obtained through the proceeds of crime. And I understand there are new offence provisions for people that fail to disclose or mislead the director as well.

Certainly we are concerned with the level of crime within Saskatchewan. And we'll want to, you know, certainly engage with stakeholders to fully understand the consequences of these changes, make sure that they step up to the challenge, make sure that there's not a host of unintended consequences that haven't been understood by government on this front, understand why more investigative powers are necessary. We'll also want to know how these amendments will impact people of limited means, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister has noted, the purpose is to combat money laundering. It's unclear as to the prevalence or the challenge of

money laundering in Saskatchewan. Certainly it's one that shouldn't be dismissed. It's one that should be taken on as a government. I point to a place like British Columbia actually, Mr. Speaker, that has really taken on money laundering, you know, in a real, thorough way and in an impactful way to combat money laundering. Part of that is, you know, heavy investigation and scrutiny of the current situation on this front, those that are behind it, the forces that are behind it, and then of course working with stakeholders to bring the tools to bear to effectively address money laundering.

So we'll want to know and ensure what consultations have occurred, what's been undertaken. All too often, you know, that Sask Party government arrives here with legislation that they quite simply haven't engaged in the kind of meaningful consultation that they should have, Mr. Speaker.

The proceeds on these fronts, of course, go to the Victims' Fund, Mr. Speaker, and that Victims' Fund is so important. And you know, I think there has to be a question as well as to the adequacy of those funds and those funding mechanisms, the adequacy of the revenues that are there right now. Certainly the government has made changes to have more organizations able to access those dollars. That's a good thing, Mr. Speaker. The Victims' Fund is critical in the work that it supports, but we need to make sure that that fund is adequate and up to the challenge as well.

You know, when we're talking about things like crime, we need to make sure we have a response that's coming forward from government that's as effective as possible. And we'll assess these measures. Our critic will be engaged with stakeholders.

It's clear though, Mr. Speaker, that this government has really dropped the ball and failed Saskatchewan people with respect to crime and with respect to their failure to ensure the supports that are so desperately needed for those struggling with mental health, for those in the grips of addictions, Mr. Speaker. And of course we know there's a direct correlation with the failure to support people and individuals on this front and crime.

So we're going to continue to press this government to recognize the crisis that so many are facing in their lives, the crisis that our province is facing. I'm speaking here today at a time where we have a horrible statistic, Mr. Speaker, that's being added up as we speak, and that's that we have more overdoses, more deaths by overdose in Saskatchewan this year than any other year before. And we know this impacts so many families in so many communities. And of course, Mr. Speaker, our failure to support folks on these fronts drives up crime.

We also know that during this government's mandate, that they presided over cuts to some of the very important work around the anti-gang efforts, Mr. Speaker. At a time when there was some really good work that was coming together in a collaborative way and in the community, this was a government that didn't have time for that work and presided over cuts and set back those efforts, Mr. Speaker. And those are the kinds of efforts that we need to be supporting in the community as well.

And it's fair to say that this government's most recent, callous move to cut so deeply those already inadequate income assistance rates for folks, leaving them in a state of desperation without basic needs being met and pushing folks out of homes

and into homelessness, Mr. Speaker, that puts already vulnerable folks in places of desperation. It certainly doesn't help the situation around mental health and addictions, and it certainly doesn't help address crime, Mr. Speaker. It has quite the opposite rate.

And of course we know the consequence of that is more crime, more costs — more costs for individuals, human costs that should be unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, but also costs to the provincial treasury, more expense for the provincial government to take short-sighted approaches like that.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I know our critic's going to be fully engaged in the consultation with respect to Bill No. 38, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act*, and I adjourn debate at this time.

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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 39 — *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm getting cheered on here by my good pal from Canora here as well. Makes some of the finest shishliki in this province, Mr. Speaker — should make sure that's on the record. That's the kind of position we can take in a unanimous way in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. And it's also good to hear my pal speak, Mr. Speaker. You know, I know his side doesn't allow him often to take to his feet, so it's nice for him to be able to express himself in this Assembly. And yes, Mr. Speaker, I know how it feels.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill No. 39, *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021*, these changes seem pretty practical. It seems like the kind of modernization that a government should be taking on. May be a bit of a question as to whether this could have happened sooner. Well of course it could have happened sooner. I don't think there's going to be any great debate about this bill, but I shouldn't preclude the consultation that needs to happen with stakeholders.

I understand this bill makes changes to the Act to allow for electronic publication of *The Saskatchewan Gazette*, the official publication of the Queen's Printer. The Act currently requires paper publication of the *Gazette* not less than twice a month. I suspect that my good friend, the former member for Lakeview, Mr. John Nilson, is likely still reading these in a studious way, Mr. Speaker — probably one of the most avid readers of the *Gazette* in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker.

The delay to print and mail the *Gazette* will now be waived, making it accessible online. And of course print will also be

available. We're happy to see the *Gazette* moving from print to online access. Making legislative changes accessible for everyone is important and certainly it seems to be a very practical modernization.

[11:30]

Of course we're focused on the heavy debate about making sure that we're protecting people's lives, that we're protecting and building an economy, and making sure folks have the jobs they need and deserve, that we're bringing the kind of real efforts to reduce crime within our province, and to step up and respond to the mental health and addictions crisis that far too many face and that cost so many, Mr. Speaker, cost all of us, and standing up against the callous and indecent choices of this government with respect to their deep cuts around SIS, Mr. Speaker.

So I won't go on any longer with respect to this bill. But I do know our critic will follow up with stakeholders and make sure that all consequences, intended and unintended, are understood, and make sure that this piece of legislation is as strong as it can be, Mr. Speaker.

At this point in time I'll adjourn debate on Bill No. 39, *The Queen's Printer's Amendment Act, 2021*.

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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 40 — *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Honoured to be on my feet again today to speak in the Assembly to join the debate on Bill No. 40, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021*. I know there's been, you know, initial comments from the minister and several comments from members of the opposition already.

And you know, I want to start just by saying initially, Mr. Speaker, that I think that there's lots in here that we support. Many of these amendments I think are things that we are in support of. But that isn't without critical thought, without a solid attempt for us to do our jobs in opposition to really interrogate everything that's in here, to consider the consultation that's taken place, and to consider both what's here and what is not here.

So my understanding of this legislation is that there's a real focus . . . that the hope here, the plan of this legislation is on deterring rural property crime, in particular by addressing trespass issues in rural areas. This legislation attempts to do that by increasing the minimum penalties from \$2,000 to \$5,000 for a first offence and up to \$25,000 for a second offence, as well as introducing the possibility of imprisonment up to a maximum of six months and a

maximum penalty of \$200,000 for corporations that counsels or aids in the commission of an offence.

You know, I think that those are interesting ideas, but I kind of want to come back to the aim of this legislation, Mr. Speaker — to deter rural property crime. And I think that's where most of my comments will come in, examining what would work. There's no question that there are issues of rural crime, that these are present and real. And by no means do we in opposition wish to live outside the reality that rural folks face who live far away from where law enforcement is located.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, yesterday I got to join the mid-year convention of SARM. The Minister for Government Relations spoke, and there were comments from Ray Orb. And I know that there are some questions from folks at SARM and also other smaller urban municipalities throughout the province who don't have an RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] detachment, maybe live far . . . I visited one of those communities yesterday, actually. And so there are real concerns out there. But something was interesting in this mid-year convention. And I know that the minister was present as well for this presentation from the RCMP.

And they looked at some of the statistics over the last . . . going back about five years to 2016 on rural crime. And while there was a trend of increasing rural crime, different types of crime, they shared statistics on things like if there was assaults, violent crime, property crime, break and enter. And there wasn't a trend, an upward trend in many, many types of crime. And I don't have those statistics at my fingertips today. But something's interesting — that there's actually a decline from January to August, I believe, of this year in all types of crime.

In rural areas — and they only were reported in the areas represented by SARM, okay — so all of those areas . . . not all of those areas, but across the board it was a decline in break and enter; a decline in assaults; a decline, you know, in many different types of the way that crime shows up in rural areas. And so I think it would be incumbent on this government to investigate.

There's lots of maybe different reasons why those crime rates are going down. If it's related to the pandemic, certainly this was not at a time of, you know, lockdowns or health restrictions. This was during a time when there was, you know, no health restrictions in place whatsoever. Yet crime was going down. So we can't just put this solely on the pandemic.

I think it would be incumbent on this government to investigate what led to that decline in rural crime. Before this legislation was able to be introduced, crime is going down in rural areas. What was the cause of that? And that's not against this legislation. It's not against this — I hear someone, you know, heckling me from the other side — that it's not against this legislation. It's just to say, what led to that decline?

So again, this is not . . . This is looking back over like since January of this year. And I think that there are other ways, on top of this legislation, to address the issues that rural communities are facing. You know, we know that the root causes of crime are related to the social determinants of health. The root causes of crime are related to things like poverty, addictions, mental health,

other historical traumas and injustices that often lead to the conditions where crime is seen as a way out of one's circumstances in life.

And again, that is not speaking against this legislation. I am speaking to other proactive, upstream ways of thinking to address the circumstances in which crime, property crime that this legislation wants to address even though it's on the decline, the circumstances in which that is allowed to be seen as a legitimate option in one's life.

And I think that those two things can happen side by side. We can seek to address trespassing with these amendments that are included here, but we can also look at what has led to a decline in rural crime rates as reported by the RCMP at the SARM mid-year convention, what other factors led to that decline because those can also be considered in addition to this legislation. And I think it's incumbent on this government to investigate that, to find out what led to that decline.

You know, with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. I think that there certainly needs to be further listening and consultation done on this. And I'll continue to, in my role as critic for municipal affairs, connect with folks and communities around this province — rural, urban — to find out what are some of those upstream ways of thinking that I spoke about today that can be done to address those circumstances, the poverty, the mental health and addictions, that often lead to these decisions by individuals to engage in these types of crimes.

So I will conclude my remarks there, Mr. Speaker, and I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 40, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2021*. Thank you.

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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 41 — *The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021/Loi modificative de 2021 sur la législation*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour again to rise and enter into adjourned debates on Bill No. 41, *The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021*. I've taken time to review the comments from my colleagues in opposition as well as initial comments from the minister on this piece of legislation which amends the existing legislation Act to maintain consistency with other jurisdictions and to continue the ongoing modernization of legislation. I want to come back to that in just a minute.

You know, it makes some changes to interpreting how an Act can apply to one another, such as how to define certain terms. A lot of this I've heard described as kind of housekeeping,

modernization.

You know, this is very much our job as MLAs, to look at older legislation, older things that have passed through this Assembly in previous sessions of the legislature, and to look at the world that we live in now and how we can update that language to align with other jurisdictions. So you know, there's not much there to be in opposition to, but I do just want to affirm that I think that that's really important work to be done, you know.

I think that we do that. Everyone here knows that I'm on leave as a public school teacher. Teachers do this work. We examine the language that we use to be inclusive in the classroom, to be affirming of our students and our colleagues and our communities. Doctors do this work. They consistently need to examine the language that they use.

I even noticed yesterday, Mr. Speaker — I think it was on social media — I saw that the APA [American Psychological Association] had indicated that their own rules on language was leading to systemic discrimination. They issued an apology for that and they even acknowledged in the academic world that by changing their own rules for grammar and language, that they could address the way that they promote and allow systemic discrimination to continue. So I think that that's not a partisan issue by any means and it's good to see the members of the government want to update their own language.

I do want to make a quick comment on the minister's words. So the Justice minister, in introducing this legislation, that he did indicate that . . . He said, Mr. Speaker, "This bill contains several changes to maintain consistency with other jurisdictions." That's a great thing, you know, at a time when this government is talking about autonomy and independence.

And you know, we've seen this province carve its own path through the fourth wave of the pandemic. Instead of aligning with other jurisdictions, this government chose a path that led to the worst fourth wave in the country. While ignoring what other jurisdictions were doing, this government chose to divide the province and bring up a number of like really divisive talking points that other jurisdictions treated as just factual medical information.

So it is kind of refreshing, I have to say, to hear the Justice minister say that it is a good thing for our province to align with other jurisdictions. I affirm those words to the Justice minister, you know, to align with other jurisdictions, to work within the Dominion of Canada, to seek to look at what's being done in other places. And even though this is just updating the language, modernizing our language, I want to affirm that that is a good thing to do, and that I would like to see that stance more from other members of the government, to say that it is important to work within the country of Canada, to look at what's working in other places.

And we've seen time and time again throughout the fourth wave that this government has ignored that until we were in such a bad place, leading the country in COVID death rates, that we had to reach out to other provinces for help. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we are one province — a very important, a great province — within the country of Canada. And I want to affirm, in the Justice minister's words, that it is a good thing to align ourselves with

other jurisdictions within Canada and to work together in the spirit of co-operation.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 41, *The Legislation Amendment Act, 2021*. Thank you.

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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 42 — *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's, as always, an honour and privilege to be on my feet today here in the legislature, and particularly today to speak to Bill No. 42, the statute . . . *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021*. Should've had another sip of my coffee before I started, Mr. Speaker.

[11:45]

But I have promised . . . Let it never be said that I'm not of a collaborative nature. I have promised my good friends to the left, perhaps so far to the left that they're actually on the right of me, that I will continue my remarks right up until 1 o'clock, by their request. So yes, you know, I know it's storming on the road. And I'm just hoping the members will stay here in Regina to spend some of their hard-earned dollars in the local economy, supporting some of the small businesses that could use it so much . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it's true. Why not stay for the weekend, you know, have a little staycation and enjoy some of the great opportunities that we have here in the city?

So, Mr. Speaker, today I'm on my feet to speak about Bill No. 42, which of course, as has been referenced by my colleague, the critic for this, is primarily a bill with some housekeeping changes, some logistical and modernization elements as well — two words that I'd love to be able to apply to this government.

But seriously, Mr. Speaker, this is a fairly basic update to an important bill. And you know, it was introduced by the minister here, who I did have the privilege of working with when he served in a different capacity as the minister of Education. And you know, I was serving as the VP [vice-president] of the SSBAs.

And it's Local Government Week today, Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan, which is important for someone to rise and recognize as we wind into mid-week. Local governments are a critical and important part of certainly our province and the fabric of our democracy. They're grassroots. They bring voice and local attention and governance and care to the communities that they serve. And we are all lucky, as provincially elected members, to have such wonderful public servants serving their communities

in the local governments across this province.

And yeah, as my colleague has pointed out, I remember Bill 63 and I'm quite certain that the school boards in this province remember it as well. And I hope that bill has firmly been put to bed.

But it was a pleasure working with the minister when he was in that file, although I do have to say, you know, I was quite disappointed when he served in that capacity and there were some attempts, due to the way that I vote, to keep me out of meetings that I was supposed to be attending in my role as vice-president of that organization.

And I wanted to take a minute and just reflect on how deeply disappointing. I felt that, as somebody who was elected by hundreds of trustees, most of whom are in rural Saskatchewan and who all elected me to serve as their vice-president, knowing full well where my political allegiances lay. And I did find that a particularly disappointing and weak moment, and I guess it really failed me upward.

So happy to be here, Mr. Speaker, speaking on this critical bill, *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2021*. There's nothing I can say that won't be more articulate than what my colleague from Regina Douglas Park has already noted. Some critical changes, of course, updating the legislation specifically around some of the gender-neutral language and some changes to *The Agriculture Administration Act*. Happy to see those. And as well, always fun, but disappointing, to see the Global Transportation Hub pop up in these bills.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, recognizing that the critic will have more to say on this, I am happy to move to adjourn debate on Bill 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.

Bill No. 43

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. L. Ross that **Bill No. 43 — *The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's such a privilege to rise here today on Bill No. 43 and have such a rapt audience. You thought I was just getting started with the last bill. Well wait till you hear what I have to say about *The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Amendment Act*.

As has been canvassed in this House already, this is a bill to provide opportunities, of course, for researchers to refresh and renew current exhibits and discover more about Saskatchewan's history. It encompasses a modernization of the museum similar

to that of other royal museums in other jurisdictions, and the RSM [Royal Saskatchewan Museum] is an incredibly important part of keeping Saskatchewan's history alive.

I know the first time that I visited this beautiful province as an adult, it was on my to-do list when I was touring around the city of Regina. That would have been in, I think, 2011. I actually came here to this House and was seated in the Speaker's gallery and was very kindly introduced to this Assembly, much to my surprise, by a former minister, Ken Krawetz, who has the perhaps dubious honour of being the first person to welcome me to this Assembly. And I tease him about that every time I see him, but I do thank him about that.

And you know, after that, Mr. Speaker, I went to the RSM, which I'm so proud of to have here in our city. And of course myself, like all members in this House, want to keep this museum vibrant and thriving and alive for many decades to come. And I do note that of course a part of this bill is granting the museum to earn revenue. And we want this museum to be accessible. We want it to be sustainable, but we also want to ensure that this museum is accessible for everyone — everyone in the community.

If you take an afternoon and you go visit, you will see people from across the province, from outside the province, from all over the city taking the opportunity to tour through, look at the beautiful displays, the records and the exhibits, and of course terrify their small children with Megamunch. Yeah, a critical, critical coming-of-age moment for all people here in Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet speaking about the RSM, I did want to take an opportunity to talk about the annex, which I'm sure that the minister is familiar with. And to all members in this House, if you have not had the opportunity — I don't know if this is something that folks are privileged enough to be allowed to do by virtue of their office — but if you have the opportunity to request a tour of the annex facility associated with the RSM, I absolutely encourage you all to do it.

It is remarkable. It's that kind of nifty, old timey-looking building — this will tell you more about me — to the south of Leopold's pub on Albert Street. And the annex is home to a remarkable and priceless collection of natural and cultural artifacts representing the history of our province.

I had the opportunity to tour this in a past role, and it's amazing. Like I cannot overstate how incredible the comprehensive record of Saskatchewan's history is in that facility, from folk art to natural artifacts to photographs. It's truly remarkable, and I would be remiss if I didn't represent some of the concerns that the Friends of the RSM and a number of my constituents do have about the state of that facility.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to date you, but you may be aware that in 1985 the irreplaceable collection of artifacts in the RSM was moved to the annex facility when the main building ran out of storage. And this was supposed to be temporary, and that was in 1985, Mr. Speaker. The irreplaceable collections in there are at risk of great damage. They're of significant local and national importance. And I cannot, I cannot overstate this. They're at risk of irreparable damage right now.

We have dedicated, world-class researchers in the fields of paleontology and archeology, zoology, ecology, and many other disciplines, and they're working in what is currently an inadequate environment. The RSM is at risk of losing leading researchers due to the nature of this environment. And it could run out of space by 2024, which is fast approaching.

The annex has already lost the ability to add collections in 11 of its 19 categories, and it's in a state of having to begin to make alternate arrangements for housing these artifacts currently as we speak. These collections are foundational, foundational to what it means to be a museum. And without the ability to preserve and share these collections — they're sitting in the annex; they're not out for the people of this province to enjoy and learn from — and without the ability to preserve and share those, it really challenges the ability of the RSM to fulfill its purpose, which is the acquisition, preservation, and investigation of Saskatchewan's historical artifacts. It provides a home for a myriad of exhibits and of artifacts, from songbirds and other specimens of research value, priceless Indigenous cultural artifacts and of course, as has been mentioned, the world's largest T. rex fossil.

Saskatchewan residents are proud of the RSM, Mr. Speaker. And I do appreciate the minister has been paying attention. And I hope, on behalf of everyone who loves this facility, that there is some attention and some needed dollars thrown towards supporting that facility and in allowing the collections that are currently housed within the annex to be appropriately catalogued and displayed for the people of this province to be able to enjoy.

And again, I started out these comments by encouraging every member to take advantage of it. There's some pretty cool things that you get to do as an MLA, and touring the annex and seeing some of the artifacts contained within there, I promise you, will be an afternoon well spent and will give you a deeper appreciation for the history and archaeology and natural state of our province, which I know all members have.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, before I conclude my remarks on this, I would like to thank the members for paying attention to this because it is pressing. It is an issue that needs immediate concern. And while I am happy to see legislation introduced with the goal of sustaining and preserving and modernizing the RSM, there is a lot of work to be done, Mr. Speaker. And some good, good work and some good stewardship of the history of our province could be done by supporting the annex, by updating and modernizing and making adequate the facility in which so many records of the history of this province are contained.

I'd like to in particular thank a constituent of mine, Margaret Skeel, who's a passionate friend of the RSM and has been a tireless advocate for this facility. And again I'd remind members that this started in 1985, and here we are 36 years later and the annex is still struggling with that temporary solution.

We've had a number of parties in government over those years, but I am looking to members across the aisle, and to the minister, to be the government that solves this. This is a fantastic opportunity to do some truly great work at preserving the history of our province for future generations to enjoy.

You know with that, Mr. Speaker, I was initially joking about

going right until 1, but I don't want to lose the crowd here. So with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 43, *The Royal Saskatchewan Museum Amendment Act*.

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. 44

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 44 — *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's great to be here on my feet today in this beautiful legislature speaking on Bill No. 44, the corporate capital tax amendment Act. And again, as with many of the other bills, there are of course some housekeeping amendments contained within this bill, updating, you know, such critical terms from "department" to the appropriate name of "ministry" and updating some definitions.

[12:00]

The stated purpose of this bill has been of course to level the playing field and protect the revenue base. And there are indeed some aspects of this bill that the public will find of interest, and I look forward to the comments that will be made on this Bill No. 44 as we continue through adjourned debates.

But, Mr. Speaker, I did want to take these next 59 minutes of everyone's time and begin to speak on the importance of small businesses for the province of Saskatchewan. Small businesses. Let me begin with point number 1 of 59 by speaking about how small businesses truly are the economic engine of Saskatchewan, and we need to ensure that they are supported with any legislation.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's a great opportunity here to talk about taxes. But I know some of the members don't like when we talk about taxes in this House when they've been responsible for the single greatest tax hike on the people of this province. You know, Mr. Speaker, it's another great opportunity to talk about some of the policies of this government that are tax, tax, tax, and no spend, no spend, no spend.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's fun to joke and poke, but there are some real challenges going on in this province right now, specifically for small businesses, as we head into our second holiday season of COVID times, which is a real challenge to many small businesses, certainly those in the retail trade and food business. The tax on food, Mr. Speaker, has not been taken off, despite this additional cost to the consumers of this province and an additional administrative burden for those businesses which . . . Nobody likes red tape in small business, Mr. Speaker. And I would urge the members opposite to really consider doing what

they can to actually support small businesses in this province, because we're in the fourth wave of a pandemic, Mr. Speaker. And this is a government that has not seen fit to proffer any supports to small businesses who are still struggling through the fourth wave.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'm on my feet a few times a week talking about our terrible job numbers, and I can't help but wonder, Mr. Speaker, if perhaps there's some correlation between those job numbers and the challenges that some small businesses are still having. And while there's certainly businesses that have survived and thrived during the pandemic, there are many others that are still struggling. And you know, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the federal support programs walking back in the past few weeks, and this is leaving a number of small businesses, who I hear from, high and dry because they're still struggling. They may not have lost 50 per cent or 40 per cent of their revenue, but they're still hurting.

And this is a government that's not only not helping them, not responding to their emails, not supporting their own business response team to help speak to these concerned business owners who are certainly trying to keep their own livelihoods going. But they're also parts of the community, they're also employers, and I would urge all members to really, really think about that as we continue through this devastating fourth wave, to reflect on the fact that there have been no provincial supports offered to businesses which have been hit hard by COVID and continue to struggle.

You know, Mr. Speaker, a topical example comes to mind. Earlier this summer — it was a lot warmer out — we heard from a business owner in town, food and beverage, who had managed to survive the pandemic due to his ability to offer off-sale with takeout. He has a restaurant that did not translate particularly well to takeout compared to some others that may have food a bit more suited to takeout. And I do see some members paying attention because I do know some members on the other side also love this business and want it to survive.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I believe it was July 13th that we reached out, and we spoke to the minister responsible. Of course we tried to go through the proper channels. And then on July 13th after no response, which unfortunately is all too common from this government, the business owner — not myself — chose to go to the media. And it was July 13th, and he was asking, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, to just allow him to do what he'd been able to do for the first two waves of the pandemic.

And he was told, we'll look into it. Of course we care about small business. We'll get back to you quickly. And, Mr. Speaker, that was 123 days ago. Now I know the wheels of government move quite slowly, and slower still for some it seems, but 123 days for a response time should be unacceptable to every single member in this House — 123 days.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is just one example. I can think of other business owners who I've been working with outside of the city in rural Saskatchewan who were incredibly frustrated by the lack of support that they got from the business response team in the lead-up to this most recent public health order. They were calling the business response team, Mr. Speaker. I called the business response team. Unsurprisingly they did not return my

call so I blocked my number and called back. And they did return my call at that point. What do you know? But the message that we got from the hard-working folks at the BRT [business response team] was that they had no idea what would be contained within the public health order so they could not give any guidance.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a pattern that unfortunately we have seen from this government when it comes to helping small businesses survive through an unprecedented pandemic. You'd think after the first wave, the second wave, the third wave, and now into the fourth wave, Mr. Speaker, that we would see some learning and some adaptation and some desire to actually get better at supporting those concerns. And, Mr. Speaker, this is nothing outrageous. This is not particularly partisan, but providing information to business owners before the changes impact them truly does seem like the lowest bar to be able to step over. But again and again we see this government tripping.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about this, you know. I think I've canvased a few examples and I can't wait for the coming days to be able to talk about many, many more, particularly those in industries which still remain challenged and are still struggling. And no member in this House wants to see any business fail.

And I really do want to just take this opportunity before I conclude my remarks to say that one of the most disappointing things is the lack of response that these people get. Because I've said it before and I'll say it again, they do not come to the opposition as their first option. They go through all of the proper channels, seeking help and seeking advocacy, and then they come to me. And you know, to have business owners get absolutely no response at all when they're reaching out is . . . it's incredibly disappointing. Sure it's disappointing to me, but it's most of all disappointing to these hard-working people who support their communities, who act as employers, and who act as economic engines. Ninety-nine per cent of the businesses in this province, Mr. Speaker, are small businesses and we should be doing everything we can to help them survive and thrive.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look up and I see I still have 51 minutes to go, but in the spirit of friendship I believe I will take that as an opportunity. With claps from the member for Walsh Acres who cares so deeply about small business — and let me read that sarcasm into the record because it is not reflected in *Hansard* — I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 44, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2021*.

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: — 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 member 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 Monday, November 15th at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:10.]

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