



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Randy Weekes  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**2nd Session — 29th Legislature**

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

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

<b>Beck, Carla</b> — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>Makowsky, Hon. Gene</b> — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
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<b>Bowes, Jennifer</b> — Saskatoon University (NDP)	<b>McLeod, Tim</b> — Moose Jaw North (SP)
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<b>Cockrill, Jeremy</b> — The Battlefords (SP)	<b>Moe, Hon. Scott</b> — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
<b>Conway, Meara</b> — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	<b>Morgan, Hon. Don</b> — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
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<b>Fiaz, Muhammad</b> — Regina Pasqua (SP)	<b>Ritchie, Erika</b> — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
<b>Francis, Ken</b> — Kindersley (SP)	<b>Ross, Alana</b> — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
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<b>Harrison, Hon. Jeremy</b> — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Vermette, Doyle</b> — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Hindley, Hon. Everett</b> — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Weekes, Hon. Randy</b> — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
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<b>Kaeding, Hon. Warren</b> — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon, Trent</b> — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Keisig, Travis</b> — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Wyant, Hon. Gordon</b> — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Kirsch, Delbert</b> — Batoche (SP)	<b>Young, Aleana</b> — Regina University (NDP)
<b>Lambert, Lisa</b> — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young, Colleen</b> — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Lawrence, Greg</b> — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	
<b>Love, Matt</b> — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)	<b>Vacant</b> — Athabasca

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

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**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Deputy Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyk

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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## CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Fiaz .....	1603
Love .....	1603
Meyers .....	1604
Mowat .....	1604
Makowsky .....	1604
Wyant .....	1604
Kaeding .....	1604
Moe .....	1604

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Young, A. ....	1605
Conway .....	1605
Ritchie .....	1605

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Economic Accomplishments and Quality of Life in Saskatchewan

Skoropad .....	1606
----------------	------

##### Reflections on the Christmas Season

Meili .....	1606
-------------	------

##### Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women Meet to Advance Gender Equality

Ross, A. ....	1606
---------------	------

##### Saskatchewan People's Struggle during the Holidays

Conway .....	1606
--------------	------

##### Marshall Volunteer Firefighters Step Up to Ensure Our Safety

Young, C. ....	1607
----------------	------

##### Eastend T.Rex Discovery Centre Sets Attendance Record

Steele .....	1607
--------------	------

##### Treat Others With Kindness at Christmas

McLeod .....	1607
--------------	------

#### QUESTION PERIOD

##### Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Meili .....	1607
-------------	------

Moe .....	1607
-----------	------

##### Provision of Health Care

Meili .....	1608
-------------	------

Moe .....	1608
-----------	------

Conway .....	1609
--------------	------

Merriman .....	1609
----------------	------

Young, A. ....	1609
----------------	------

Love .....	1609
------------	------

Ritchie .....	1610
---------------	------

Sarauer .....	1610
---------------	------

Mowat .....	1610
-------------	------

Beck .....	1611
------------	------

Bowes .....	1611
-------------	------

Wotherspoon .....	1611
-------------------	------

Hindley .....	1612
---------------	------

##### Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Meili .....	1612
-------------	------

Moe .....	1612
-----------	------

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Ottenbreit .....	1613
------------------	------

#### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

##### Acknowledgements and Christmas Greetings

Harrison, J. ....	1613
-------------------	------

Mowat .....	1613
-------------	------

The Speaker .....	1615
-------------------	------



[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can I ask for an extended introduction, leave for an extended introduction, please?

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce very special guests sitting in your gallery, students from St. Kateri elementary school from Harbour Landing. Mr. Speaker, these students wrote a letter to our Premier with their thoughts and opinions, and those thoughts and opinions are very important to us and we value them. And I invited them to come into our legislature to watch for question period. They also wrote a letter for a thank you note to our Premier and asked them to keep doing what you're doing for the people of Saskatchewan.

I would like to ask them to raise your hand as I introduce you by your name. Cruz Boutin, grade 4, with his dad, Matt Boutin. He is a big fan of the Blue Jays which is the best team of MLB [Major League Baseball], Mr. Speaker, and hope to see him pitching in the major league sometime.

And we have Nash Pollock, grade 4, with his dad, Ryan Pollock. He loves to play football. Baltimore Ravens is the best team. He is a fan.

Levi Pilon, grade 5, with his mom, Tania Pilon. He is a computer fan and loves doing math.

We have Parker Thorp, grade 5, with his mom, Erin Thorp. He is very good in basketball and volleyball, also plays baseball as well.

And Blake and Easton Needer are the twins accompanied by their mom, Andrea Needer. They both play on the same hockey team and they are a fan of the best NHL [National Hockey League] team. I believe our Premier knows what team is that.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to join me in welcoming these student delegates to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been requested for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, to you and through you and to all members, welcome five incredible individuals. Five people who motivated me every day as a teacher, five people who motivated me to run for public office, and five people who motivate me each and every day that I come to work in this Assembly. Those five people are my family. The Loves are seated up in the east gallery.

My mother, Jody, is here, visiting from Kelowna, British Columbia. She's come to help me over the last week or so, taking care of our youngest as he's joined me here in Regina. And you know, my mom, Jody, is just an incredible person. She raised three boys on her own, taught us how to be good men. I think everything that I know about parenting, hard work, and caring for others, I learned from her. Welcome here, Mom.

My wife, Emma, is also here. And Emma's just the best person that I know. She's the person I go to for wisdom. She comes to me for humour because I'm funnier than her. She's a beautiful person who I have been just fortunate and thankful every day to have as a partner in life. She's an amazing mother to our kids. She's an amazing and respected community member in Saskatoon. And many people on the campaign trail said that the number one reason that I would succeed is because I'm married to her.

Also with us are our children. Our youngest Myles — I've spoken of these three amazing kids in here before — and Myles is four years old. He's Inuk He's a wonderful little boy who loves hide-and-seek to no end. He loves the trampoline. He loves playing with his siblings, and he's just the most affectionate and cuddly little guy around.

Our middle child is Tom. Tom will be nine in February. He is a voracious reader. He loves animals. He's an amazing mountain biker and loves football like Dad. And he's just the best big brother around.

And our oldest is Etta. She's 14. And on top of being a very accomplished public speaker, intersectional feminist, and standing up for women and queer rights, Etta is also the strongest female weightlifter in the history of Saskatchewan. She's 14. She's 14 years old, and she just competed in the USA [United States of America] Weightlifting North American Open. She was the youngest person to qualify for the A group. And at that competition, she became the youngest woman in the history of North America to have a combined total over 200 kilograms. That is an astounding achievement. We're all fortunate to have her here today, and I'm just proud as can be to be her dad.

Mr. Speaker, to you and to all members I'd like to wish a Merry Christmas from the Loves. I ask all members to join me in showing some love to the Loves in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Meyers:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to join the member opposite in welcoming his family here. We know this is such an important time of the year as we head into the Christmas season and how important family is.

And I'd also like to join the member from Regina Pasqua in welcoming our young students here, but in particular — speaking of family again — one of the dads up there, Ryan Pollock, a really good friend of mine. Ryan's a former U of R [University of Regina] Cougars hockey player. He's a Grey Cup champion with the Riders in 2013 as their communications director. And he's now the general manager over at the Royal Regina Golf Club, and ironically a couple of years ago, was my golf partner when I shot my career round.

So I'd like to ask everybody to welcome Ryan to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet today. To you and through you, I would like to welcome a guest seated in the Speaker's gallery who is no stranger to this Assembly, Mr. Michael Fougere, and congratulating him on his new role as the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan. Of course he's had a storied career already as the mayor of Regina and the president of the Sask Construction Association. And we welcome him to this new role and invite all members to welcome you to your Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome our NDP [New Democratic Party] caucus director of issues management, Mitch Bonokoski, who's a little sneaky because he didn't tell me he was coming to watch today. But I'll have a few more words to say about Mitch and the support that he provides to our team in my statement later today. But I want to welcome him to his Assembly as well as his wife, Tyne Hagey, who I believe is the director of Legal Aid offices at Moose Jaw, and welcome her to her Assembly, as well as their baby, Gwen, who is looking quite festive in pink up there today, Mr. Speaker. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also join in and welcome Michael Fougere to the Assembly here this morning. Of course he served as mayor in Regina for eight years, many years before that on city council. He was my councillor for a number of years. And he was with the construction association before that. Now, as mentioned, with the pharmacy folks now. We wish him well in that new role and thank him for his many years of service to the people of Regina. So it's great to see him here, and welcome.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleagues in welcoming Michael to his legislature today. I know

that the Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan, was very excited to have him in this new leadership role. My wife continues to play a key role in the leadership of pharmacy in the province, and I know she's very excited about working with Michael and plotting a new course for the pharmacy association. So I too want to join with my colleagues in welcoming Michael to the legislature.

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

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce, sitting in the west gallery today, 12 grade 10 students and teachers from the Melville Comprehensive School. They're led by teacher Don Coleman and Kale Stoll.

I'm very proud of our Melville students, Mr. Speaker. The Melville Comprehensive School has a nationally recognized MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] program. They've had a number of students who compete and win nationally in the trades and skills competition, and are just generally great student leaders, Mr. Speaker.

I'm so looking forward to how students like these are going to be able to participate in this growing Saskatchewan economy, Mr. Speaker. And I know I am going to be looking forward to some very engaging conversations after. So this morning I would like all members to welcome our Melville students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave for an extended number of introductions.

**The Speaker:** — The Premier has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with many members, all members of this House, in welcoming all of our guests here today, in particular the member from Pasqua introducing the school group from Harbour Landing. And we all know it's Go, Oilers. That's how we . . . The member from Melville with a number of senior students from the community of Melville. Thank you for making this trip, and welcome all of you to your Legislative Assembly.

I'd like to join actually with the member from Eastview as well in welcoming his family. The member from Eastview and I don't agree on many things, but we do agree on even a larger proportion of things. But I do want to thank you for the support that you provide the member from Eastview, an effective member of this Assembly, an effective member representing his constituents in Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Speaker, I join again with a number of members in welcoming a former mayor of Regina, our capital city, now with the pharmacy association, Michael Fougere, and thank him for his efforts in making this province a better place over the course

of his service, in public service and now representing associations in the private sector, Mr. Speaker. And to welcome all others that have joined us here today.

But I do want to take a moment to welcome a special individual to myself, Mr. Speaker, a young lady that is finishing up her studies. Those studies started in Minot State actually, Mr. Speaker, where she attended a four-year undergrad degree of communication disorders, then moved on to Grand Forks, to UND [University of North Dakota] where she is taking her master's in speech pathology, Mr. Speaker.

Thankfully has moved back to the province of Saskatchewan to do her practicum, Mr. Speaker, her practical applied work, Mr. Speaker, here in the province and looking forward to a future in the province, working quite likely with kids, Mr. Speaker, in the area of speech pathology. Very much has an affinity for working with children that are hard of hearing; fluent in American Sign Language; someone that I consult with on a regular basis. And if you in this House ever see me in a situation where my tie doesn't match my suit, it's because this individual didn't return a text that morning, and I picked out my own clothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but in the same spirit as the member of Eastview spoke, we don't serve in this Assembly alone. None of us do. None of us ever have, over the more than 100 years that this Assembly has been here with members in it, Mr. Speaker. And I most certainly do not serve alone; I only serve with the support of my family. And for the first time in my career, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to ask all members to join me in welcoming my daughter here, Taryn Moe.

[10:15]

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All the love in this House, I was off my game. But, Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition to this Assembly calling, of course, for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments, Mr. Speaker. I've spoken extensively about this petition over the last couple months here. And again, Mr. Speaker, all of the signatories of this petition are from Livelong, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the issues contained in this petition — that one in six couples in Canada experience infertility and that Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status — these issues are of great, great interest to people across the province.

Signatories from Livelong, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'll admit I had no idea where that was. And I spoke to the member from Cut Knife, and I believe I learned that it is in fact in the constituency of Meadow Lake. But these petitions are coming in steadily from across this province.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to

cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Again, with thanks to the signatories of this petition from Livelong, Saskatchewan, I do so present.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this last day of the fall sitting to present again a petition calling on this government to reverse the cuts and changes under the new Saskatchewan income support program or SIS. Unlike its predecessors, Mr. Speaker, SIS does not directly pay for utilities and housing. Its introduction has led to a dramatic increase in arrears, evictions, homelessness. The Sask government was warned years ago by stakeholders, from the Saskatchewan Landlord Association to anti-poverty groups, that this would happen, and this is exactly what we're seeing happening today in this province.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer:

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

The signatories of this petition reside in Sedley and Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to be on my feet again today to present a petition calling for the government to reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development.

The undersigned residents of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that Quebec-based Lambert Peat Moss has proposed the creation of a peat moss mine near La Ronge in northern Saskatchewan; many local residents, hunters, trappers, and traditional land users are opposed to the proposed mine and concerned about the potential for damages to habitat, including critical habitat for woodland caribou, traplines, and drinking water sources, as well as climate impacts; more than 20,000 people signed an online petition calling for the proposed peat moss mine to be stopped.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the provincial government to protect the boreal forest and reject the proposed Lambert Peat Moss development.

This petition is signed by the residents of La Ronge. I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Arm River.

### Economic Accomplishments and Quality of Life in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Skoropad:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as this legislative session comes to a close, we should take account of the past months. A lot has happened, Mr. Speaker: more supports for carbon capture for a cleaner future while supporting Saskatchewan energy companies over Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Venezuela; a helium action plan to support a budding industry that has taken root in the southwest. We saw the first lithium well in provincial history as our entrepreneurs grabbed new opportunities.

And while we see these new parts of our economy form, a commitment to the bedrock of our province — our agricultural producers — who continue to deliver world-class food to the planet in a tough year of drought for much of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, at that same time, the economy is a means to an end for a better quality of life for everyone in our province — more funding options for children with autism, a new pilot project to connect teachers and parents, higher wages for early childhood educators, more child care spaces that are more affordable for parents. All of this as we face a pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

That said, the most important thing this Chamber can do, Mr. Speaker — what it can build that will outlast any brick and mortar — is bring people together. “From many peoples, strength” is more than just a motto. Thank you.

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

### Reflections on the Christmas Season

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to take this opportunity to wish you, to wish all members and all Saskatchewan people a Merry Christmas. As we close off this session today, we can look forward to spending time with our families and enjoying our holiday traditions. Whether your tradition is turkey or tourtière, eggnog or Christmas pudding, bannock or samosas, or all of the above, there’s something incredibly special about gathering with family around the table this time of year to share a meal and to make new memories.

Without a doubt, this Christmas will be different for many. Some might be setting one less table setting, missing someone who’s no longer with us, or who isn’t well enough to join in and enjoy a meal. With everything we’ve been through, it’s important we remember the true meaning of this year: love and joy and hope.

We’ve seen incredible examples of that spirit in our province. Health care workers have worked under constant pressure to keep our friends and family safe. Teachers working under difficult circumstances to give the kids the support they need to learn and grow. The farmers and ranchers, who despite a drought, continued to put food on our tables and tables around the world. The seniors, the youth, the workers sharing their stories.

To every person in this province who continues to pull together in our time of need, thank you from the bottom of my heart, and Merry Christmas to all.

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

### Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women Meet to Advance Gender Equality

**Ms. A. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 39th Annual Meeting of Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women is taking place this week. This is a meeting co-hosted by the Minister Responsible for Status of Women. Ministers from across Canada are meeting virtually to work on advancing gender equality and discuss important topics impacting all women across our country.

Ministers are talking about the importance of their collective work on ending gender-based violence, women’s economic participation and prosperity, as well as the importance of women’s roles in leadership and democratic participation. Ministers are also meeting with national Indigenous leaders and their representatives. This is an important opportunity to hear from Indigenous voices on their priority areas of focus for Indigenous women in Canada.

Saskatchewan’s Status of Women office is proud to be hosting these important meetings ahead of the Christmas season and look forward to discussions, sharing of information, and advancing this work in the spirit of unity and kindness as it will impact all women, not only in Saskatchewan but across the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Saskatchewan People’s Struggle during the Holidays

**Ms. Conway:** — Do they know it’s Christmas, Mr. Speaker? I rise on this last day of the fall sitting to recognize the countless Saskatchewan people who are struggling this holiday season. I recognize the many Saskatchewan people working multiple jobs for poverty wages to put a decent meal on the table for their families every day. The health care workers across the province that are burnt-out and yet will not have a chance to spend time with their families and friends, instead to support our aged and sick.

I recognize the thousands of people who are ill, who are suffering through another Christmas without the surgery and treatments they so desperately need. The one in four children without enough to eat. The increasing number of Saskatchewan people who have lost their housing and have no place to call home for holidays. The hundreds of families grieving the loss of loved ones due to a virus our leaders failed to effectively control. The families grieving those lost to suicide and overdose in the North, our inner cities, and across the province.

Saskatchewan people are resilient, but Saskatchewan people are tired and struggling. Maybe it’s the spirit of the season, but my hope is the members opposite will, as Scrooge’s nephew hopes for his uncle, open their shut-up hearts freely and think of people below them, the people out there, as fellow passengers. With that I ask all members to rebuild a province that is kind, caring, and “from many peoples, strength,” Mr. Speaker. We can and must do better.



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

**Marshall Volunteer Firefighters  
Step Up to Ensure Our Safety**

**Ms. C. Young:** — Mr. Speaker, it has been said that our province's greatest strength is our people, and this holiday season I encourage everyone to reflect on the people who make Saskatchewan so great. Volunteer firefighters are one such example, stepping up to ensure our safety and well-being time and time again.

Today I'd like to recognize three firefighters from Lloydminster Legacy Regional Protective Services. Aaron Lines, Richard Gross, and Rob Patterson recently received Canada's Exemplary Service Medals and plaques. This is in recognition of those dedicated to preserving Canada's public safety through long and outstanding service.

All three gentlemen reside in the community of Marshall where they have provided services for the past 20 years, and through partnerships with Lloydminster and Lashburn they serve a much larger surrounding area. There are 49 firefighters, mostly volunteer, between the three halls, but only Marshall firefighters cover the entire RM [rural municipality]. Mr. Speaker, interim regional fire chief Dean Peters presented the awards on behalf of the Governor General.

Mr. Speaker, these gentlemen have shown commitment and bravery. And my hope and wish is that during this holiday season and moving forward into the new year, we can all across this great province show our commitment in showing more kindness and caring to one another. Thank you to these gentlemen for their service. And wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas.

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

**Eastend T.rex Discovery Centre Sets Attendance Record**

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we are proud of our many amazing tourist attractions and destinations. And one in particular saw a record attendance despite the challenges with the pandemic. Saskatchewan's T.rex Discovery Centre in Eastend — home of Scotty, the world's largest T. rex — set new attendance records this year. Attendance of 12,000-plus visitors greatly eclipsed the previous mark by 25 per cent set in 2018.

Mr. Speaker, we are very pleased to see that so many people were able to enjoy the T.rex Discovery Centre and the diverse array of paleontology exhibits, programs, and events they offer. Guests are able to visit the world's largest T. rex specimens in addition to the checking out of the new paleo lab experience and some of the latest discoveries by the Royal Saskatchewan Museum paleontologists.

This Christmas, Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone to start planning their trip to check out Scotty and the rest of the Discovery Centre programming when it opens again next year. I'd also recommend a trip to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum this holiday season, as there is always something new to see. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Treat Others With Kindness at Christmas**

**Mr. McLeod:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we enter this holiday season, my wife, Tenielle, has once again transformed our home and made preparations for another wonderful Christmas. But so much more than the gifts and decorations, Tenielle will set the tone for the holiday spirit in our house. She will do this by arranging to spend time with family and friends, sharing smiles, fellowship, and traditions. In much the same way, Mr. Speaker, the members of this House have the ability to set the tone for our province moving forward. We can do that by demonstrating an attitude of respect and concern for our neighbours. We can listen to others with open hearts and open minds.

Indeed these are the lessons we learned from God's gift to this world, the reason for the season, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. When you unwrap the fullness of the baby in that manger, you find that God's gift grew up, and he taught us how to love one another. Regardless of our differences, he taught us that the overarching law of life is to care for one another.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Christmas I will make an extra effort to treat others with kindness, compassion, and love, not judgment or condemnation. And I ask the members of this Assembly to please join me in setting that tone for this holiday season and the months to follow. From my family to all of yours, Merry Christmas, and all the best to you and those you love and serve in 2022.

[10:30]

**QUESTION PERIOD**

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

**Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Premier refused to answer any questions, took the day off just like he took the whole summer off. The people of Saskatchewan deserve more. They deserve answers, deserve answers to the incredible tragedy that we've all been put through this last year, Mr. Speaker. Even if the Premier thinks he's done all he could, surely even he would recognize that we have important lessons to learn from this pandemic. Can the Premier give me one good reason why we shouldn't have an independent arm's-length public inquiry into the province's handling of COVID-19?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, throughout this pandemic we have made decisions, like other governments across Canada, Mr. Speaker, with the information that we ultimately have. Mr. Speaker, most recently, in the middle of September, we had made some significant decisions, enacting a number of public health orders here in the province, Mr. Speaker, due to the fact that we were being hit significantly hard here in Saskatchewan with COVID-19, and more specifically the fourth wave of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, thankfully those measures have worked. We peaked at about 500 cases a day, Mr. Speaker. We're now down about . . . Sorry, on a seven-day rolling average, down to about 60. We're down over 85 per cent in our cases. Our hospitalizations have been reduced dramatically, Mr. Speaker.

And again that's due not only to the public health orders and guidance that have been in place, Mr. Speaker, it's due to what Saskatchewan people are doing. They are going out in even larger numbers and getting vaccinated, where 900,000 Saskatchewan residents have now have gotten their first shot, Mr. Speaker. We've seen about close to a quarter-million shots delivered since we've put in place the proof-of-vaccination/proof-of-negative-test policy, Mr. Speaker.

So once again I say through you to all of the people of this province, you know, thank you so very much for what you've done over the course of the last number of months in particular, but over the course of the last 21 months in ensuring that this province can address the challenge that we are faced with, COVID-19, Mr. Speaker, and be part of really what is a global challenge that we are facing as global citizens.

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

#### Provision of Health Care

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He found his feet today but still no answer to the question, no commitment to making sure that we get to the bottom of the reasons why this government led us into the worst fourth wave in the entire country, put thousands unable to get care, hundreds have lost their lives, and made life so difficult for health care workers across this province.

Health care workers like Melissa McGillivray who joined us yesterday, one of the many nurses who is burnt-out, forced into service she wasn't trained for because this government failed to get ahead of COVID-19. She drove down to Saskatoon in the middle of a snowstorm. The Premier refused to stand. Refused to acknowledge her. Certainly didn't give her an hour of his time.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: the cries from health care workers are getting louder every day. When will he listen?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, as we well know, Mr. Speaker, we redeployed . . . And first, let me start with saying thank you, not only to Melissa, but to Melissa and all of the other not only health care workers, Mr. Speaker, but all of the folks across this province that have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic on behalf of their fellow citizens and families in their communities, Mr. Speaker.

We did redeploy a number of folks for our vaccination program, for our testing program, and yes, to offer services as we found our way through the fourth wave of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has spoken over the course of the last number of days and weeks with respect to the resumption plan of procedures and the resumption plan of services that are being provided in communities across the province, Mr. Speaker. We're ahead of schedule in resuming

those services and programs, Mr. Speaker.

Just this morning we had released, the Saskatchewan Health Authority released their surgical resumption plan, Mr. Speaker, a plan to not only ensure that our surgeries moving forward are at a level that is sustainable for what is being required, but ensuring that we have a plan in place to address the backlog of surgeries that we have here in the province, Mr. Speaker, due to the 20-month response to COVID-19, Mr. Speaker.

It's not a unique challenge to Saskatchewan. I believe there's just over 300,000 surgeries across the nation in Canada that have been delayed over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. And that is why we have put together and released this morning a robust plan to ensure that we have a sustainable number of surgeries moving forward. And we also are going beyond that with a three-year plan on increasing the number of surgeries to address the backlog that we have here.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has completely ignored the suffering of those paying the price for his choices. He's literally turned his back on them here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Stephanie Brad is one of those people. She drove down looking for answers. She's had major essential surgery cancelled, not once but twice. She lives in constant pain, and her family is struggling and suffering alongside her.

The Premier today has announced a plan to make a plan to eventually clean up the mess he's made, Mr. Speaker. He has still not apologized to Saskatchewan people. He has still not apologized for letting the fourth wave run wild, for allowing this situation with surgeries to take place, Mr. Speaker. Will the Premier admit what he's done and apologize to Saskatchewan people for putting his politics ahead of their lives?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I understand shortly after that day that the Minister of Health did meet with Stephanie to help and assist in any way that he can in navigating her health care journey, Mr. Speaker.

And this precisely speaks to the reason why we announced the surgical initiative here this morning, Mr. Speaker, an investment in additional ICU [intensive care unit] beds, not on a temporary basis but increasing the number of ICU beds here in the province on a permanent basis, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we have the ability to flex up should we need it for not only ourselves but to lend that capacity to other provinces as well, Mr. Speaker. An investment in expanding the public surgeries that are happening here in the province, Mr. Speaker, and investing also in . . . re-investing in the surgical wait time initiative that we had put in place a number of years ago, Mr. Speaker, to help address the backlog, the wait time that we had in surgeries, Mr. Speaker, when we formed government in 2007.

We as a province have done this before, Mr. Speaker. We need to do it again as we find our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Speaker. And I think Saskatchewan most

certainly has had some tools that have been effective in the years gone by. They're tools that are being looked at by other provinces.

In fact, when we're done here today, Mr. Speaker, I'll be on a call, a Council of Federation call with all of the other premiers, working on how we are going to ensure that the federal government is going to be a full funding partner, Mr. Speaker, in our health care as we move forward to ensure that we have the sustainable surgery capacity here in the province and the sustainable services that are going to continue to be offered in community after community, Mr. Speaker, across this province.

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

**Ms. Conway:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has not yet apologized to the thousands of people paying the price for his choices. Eden Janzen is here with us again today. She desperately needs parathyroid surgery and a kidney transplant. She's been on dialysis most of her adult life. Her parathyroid hormone is 33 times the upper healthy limit. Her blood reads above upper panic limit. And yet she has no idea when she'll access a surgery or a transplant.

Instead of living a normal 25-year-old's life — healthy, even pursuing work in politics fighting for the underdog — she lives on assistance because she's not well enough. Does the Premier recognize his choices, which have denied people care, have also denied them the opportunity to live their lives and contribute to this great province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I do welcome Eden back to the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, when people are brought down to the Assembly — I actually said this in the media — I encourage people to contact us and let us know what's going on in the front line, Mr. Speaker, so we understand as government so we can pivot and adapt to what is happening out there.

But, Mr. Speaker, just this morning we announced our surgical resumption — this is a huge initiative — and not just that, also increasing our ICU capacity. We've also done our service resumption, Mr. Speaker, which we exceeded the 90 per cent by December 1st.

And I have to again thank the people out there, the health care workers who have pivoted from one position back to their original position. What I'm hearing from the health care workers out there, Mr. Speaker, is they're very happy to be able to get back to their original position so they can deal with the patients that have been waiting. We appreciate the patience that people have been waiting out there, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we announced this today, that we can start going forward with our surgeries. We've already announced our service resumption, Mr. Speaker, to address the needs of not just the people that are brought down to the Assembly here, Mr. Speaker, but all the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

University.

**Ms. A. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know that minister speaks about people being happy, but you know who's not happy, Mr. Speaker? Eden. Eden's furious, and she's furious because she was used as a prop by that Health minister.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to bring attention once again to a constituent of mine, Dallas Oberik. And she shares that same frustration, Mr. Speaker. She waited over two and a half years, two and a half years for her hip replacement. And since coming to the legislature, she said yesterday:

It felt like I was paid lip service. The surgery can't come fast enough. Although the Premier said this issue was his top priority, I'm no further ahead than I was at the beginning of November.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally admit that his fumbling prolonged the daily pain of people like Dallas who are desperately waiting for life-altering surgery?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I always reach out to anybody that's brought down to the Assembly or tries to contact my office, Mr. Speaker. It's certainly not a token gesture, Mr. Speaker. I do take their concerns. In this case, Mr. Speaker, we were able to connect the individual with the quality-of-care coordinator who navigates the system on behalf of patients, Mr. Speaker. That's why we set up this position years ago.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what I addressed in my first answer. This is why we had our service resumption. We had very aggressive targets of 50 per cent by Remembrance Day, 75 per cent by the next week, Mr. Speaker, and by the end of the month, 90. We're there. Services are resuming, Mr. Speaker.

And I understand that there have been some delays, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate people's patience in that. That's why we're announcing this very aggressive surgical plan, Mr. Speaker, so we can address that. Seven thousand additional surgeries, Mr. Speaker, in the next fiscal year; an additional 6,000 surgeries on top of that, Mr. Speaker, in the following year; and an additional 5,000 surgeries. That's a total of 38,000 surgeries, additional surgeries that we'll be bringing into our system to meet the needs of not just the people that are here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but again all the patients across our great province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Love:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Dallas and so many others have had their lives completely upended by their delay in care. One of those suffering is my constituent, Jessica Bailey. We all know that she is desperately in need of a kidney. Since joining us here in her legislature, she's had to be hospitalized four times. Her health is getting worse, and her window for a transplant is narrowing.

I got a message from Jessica last night. She wants to know why

the organ donation program has not fully resumed. What does the Premier have to say to Jessica and all the others waiting on life-saving care in Saskatoon — people who are paying the price for his choices?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And with that specific case of Ms. Bailey, Mr. Speaker, I was scheduled but there was a cancellation on the patient's part due to health concerns, and I fully respect that, Mr. Speaker. I understand that they don't always work on my schedule.

We have reached out to Jessica to see if there's another opportunity to meet, and we'll continue to reach out. But we have connected her with the acute and emergency services branch to review this. What we had to do, Mr. Speaker, is we had to be able to pause some services, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that our ICUs and our acute care had the capacity to be able to meet the influx of mostly unvaccinated people, Mr. Speaker.

We have moved those positions back as soon as we possibly could. There is a couple of vacant positions in Saskatoon, and we're working very diligently to make sure that those services are resumed as soon as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Ritchie:** — Well that response is hardly reassuring, Mr. Speaker.

The Dicksons and their baby, Helen, are constituents of mine in Saskatoon Nutana. They still haven't heard anything about Helen's very necessary eye surgery. If Helen doesn't have this surgery soon, she won't ever have the opportunity to see the world the way the rest of us do. They are anxious about what the future holds and out-of-province, out-of-pocket options may be Helen's only hope. The clock is ticking. Her window of time is closing. Can the minister assure the Dicksons they won't have to pay out of pocket for life-changing surgery?

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

[10:45]

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Mr. Speaker, and again, I did meet with the Dickson family right after question period and had a great conversation with them about some of the challenges that they were facing, Mr. Speaker. And I did ask them to follow up with my office if the service resumption wasn't done within a week or two, Mr. Speaker. I have not heard back from that individual so I'm assuming that things . . . But if something has changed, I will certainly sit down and have that discussion with them again, Mr. Speaker.

But again, Mr. Speaker, what I can emphasize is I want to thank the health care workers out there that are pivoting back to their original positions and getting back to their patients, Mr. Speaker. This is critical in moving our province forward, Mr. Speaker, is making sure that the people get the proper health care that they can, Mr. Speaker.

It is absolutely fabulous that this is happening, that we've got our surgeries. We've got an aggressive program for our surgeries, Mr. Speaker. We've got an aggressive program for our service resumption, Mr. Speaker. And the great people that are working on the front line are making it happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, surely the Premier and the minister remember Blake. Blake, who is here today again with her mom, Sarah, finally has access to her spinal cord clinic and her foot surgery is booked for the new year. Great news, Mr. Speaker. But Blake is still on a four-year wait-list to see one of two pediatric gastroenterologists in the province. At this rate Blake, who is two years old, won't have access to her much-needed care until she's in grade 1.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier recognize that our health care system is broken? Does the Premier think it's acceptable that children, toddlers like Blake, have to wait four years until they can access life-changing care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker, and I did have an opportunity to meet with Ms. Turnbull just before question period started and asked how things were going. I won't divulge all of the medical information for the little girl, Mr. Speaker, but she did say the resumption of services . . . There was one specific program that they were looking for, Mr. Speaker. And I said I'd be more than happy to sit down with the family to be able to find out when we can get that done, Mr. Speaker.

So again I will continue to work for the people of Saskatchewan on their health care needs. Not only the ones that are brought into the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but all the ones that my colleagues and the opposition are bringing forward to be able to make sure that they can get the proper services in a timely manner, Mr. Speaker.

But we have faced an unprecedented challenge in the last 20 months, Mr. Speaker. And I can't thank the health care workers, I can't thank the patients for being patient, Mr. Speaker, to be able to wait until we can resume and get those critical people back into their positions, Mr. Speaker, so the service resumption can continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mercifully, some of the people who have joined us here have gotten the care they need, but they shouldn't have to come to their Assembly to get that care. And we know thousands that haven't.

Jessica Edie has received one of the procedures she desperately needed. She received her vein surgery on December 7th. This is what she had to say:

I am happy that after almost a year, I finally received my vein surgery, but this is not the end for me. Due to the collapse of our health care system, I am still waiting on my

compartment syndrome testing, and it's unclear when this might happen.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell people like Jessica that their health care will never be put on the back burner again?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I did have the opportunity to meet with Jessica just last week, Mr. Speaker, over Zoom. And I appreciate her honesty in talking about her situation, Mr. Speaker. We have again connected Jessica with the provincial quality-of-care coordinator and I'm glad to hear that some of her services has resumed. But, Mr. Speaker, again this is why we had those aggressive program service resumptions back in November, Mr. Speaker, so we could get these services identified by the public. We did not want to move people out of their positions but felt we had to in order to protect the overall health care system. I can't thank those workers enough.

I understand that this has some impact on some people's lives, Mr. Speaker, but that's why we did our surgical resumption that was announced this morning — 38,000 more surgeries in the next three years, Mr. Speaker. That is a very significant amount of surgeries. We have the capacity to be able to do this, Mr. Speaker, in our SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] but also with our publicly funded private clinics. We're going to make these surgeries happen as soon as we possibly can and get people back to their normal lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Carolyn Brost Strom joined us here because she was furious with this government's interference in public health measures to keep kids safe. Instead of allowing kids to receive vaccines with parental consent, this government put up additional roadblocks requiring parents to be present, not because it's good health policy, but it's because they have deemed COVID vaccinations controversial.

Does the minister think that it makes any sense to make it harder for kids to receive vaccines? Or does he agree with health experts like Carolyn?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I also on December 1st had an opportunity to meet with Carolyn face to face and discuss that, Mr. Speaker, those exact comments that she had made that were brought forward by the opposition. I thanked her for her input. She had a couple of very valid points, Mr. Speaker, which I have then passed on to my officials because there are some extenuating circumstances sometimes where a parent can't be available, Mr. Speaker.

If a parent can't be, Mr. Speaker, we will try to make accommodations because we understand that not everybody has a typical family, Mr. Speaker, that there are some challenges with individuals. She brought up that point. I talked to her about it. We had a very good conversation, left on good terms, and I very much thank her for her input.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not just the one-off. I'm getting lots of input from lots of different health care workers, some supportive, some critical, Mr. Speaker. But I do appreciate all the input that they've been giving myself, my colleagues, and my office staff to be able to provide input on how we can better work with this pandemic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Bowes:** — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday we were joined by Bashir Jalloh and 12 of his colleagues, front-line health care workers who are burnt-out, beyond frustrated, and desperate to see a plan from this government to address the chronic understaffing that persists throughout our health care system. They didn't get an answer from this government on what steps will be taken to address systemic, chronic short-staffing in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Does this government understand that we need a collaborative health workforce strategy involving the ministries of Health and Advanced Education if we have any hope of recruiting and retaining the health care workers that we so desperately need, let alone keeping the ones we've got?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you. Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was a group of health care workers that were here, and they did talk to the media. I did offer, reached out from my staff to meet with them, Mr. Speaker. But what I was told is they had to go back to work. And I thank them for going back to work and being able to help out, Mr. Speaker.

But some of the planning that we have done that was announced in the media at 9:15 this morning is we do have 144 additional positions at Saskatchewan Polytech that we are doing to recruit. We're also going to look around the world, Mr. Speaker. We're also going to see if there's people that have gone from full-time positions down to part-time or casual, if they would move back up, Mr. Speaker, to be able to help with our capacity.

I understand that the health care workers have been challenged, and it's been very stressful for them. And we recognize that and we thank them for that, Mr. Speaker. Well we're going to work very hard so we can backfill some human resources to be able to help them out to complete the surgical resumption but also our service resumption. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we were joined by Devin Bernatchez, a remarkable leader from the Lac La Ronge Indian Band who knows all too well this government's mishandling of COVID made the existing crises in mental health, addictions, and suicide so much worse with such horrible and tragic costs. To the minister, what's the plan to address the lasting damage of this government's inaction for people suffering in despair and in the grips of addiction?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I was grateful to have the opportunity to meet briefly with Devin when he was here at the Assembly earlier this session. Mr. Speaker, this is a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan. We have invested a record amount of funding, \$458 million, into mental health and addictions in this year's particular budget, Mr. Speaker, funding across this province to try to provide supports and services to people in Saskatchewan regardless of where they live, whether it's in our urban centres, our rural communities, and our far North and First Nations communities.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week we actually announced some funding for the Muskwa Lake Wellness Camp up near the northern village of Pinehouse to support some of the programs up there. And as I said earlier in the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to travelling to Sucker River to meet Devin and to meet with the community first-hand as we try to address this challenge. It's a priority for the Government of Saskatchewan and for people across this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout this session we've shared people's stories, amplified voices — the stories that weren't being heard, the voices that were being ignored by this Premier. Mercifully, some of them have got some of the help they need. But Saskatchewan people shouldn't have to put their stories out, their lives, their tragedies, their sufferings on the floor of this Assembly to get the care they need. They need and deserve a government who makes choices to protect them, protect people's health, protect our health system, a government that helps people because it's the right thing to do, because it's their job, not just because the camera happens to be rolling, Mr. Speaker.

Jessica, Dallas, Eden, Blake, thousands more like them that can't get care. Hundreds who can't ever come to this legislature because they're no longer with us. The people whose lives this Premier thought were less important to save than his own political skin, Mr. Speaker.

If the Premier can't acknowledge these failures, if he can't demonstrate that he knows what he's done wrong, that he's willing to learn, how can he continue to do this job, to keep doing this all-important role, when he's clearly shown he's got all the wrong priorities, when he's proven he's unfit to serve?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, throughout this session, yes we've seen a number of Saskatchewan residents, including today, that have been in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health have offered to meet with, and have met with all of those that have taken them up on their offer, Mr. Speaker, to navigate their specific health care journey.

We saw, a number of days ago, the service resumption plan, Mr. Speaker, across this province, and I'm happy to report that that plan is ahead of schedule. We saw this morning the surgical resumption plan on how we are going to ensure we have sustainable numbers of surgery into the future for what is

arriving, Mr. Speaker, but also what is going to address the backlog that we have.

Throughout this pandemic we've had to make some difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker, and thankfully Saskatchewan people, through what they have done, those decisions are proving to be effective. Down, Mr. Speaker, our seven-day average some 87 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Vaccinations in this province are up over a quarter-million, Mr. Speaker. And that most certainly and assuredly is thank you to the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, throughout these very difficult decisions, yes we have reached out to constituents across Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, there are some that don't agree with the decisions that the government has made. And I would say there's a couple of ways for us, as we go forward, to approach this, Mr. Speaker. We can take the approach of the Leader of the Opposition and name-call Saskatchewan residents, Mr. Speaker. Or we can take the approach that government members have been taking in their constituencies across this province and engage in a respectful dialogue and conversation with the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

That doesn't mean that you agree on every item that you discuss, Mr. Speaker, but as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, the approach of this government is going to be one of engagement. The approach of this government is going to be one of respectful dialogue. Mr. Speaker, we understand that you can . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, the government does understand that we can disagree while not being disagreeable, Mr. Speaker, across this province. And as we enter the Christmas season, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for all of us in the House as we venture back to our communities to spend time with community members, with friends, with family, to remember just that, Mr. Speaker, and be the leaders that we know we can be in our respective constituencies, Mr. Speaker, engage with the people of this province.

I understand that we may not agree on every point, Mr. Speaker, but most certainly, Mr. Speaker, that we agree on the broader vision of our province, our families. The people of this province are much stronger than this COVID virus, Mr. Speaker.

And through you, I want to wish everyone in this province a very Merry Christmas.

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order, order. Order.

[11:00]

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip. Order.

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order answers to questions 16 through 22.

**The Speaker:** — Questions 16 through 20 have been ordered . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Questions 16 to 22 have been ordered. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the House for leave to make a farewell statement for Christmas.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has made a request to have an extended message. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

##### Acknowledgements and Christmas Greetings

**Hon. Mr. J. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank my colleagues for granting leave to provide a traditional farewell message as we will be ceasing sitting for this sitting, Mr. Speaker, at the end of today. So I want to make some thank yous.

And the first thank you I want to make, clearly and emphatically, I really do want to thank my colleague across the way, the Opposition House Leader, who . . . I think it's a surprise to a lot of folks, Mr. Speaker, who probably just watch the back-and-forth in question period, the amount of co-operation that is necessary in order for this Chamber to function. And that really is a reflection of the relationship between the House leadership teams. And I really sincerely want to say thank you to my colleague across the way who, you know, not that we always agree on everything, Mr. Speaker, but we always are able to have the discussion and have that opportunity for dialogue, which really has resulted us in being able to function, not just through this session but through sessions in the past as well. So I want to thank very, very much my colleague, the Opposition House Leader.

I want to thank as well you, Mr. Speaker, for your leadership in the Chair in what we all realize is a very challenging job, and you know, very difficult on occasion. And I just want to say thank you to you, Sir, for your leadership in your role.

I want to thank as well the Clerks, and especially the Clerk who we've have the opportunity to work with for 15 years now in my case, and with a lot of members many, many more, whose . . . over 35 years of service, I believe, in the Chamber. So I want to thank you, Greg, for your leadership of the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service], and also your team — Iris Lang, Kathy Buriyanyk, and Ken Ring — and through you to the rest of the Legislative Assembly staff. So thank you, Sir.

I want to thank as well all of the other components that make up the Legislative Assembly Service — the Sergeant-at-Arms, the broadcast services, the Hansard, the cafeteria staff — all of those who do so much work to make this functional and possible here in this Chamber. So I want to pass along sincerely that thank you

as well.

I want to thank as well the House business staff, Michelle Lang, who has been our chief of staff, exec director in House business for some time, who's going to be . . . This is actually her last day as exec director of House business. I want to thank Michelle for her knowledge, her leadership. She's going to be moving on to a chief of staff role for a minister, but I want to say and really recognize her personally and the team in House business and research.

I want to thank as well our colleagues, my colleagues, Premier especially, Mr. Speaker, who has provided just remarkable leadership, the captain of our team, through what has been a very, very challenging two-year period, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to very sincerely thank you, Premier. I want to thank our Minister of Health as well, who has carried so much of the burden, you know, in kind of the most personal ways you can imagine, Mr. Speaker. And thank you. Thank you, colleague, Minister.

And thank our team over here, just an incredible team of folks and on both sides of the House. I guess we have three-quarters of the place in here, but I want to thank all of our team for just being a great group of colleagues to work with every day. Has really made this a joy and made it possible to come to work with a smile on our face every day despite some of the really weighty and challenging issues that we deal with. So I want to say thank you there.

And, Mr. Speaker, through you to all of the people of the province, we want to say, number one, thank you, and number two, we wish everyone the best of Christmases, the best holiday season possible to be enjoyed safely with friends and family. And through you, Mr. Speaker, Merry Christmas to all.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask leave to make a statement.

**The Speaker:** — Opposition House Leader has asked for leave to make a statement. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, it is a tradition for us to say a few words at the conclusion of the fall sitting here, so I will join the Government House Leader in making a few comments before we head off to our various Christmas plans here.

This was the first full sitting for many members of this Chamber for the fall. And I'd like to say that it was unprecedented with COVID measures, but I feel like we're all starting to get kind of used to this unprecedented time. And so we still made some changes to the Assembly, as you know, and we still have the spaced-out desks so we're not entirely back to normal. But it was good to be able to welcome guests to this Assembly again, and appreciated the COVID precautions that were taken here to make sure that everyone was safe throughout this sitting.

I do want to say a few thank yous, Mr. Speaker, to yourself and your staff. I think our relationship has developed over time. I haven't been hauled or called politely down to your office for quite some time now, so I think we're doing well. And I want to thank you for your firm but fair rulings in keeping this place in order, because I imagine it is not easy to do that. We certainly have a lot of folks that test that at times, so thank you for your patience.

To the Clerks' Table, and the Clerk in particular, thank you for always taking my calls, never telling me this is an answer that you should already know when sometimes that is the case, I will say. But also for walking us through the areas that are a little greyer that we need help with precedent on, and making sure that we always know what we are to do in this space when we ask those questions. That guidance is always appreciated, as well as the willingness to answer a call and sort of drop things when we call. And we do appreciate that. I know you must have a lot of other stuff going on.

To the committee Clerks for making sure that our Chairs stay on track. For anyone who has ever chaired a committee, you know that there's a lot of business that happens there. And they always have the motions ready and make sure our committees run smoothly, some of them in very short periods of time, very efficient. So thank you to the folks who are involved in that process as well.

To the Sergeant-at-Arms and the security team who continue to keep us safe in an ever-changing world, particularly Terry Quinn, the Sergeant-at-Arms; Sean Darling, the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms; Basil Kuzyk, special constable who is retiring at the end of the month. And today is Basil's last day here. And he's had a long and distinguished career in policing, including a full career with the Regina Police Service. He was awarded a Police Exemplary Service Medal from the Governor General for his remarkable service in 1999, and we have been so fortunate to have him on the team. I wish him a happy retirement and thank him for his service to us in this place. John Yee, special constable; Robert Pilon, special constable; Lyall Frederiksen, special constable; and the security kiosk with Dave Scantlebury, the head of Commissionaires, and of course the whole Commissionaires team. Thank you for your service.

I also want to thank the many staff that go into this place for working tirelessly to keep this place functioning efficiently. We have Pages back this year. Thanks for your service and putting up with us passing notes and doing other ridiculous things when you have real business to take care of.

Thank you to Hansard for having to listen to us all day, make sense of what we are saying, and somehow get all of the names and facts correct. It's truly magic, and I imagine that the masks don't help. So thank you for your patience with that and in getting up that record of transcription and what happens in this place so quickly and so accurately. Folks depend on that.

And another part of that record is broadcast services. And being a Saskatoon MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], we don't have very many folks that make the trip down from Saskatoon despite the fact that I'm always trying to get people to come see me. I don't know. Friends and family have made it down maybe once or twice. But we rely so much on broadcast

services to give a record of what's happening in this place, to communicate out through the website and through the TV channel what is happening in this space, and so many folks rely on that. We've had uninterrupted service and truly a great job in terms of the shots always being on the right folks. So much appreciated to the work of broadcast services. And to the facilities staff for keeping this beautiful place beautiful, cafeteria staff for feeding us.

And I do want to thank the media as well. I see some of them are still sticking around in the press gallery up there. COVID has been a time, the last 22 months, and I think probably no one is more familiar with that than the media who have been following this and communicating out these messages and updates, sometimes by the hour. Thank you for turning around those stories so quickly, for making sure that stories get told across this province. And it is an important work and often thankless work, so I want to say thank you as well.

And to the Government House Leader, we've had a relatively smooth session. I appreciate his words at the beginning of his remarks as well. I've also appreciated the communication back and forth and the ability to work together to ensure that this place is as predictable as possible.

And maybe a special thank you for what was probably the best Christmas party we've ever had on Tuesday night. It wasn't the Christmas party we were planning, but it is the one we got, and we were able to make the best of it no matter what.

But truly thank you for those conversations back and forth. I think a lot of people don't understand the amount of coordination that it takes to make this place function, and always appreciate the heads-up of what is happening. So it looks like we disagree very publicly in this space all the time, especially just right when we are leaving question period, but there has to be agreement to make this place function. And he did acknowledge that, and I will as well. And thank you sincerely for that.

And I guess to the rest of the House Leader team and the Deputy as well . . . Special note. So there was some searching for that.

But truly we would not . . . I do promise I will wrap soon as well. But truly we would not be able to be here and do this work without our caucus staff team. I want to thank Kat, Mitch, Brock, Cheryl, Jannet, Nathaniel, David, Kelsey, and — helping us out this session — Marshall, for helping us keep it together. And yes, for the members opposite, that is our team, and they have done a bang-up job in making us look our best.

[11:15]

And I do want to say a special thank you to Mitch Bonokoski, our director of issues management, my right hand in all of our House biz. He is going on parental leave, and we saw his baby Gwen here today with us in the Assembly. He's going to spend some time with Gwen, so I'm sad to say that he will not be with us next session and he's going to be away. I was now a little bit worried for the House biz side of things. I was already a bit worried, but hearing that there's turnover on the government side as well as . . . We maybe should do some planning.

But Mitch has been a steady force in keeping us on track, helping



us prepare for question period, following the issues of the day, making sure that we always know what's going to happen in this place, whether we have to stand up to present petitions or bills. He's involved in all of that.

And on top of all this, he tracks the issues very diligently and personally, is always there if you want to go gripe at the end of a long committee meeting even if it's late into the night. You know, he's been there watching. He's lived through it with you and is willing to have those conversations, you know, sometimes just to let us vent I think so that we can go on our day. But yeah, just a tremendous amount of respect for Mitch. We're going to miss you. We look forward to you coming back, but take some time with that beautiful baby of yours, and you will be missed.

And of course, to the members and in particular our team here who has always made me laugh and has reminded me of the humour in this but also the drive. I have so much respect for all of you. And you're a constant reminder of who we're serving, always bringing people's stories to the table and advocating on their behalf. And thank you for the work that you do, as well.

And in particular Ryan, sorry, the Leader of the Opposition, for his — it's hard when you're talking about someone personally — for his leadership in, you know, bringing this team together. And I think we've had a good session here. And you know, he has ran I think a ton of questions past the Premier this session and done a fantastic job of representing us. And I want to thank him for that, as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I will wish everyone a Merry Christmas, encourage everyone to take some downtime, and we will see you in the spring. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I would also ask leave to make a statement. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — As we reconvened the second sitting of the twenty-ninth legislature on October 27, we as MLAs entered the Chamber once again in the midst of a global pandemic. We owe our extreme gratitude to many who continue to go above and beyond to accommodate the provincial health regulations in the Legislative Assembly so that we may serve the citizens of Saskatchewan in our roles as legislators.

I would like to acknowledge these people at this time: Steve Bata and his team for keeping our building running efficiently and managing COVID protocols throughout the building, keeping all safe. To the Clerk's office: Greg Putz, Iris Lang, Ken Ring, Kathy Burianyk, Rob Park, Anne Drake, and the staff of the Legislative Assembly. Thanks to you all and your teams for your extraordinary effort not only to keep us on task but also enabling the legislative process to run smoothly in the midst of a pandemic. Thanks also to Monique Lovatt for her dedication and hard work supporting the members' participation in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

To the Hansard team, procedural services, finance, and to the parliamentary heritage education teams: we appreciate all the work that you do. Thank you to the Pages for the excellent job that they do for the members. It is nice to have you back in the

Chamber. I want to acknowledge the Sergeant-at-Arms, Terry Quinn, and his team for their professionalism and integrity in maintaining the security of the Legislative Building and precinct. Thank you very much.

I also want to congratulate a member of the Sergeant's security team, Basil Kuzyk, who will be retiring. In fact, this is his last day today. Basil spent 27 years with Regina Police Service, retiring in 2006, then going on to the Saskatchewan Police College for the next four years. After a plethora of various work experiences, Basil started as a sessional employee for the Legislative Assembly in March 2015, and in June 2016, he became a special constable. Basil, not only do I want to thank you for your service to the Legislative Assembly, but I also want to thank you for your many years of service to the province of Saskatchewan. Congratulations on your retirement, and good luck in the next leg of your retirement journey.

We are very fortunate in Saskatchewan to have one of the finest Clerk's office and Legislative Assembly staff of any jurisdiction in the country. Thank you for all that you do for the members every day.

Thanks to Sheila Sterling and Twyla Wilson for keeping my office running smoothly. Twyla joined the Speaker's office in September and has been an asset to the team. I'd also like to thank Janet, my constituency assistant, who has been with me for nine years.

And to my family, thank you to my spouse, Cindy, who recently retired as an educational assistant; my daughter Lacey and spouse Nick who have three girls, Surayya, Amara, and Leonora. Lacey works for Nature Saskatchewan and serves on the Regina Public School Board. Nick works in construction. Our son Marshall works for Corrections Canada and our daughter Alex, who works for SHA in North Battleford, and her spouse, Andrew, who works for the city of North Battleford. They postponed their wedding last summer due to COVID, and so they were able to get married this summer. I also want to mention our grandson by choice. And Zane, he and his mother, Des — I can never get through this without choking up — he and his mother, Des, have been reunited and are doing fine. I'm very proud of my family.

Thank you to the members for your many hours of service and strong commitment to your positions as elected officials, the province of Saskatchewan. Members, please travel safe and may you keep your families and stay . . . May you and your families stay safe. Merry Christmas, everyone, and all the best in the new year.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 on March 7th, 2022.

[The Assembly adjourned at 11:23.]



# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

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

**Hon. Fred Bradshaw**  
Minister of Highways  
Minister Responsible for  
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

**Hon. Lori Carr**  
Minister of Social Services

**Hon. Dustin Duncan**  
Minister of Education

**Hon. Bronwyn Eyre**  
Minister of Energy and Resources

**Hon. Donna Harpauer**  
Deputy Premier  
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Minister of Trade and Export Development  
Minister of Immigration and Career Training  
Minister Responsible for Innovation  
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Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated  
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Saskatchewan Government Insurance  
Minister Responsible for  
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