



SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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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

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Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
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Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)	

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1

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Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce some of my constituents from the Southwest. First of all, I'd like to introduce Chief Alvin Francis from the Nekaneet First Nation — give us a wave; Cherish Francis, CEO [chief executive officer] of the Nekaneet Management Ltd.; and Tony Cappel, vice-president of business development in Makwa Innovations. Welcome to your legislature.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming the chief from Okanese as well as other members to their legislature. miigwech for coming out here and joining us here in your legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Yeah, to you and through you I'd like to, in your gallery, introduce Sean Checkley. He seems to get introduced by a couple of us all the time here. Welcome to your new office up there, Sean, and it's great to have you here.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition wish to draw to our attention that one in six couples in Canada and right here in Saskatchewan will experience infertility, and that IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive for many, with one cycle typically costing upwards of \$10,000.

Mr. Speaker, despite public health care being a right in Canada, and this very much being a health concern, there is no government financial support for Saskatchewan couples or individuals seeking to grow their families. Saskatchewan people's right and ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status, and other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing IVF treatments to those struggling to conceive.

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 treatment for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today come from Colonsay and Humboldt. I do so present.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Saskatchewan people recognize how important the rail system is to getting our commodities to market, we the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas access to rail service is of critical importance to the Saskatchewan economy, including to producers, ranchers, miners, energy workers, forestry workers and exporters; and whereas our Saskatchewan conductors, trains people and yard people are some of the best employees in the province at ensuring our commodities get to that market; and whereas the leadership at CP Rail [Canadian Pacific Railway] and the Teamsters union have failed to come to a fair collective agreement to ensure the continuation of rail service; and whereas the federal government has failed in preventing a disruption to rail service due to a labour dispute:

Therefore we in the following prayer that reads:

Respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the federal government to immediately implement back-to-work legislation to end the disruption of rail service, and to introduce legislation to designate rail service as an essential service to prevent future rail disruptions caused by labour disputes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present this petition calling on the government to designate the west lawn as the Chief Piapot learning grounds. Chief Piapot was an influential leader for First Nations on Treaty 4 who brought his fight for treaty rights to a camp at Pile o' Bones, located at what is now the legislative grounds. The west lawn has become a de facto site for Indigenous expression due to its proximity to the Legislative Assembly, and officially designating the site would facilitate the ongoing process of reconciliation.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The signatures of this petition reside in Balcarres, Lestock, and Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to

present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents who want to see the Sask Party government finally put an end to underfunding in our children's classrooms.

Those who have signed the petition wish to draw our attention to the following points: that the 2021-22 provincial budget's failure to fully fund the teachers' contract amounted to a cut; and that the Sask Party's cuts mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students as they recover from the impacts of COVID-19; that after years of underfunding, school divisions have nowhere left to cut that won't impact student learning; that the Sask Party government's cuts leave educators and support staff without the resources that they need to support a full pandemic recovery; and that the Sask Party government's failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences today, Mr. Speaker, and if not rectified, will continue having serious impacts throughout the future of these students.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, call upon the Sask Party government to immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by providing stable and adequate funding for public education in Saskatchewan.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, this is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It recognizes the date police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid pass laws in 1960.

In 1979 the General Assembly adopted a series of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to combat racism and racial discrimination. From that work, a week of solidarity was formed to acknowledge those struggling against racism and racial discrimination. Although the apartheid system in South Africa has been dismantled and racist laws and practices have been abolished in many countries, we continue to see today to continue our work in dismantling systems of oppression.

The United Nations General Assembly reiterates that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and have the potential to contribute constructively to the development and well-being of their societies. The General Assembly also emphasized that any doctrine of racial superiority is scientifically false, morally reprehensible, socially unjust, and dangerous and must be rejected.

Here in Saskatchewan organizations like the ACRN [African Canadian Resource Network], the Multicultural Council, Regina Immigrant Women Centre to name a few, work to combat racism and create more welcoming communities for our newcomer

population. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I stand today in recognition of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Like my colleague the member across stated, this day is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful protest.

Mr. Speaker, racism is alive and well in Saskatchewan. Indigenous and racialized communities continue to suffer from injustice and stigma that racism brings. Systemic racism continues and is prevalent within our colonial system such as government organizations and our society.

March 21st is an opportunity for all of us to reflect and acknowledge Indigenous peoples and racialized communities continue to face racism and discrimination in our province. Mr. Speaker, racism is an ugly part of our province. We must acknowledge it exists, and we must call out racism and stand with those experiencing racism. And we must address this ugly part of our province called racism. Fellow legislators, please join me in committing to do our part in eliminating racial discrimination within our province of Saskatchewan. miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

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

World Down Syndrome Day

Mr. Buckingham: — Mr. Speaker, I am happy to stand in my place today wearing mismatched socks to mark 3/21. March 21st is World Down Syndrome Day, celebrating individuals with three copies of the 21st chromosome. I would like to recognize the organizations and service providers advocating for and supporting these children and their families, Mr. Speaker.

This includes the Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society as well as the Ability in Me or AIM program. This is a provincial, non-profit, charitable organization supporting children and young adults with Down syndrome and their families. AIM offers things like speech and language therapy, literacy programming, occupational therapy, and music therapy. The Ministry of Education has funded the program since 2014-15 and is providing \$470,000 this year for existing therapeutic services.

There are approximately 400 individuals in Saskatchewan living with Down syndrome now. AIM estimates that 15 to 20 children in Saskatchewan are born with Down syndrome every year. Many of us will know and love someone with something to spare, this extra copy of the 21st chromosome. I ask all members to spare some time today to show support for each one of these unique people within our communities and province, one of them being my beautiful daughter Deanna.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Eastview Community Centre Winter Carnival

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I stand today to recognize the work of the Eastview Community Centre in the planning and execution of a fantastic family-filled event. This past February, the Eastview Community Centre held their annual Winter Carnival. The Winter Carnival provided the residents of Eastview an opportunity to meet their fellow residents and engage in winter-themed, family-friendly activities. Families were invited for horse wagon rides, a bouncy castle, and snowshoe races.

Participants also took part in three separate waves of helpers who helped clean the facility in preparation. Volunteers included many Eastview residents, staff, and directors. Overall over 350 people participated during these challenging times, and this event showed the true spirit of our residents in Douglas Park and highlighted the importance of being able to come together and support each other in a safe but fun manner.

[13:45]

I'd like to send a huge thank you to Denis Simard, executive director; Katelyn Kostiuk, program monitor; Bill Gray, board president; and the rest of the board and staff team for putting on this amazing, family-filled event. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Eastview Community Centre for their successful 2022 Winter Carnival.

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

Battle of Little Big Puck Hockey Game

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I recently attended the 39th annual Battle of Little Big Puck. This is a hockey game between the local cowboys from Maple Creek and the Nekaneet First Nation. Mr. Speaker, the origins of this game date back to a friendly debate over who had the better hockey players. Today it's a much, much anticipated fundraiser for the Southwest Integrated Healthcare Facility.

The game begins with a typical hockey game, only there's no contact. But the game really comes to life in the third period, Mr. Speaker, when both teams take to the ice in traditional clothing. The cowboys sport their iconic cowboy hats with buffalo coats, big chaps, and western shirts. And the players from the Nekaneet First Nation, Mr. Speaker, don full buckskin, beadwork outfits, along with headdress and face paint.

Before the puck is dropped, the teams gather on centre ice for the traditional Indigenous song and drum. Mr. Speaker, this is a tradition the communities of Maple Creek and the Nekaneet First Nation are very proud of, and we look forward to the 40th Battle of Little Big Puck next year as it will be held outdoors. I encourage all the members of this Assembly to come and experience it for themselves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

I Am Not 4 Sale App Launched in Saskatoon

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday I had the

honour of representing the Minister of Social Services, alongside the Minister of Health and Don Meikle, executive director of Egadz in Saskatoon, for the launch of the new app I Am Not 4 Sale.

Mr. Speaker, this app is a game changer. I Am Not 4 Sale app supports and connects sexually exploited children and youth with Egadz counsellors 24 hours a day and seven days a week. It also gives real-time location of the Egadz street outreach vans. The press of a button on the app will discretely and anonymously have emergency services sent to the user's location.

In 1990 Egadz began providing street outreach, housing, education, parenting programs, and a clean-and-sober-living program that employs many youth. Mr. Speaker, Don Meikle recently celebrated 29 years of service with Egadz, which is recognized nationally and internationally, and in 2019 won Saskatchewan's first Governor General Award for Innovation. I'm overwhelmed by Don's passion supporting children and youth in our community. I share that passion, Mr. Speaker. I now ask that all members join me in thanking Don Meikle for the incredible work that they do in Saskatoon and throughout the province. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Humboldt-Watrous.

Prairie Women on Snowmobiles Raises Millions for Cancer Charities

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday past and present members of Prairie Women on Snowmobiles got together for a local ride and a farewell banquet in Humboldt. This group, consisting of only women, is well known in my constituency and across the province.

Prairie Women on Snowmobiles started with one empowered woman, Jeannie Brewer. Jeannie, a breast cancer survivor, alongside a group of friends, combined raising awareness with their favourite sport, snowmobiling. Mr. Speaker, they rode over 1600 kilometres a year for the first 15 years. And in an impressive 22-year run, 164 women visited nearly 200 communities.

Mr. Speaker, together they raised over \$2.5 million for the Canadian Cancer Society and another \$436,000 for the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan. This brought in new equipment and a breast cancer screening and mammogram bus. The bus, Mr. Speaker, travels the province and helps staff to perform over 900 mammograms a year. President Kelly Rea credits their success to corporate sponsors and volunteers who were keen to help them out as they needed along the way.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members to join me in thanking the Prairie Women on Snowmobiles. Thank you for your commitment and your accomplishments, your perseverance, and your passion. You're an inspiration and we're forever grateful. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We learned sad news from the latest doctors' town hall, learning that Saskatchewan now leads the nation in COVID death rate at 4.7 per 100,000. That's over double the national average.

Saskatchewan is losing people faster than anywhere else in the country, and the only thing the Premier has to say about it is, we don't talk about COVID. Why, Mr. Speaker? Is this Premier really satisfied with having the worst death rates in the entire country?

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, first and foremost what I would do is offer my condolences on behalf of myself and the entire Government of Saskatchewan to all of those that have lost a loved one to COVID or for any other reason as well, Mr. Speaker, across this province.

More specifically to COVID, Mr. Speaker, throughout the last two years of this pandemic — just over two years now that we have faced this pandemic in Saskatchewan and across this nation and around the world — as we find our way through to a different place, admittedly a different place here in Saskatchewan, we're seeing other provinces make similar moves to ensuring that they are providing, governments are providing the tools so that individuals can manage their risk and so that individuals can ultimately move forward in living with this virus in our communities. There's availability of vaccines. There's availability of rapid tests, Mr. Speaker. There's some early intervention treatments also available.

Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing, week-to-week comparisons, is a decrease in our hospitalizations, Mr. Speaker, and most notably an increase in those hospitalizations of people that are in hospital due to COVID. So by no means are we through COVID. COVID is here to stay. We are most certainly making every effort, like other governments, to provide Saskatchewan people with the tools so that they can live with this virus in their communities.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are spikes with each wave of COVID, although Saskatchewan has frequently found itself at the top of those spikes especially during this deadly fourth wave that the Premier failed to even try to prevent, a fourth wave that saw an increase of 26 per cent in excess deaths — five times the national average.

And now when we look at total cumulative deaths, we're third in the country, the highest among those provinces that don't do posthumous testing. Mr. Speaker, again, is the Premier satisfied with having one of the worst records in the entire country when it comes to the number of people who have died from COVID-19? Is he proud of this record?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, most certainly when you look at the challenges that Saskatchewan people have faced over the course of the past two years, in facing the COVID pandemic, now coming through that and facing alongside with the rest of the world . . . We see areas of conflict, you know, most notably in

Ukraine, providing additional uncertainty into our everyday lives, uncertainty that we see each and every day. And increased inflation on the products that we most certainly are purchasing, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very proud of how Saskatchewan people have faced this pandemic, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud of the way I see individuals and communities, how they have come together to ensure that, yes, the tools that are available are being made available to Saskatchewan people, and people are using those tools.

Mr. Speaker, when you go out — and I was home this weekend — when you go out and about, you have some folks that are continuing to wear their masks, and some folks are not wearing their masks. Virtually all folks I talked to do have a rapid testing kit at home and are doing periodic testing of them or their family members. Most certainly Saskatchewan people are ready to move forward to live with this virus in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

I'm proud of the way that Saskatchewan people as individuals, communities, and as a province have faced this pandemic, Mr. Speaker. And we most certainly are going to find our way like we always do.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The numbers don't lie, and this Premier intends to do nothing differently despite the immense failure. Statistics Canada reports an increase in the period between March 8th, 2020 and October 16th, 2021, an increase of 1,728 deaths compared to previous years, Mr. Speaker. That's an 11 per cent increase, twice the national average, the first time in decades that we've seen a significant drop in the life expectancy of Saskatchewan people.

Now when we look at official COVID deaths, those are 776 in that period, accounting for only 45 per cent. So since the Premier denies that the other 55 per cent is COVID, can he explain what else is taking the lives of so many Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to fatalities in our health care facilities across this province, each of those fatalities is then signed off by the attending physician in that facility. And I trust that each of those fatalities is signed off accurately by each of those physicians that do so, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to COVID specifically, Mr. Speaker, as we look ahead, we are not through all of the challenges with COVID-19. We're seeing now the BA.2 variant is surfacing in other areas of the world. And it's present here in Saskatchewan. Low levels today, I believe, reported out — in fact declining levels a little bit week to week — but just over 5 per cent here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's something that Dr. Shahab and public health continue to monitor here in the province.

But we are seeing our hospitalizations down, Mr. Speaker, down about 40 this past week, as well as those that are in hospital due to COVID also decreasing here in Saskatchewan. And yet again we just thank Saskatchewan people for the effort that they are making day in, day out to ensure that we are moving forward as Saskatchewan communities. We are finding our way to a better

place to live with COVID-19 in our communities, Mr. Speaker, and doing what we can to minimize our individual risk.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, the worst COVID death rate in the country, over 1,000 deaths unaccounted for, and a premier who shows no curiosity, no concern. Just we don't talk about COVID because the last thing he wants is for anyone to examine the results of his deadly choices.

British Columbia last week announced their intention to have an independent investigation into their COVID response. British Columbia, that has just over half as many deaths per capita as we've seen in Saskatchewan, is willing to look for the truth. But the Premier? He wants the truth to stay hidden. Saskatchewan people, on the other hand, deserve answers.

Will the Premier commit today to an independent inquiry into the COVID-19 response that has cost so many Saskatchewan lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, first, with respect to the fatalities, as I said in a previous question, those fatalities are signed off as to a cause by the attending physician. That's what has happened for many, many years here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and continues to happen up to and including today. So there are no unaccounted-for fatalities. They are accounted for by the attending physician at that point in time in that facility.

With respect to some type of an inquiry, Mr. Speaker, no. The answer is no. Myself, the Minister of Health, our chief medical health officer, many other ministers have been out throughout this pandemic, communicating with Saskatchewan people multiple times a week in many cases, working through . . . With the knowledge that we have at that point in time, Mr. Speaker, sometimes enacting public health measures, sometimes removing those public health measures, but always providing all of the tools that we can to Saskatchewan people as quickly as we can.

And throughout this pandemic, we have made the best decisions that we can with the information at that point in time, Mr. Speaker. We most certainly have communicated those decisions throughout the pandemic. And I would say once again that I'm proud as to how Saskatchewan people have responded, responded to that communication and have responded to COVID-19 more generally. And that's why as we look ahead, we are going to, yes, move on living with COVID in our communities, Mr. Speaker, but getting things back to a much more normal environment.

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

Accessibility of COVID-19 Testing

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this government has pulled the plug on protecting kids under five, the only demographic unable to get vaccinated. Kids under five in this province are showing up in the ER [emergency room] at three times the rate of other age groups. And we don't yet know what the effects of long COVID

looks like on kids, although there are early indications that it could have an impact on IQ [intelligence quotient] and lead to a higher incidence of diabetes.

Yet kids, symptomatic or not, aren't eligible to get PCR [polymerase chain reaction] testing. Why won't this government take the minor step in protecting kids and allow them to get the PCR testing that they and their parents want?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a couple of things I'll address in that question. One, vaccinations haven't been approved for under the age of five, and as soon they are, the health care system will make that readily available to anybody who wants that, Mr. Speaker.

The other side of it, Mr. Speaker, with the PCR tests, we do have over 18 million rapid tests that people can use in their homes to diagnose it, whether they have COVID or not.

But what I can say on long COVID is we understand that there may be some effects. This is all clinical decisions that are going to be made on this, Mr. Speaker. But we have formed a working group that is dedicated to long COVID that's going to be made up of the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority], the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] College of Medicine, and the Ministry of Health. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we're hearing of kids getting sick. Parents are worried but unable to get a PCR test without paying upwards of \$200. Parents deserve to know if their child has COVID and get it on their medical records whether they can afford to pay or not. Will this government today commit to expanding COVID PCR testing that includes sick kids in our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and a very similar answer to before. There are rapid tests available for anybody in Saskatchewan. There's over 18 million of them. If somebody needs they can contact public health, and we'll make sure that they have available. We have them available over 150 locations across the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I assume that if there is a required test, that if there is further testing done at any level within the emergency room, the doctor would order that test. That's not something that would come out of my office. If a doctor needs to do a test in an emergency room situation, I'm sure that they will order the adequate test for whatever it is that they are seeing in front of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, surely the Minister of Health

understands that rapid tests are different from PCR tests, and rapid tests don't go on your health record.

This government has, time and again, walked away from its public health responsibilities and has allowed private testing to thrive while families in this province are struggling. It's typical for this government to manufacture a crisis and then come up with a private solution. How does it make any sense, Mr. Speaker, for families to have to pay out of pocket to know if their kids have a cold or if they have COVID?

Again, will this government include unvaccinated kids under five to the list of those who are eligible to receive a PCR test in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker, that we have over 18 million tests available that have been distributed out. We also have a reserve.

There seems to be a lot of criticism coming from the opposition that the doctors don't know how to sign off on a death certificate, that they're somehow hiding something. Now there's accusations that the ER doctors aren't being able to provide the rapid tests . . . or any of the tests, the PCR tests that they need within the emergency room, Mr. Speaker.

What I'm asking for is, Mr. Speaker, to have some respect for the physicians that we have out there, that they are doing their job. They're ordering the tests that they need to be doing. When somebody passes away, they're signing off on what that cause of death is. I certainly have the respect that the clinicians can do that. I would hope the opposition would as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Automobile Insurance Rates

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's becoming more and more difficult for Saskatchewan families to pay their bills. Mr. Speaker, it's about affordability. And any chance that this government gets, they are squeezing harder, whether it's hunters and fishers or through the Auto Fund. Mr. Speaker, the rate stabilization reserve is wildly, wholly, and uncontestedly overfunded. Fact. This government is overcharging Saskatchewan drivers. Fact. There are hundreds of millions of dollars that could be going to lower fees. Fact.

To the minister: will this government reverse their decision and stop nickel-and-diming Saskatchewan drivers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and I appreciate the opportunity to raise and reiterate the answers that we gave last week.

Mr. Speaker, the Auto Fund has got two components in it. One,

where people put money in, and there's a return on the investment on that fund. Secondly, where there's reduced accidents, because of COVID or whatever, funds generate.

Mr. Speaker, we will work hard because we want to have rate stabilization. We don't want to lower rates then have to have them come back up. I think one of the things that is most important to our people is consistency. We have had a flat system for the last number of years. And it is the goal of this government to try and maintain that, and we are going to do that.

Mr. Speaker, in order to help people with the pandemic, cheques for \$100 are currently being processed right now which will give some people some assistance with gasoline prices.

But, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will stand up . . . and that will be how they will handle money. They will want to throw it away. We will want to have some stability in our province.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Wow, Mr. Speaker, stability in the province. Two hundred bucks a pop for a kid under five to get a PCR test, and the member opposite is talking about this \$100 rebate as somehow that's offsetting gas prices.

Mr. Speaker, the minister needs new talking points. Or maybe he should pop over and chat with the member from Indian Head-Milestone, who was the minister responsible the last time the SAF [Saskatchewan Auto Fund] made an application to the Saskatchewan rate review panel. Back then the MCT [minimum capital test] was at 100 per cent and the Auto Fund was encouraged to review it. At that time, Mr. Speaker, the consultant suggested that the appropriate MCT target ratio might be between eighty-eight and ninety-one and a half per cent and that the selection of 100 per cent as the appropriate MCT target ratio might be a sign of excessive conservatism.

But enough with the jargon, Mr. Speaker. They obviously can't keep up. To get down to dollars and cents, this government is overcharging drivers. They're hoarding millions of dollars because they don't want it showing as a loss on their books. Mr. Speaker, this is money that belongs to people. Will the minister listen and reduce the rates?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SGI.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I answered a question earlier about maintaining some stability. Saskatchewan customers benefit from some of the lowest average personal auto injury rates in Canada, with the most comprehensive insurance injury coverage. In 2021 SGI customers paid the lowest car insurance rates in Canada, over \$2,600 less per year than in Ontario.

An adequate balance in the rate stabilization reserve protects customers against unpredictable premium increases for their insurance. SGI has been able to provide rebates because the Auto Fund has been in a strong financial position due to strong investment returns.

However, Mr. Speaker, we are now in a time of more volatile rates from the returns. We saw the Auto Fund lose over

\$128 million in the first three weeks of January. I would not want to be standing in this House saying to the citizens of this province, SGI lost \$128 million and therefore we have to raise rates. I'm glad the fund has come back. The fund is providing that stability. It is doing what it is supposed to, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Health Care

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, family doctors are closing their practices, and it's a real shame considering there are fewer family doctors in Saskatchewan now than when this Premier took office. Too many health care jobs are vacant in Saskatchewan as we speak — nurses, CCAs [continuing care aide], technicians, and support staff. It says one thing to me, Mr. Speaker: recruitment and retention are impossible under the leadership of this government.

The exodus is critical. Will he save our universal health care system while he has the chance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, if they want to look to the mass exit of doctors, they have to look to their record, their 16-year record in government where they lost year after year after year, mister doctor. Just because they stand up here and they go out in the rotunda and be able to talk about this number, Mr. Speaker, that they say doctors . . . It's just not accurate, Mr. Speaker. It is just not accurate.

What we have, Mr. Speaker, is there are 118 more doctors in this province practising. We have 56 per cent overall; a 72 per cent increase in specialists; a 43 per cent increase in general practitioners, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we work with the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association]. We work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons. We work with the Minister of Immigration and Career Training to be able to make sure that we have the proper people in place. We also work with the Minister of Advanced Education to make sure that we're increasing our training seats, which we have done, Mr. Speaker, year over year.

These are all the factors that we do to be able to make sure that we have the proper component of health care workers for our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — This is not a difference of opinion, Mr. Speaker. People can see these differences with their own eyes. They can see that there are less doctors than there were before. It's not a matter of . . . No. It's not a matter of a difference of opinion, Mr. Speaker.

It's not just doctors. It's not just front-line health care workers. Saskatchewan is losing health leaders as well. Months without a permanent CEO and COO [chief operating officer], vacancies in vice-president roles and physician executives, and more on the

way out. A casual observer can see there is something rotten in the state of our health system.

Mr. Speaker, why would anyone want to work for an organization with so many red flags?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, again, it is just not accurate what the member opposite is portraying to this Assembly. This year's . . .

Mr. Speaker, what I can talk about is what we do with some of our physician compensation, which we do have one of the best packages in Canada. We have the rural physician incentive program. We have the specialist physician training program. We have the specialist recruitment incentive. We have the Physician Long Term Retention Fund.

On and on, Mr. Speaker, what this government has had to do since the 16 years of the government over there, Mr. Speaker, to be able to build up our health care, build facilities. What we've also been able to do, Mr. Speaker, just on the capital, is the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford that we built, the children's hospital, Victoria Hospital, the Moose Jaw hospital, the Humboldt hospital. This government is building hospitals and building up our health care system, while those guys, when they were in government, they just tore it down, Mr. Speaker.

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

R Marker on Health Cards

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Indigenous people in this province continue to face systemic racism. It is unfortunate it took treaty Indians in this province filing a human rights complaint to get this government to remove the R from our provincial health cards.

Now the government needs to do the right thing and ensure that these cards with the R are permanently out of circulation. Mr. Speaker, asking treaty status Indians on- and off-reserve to make a request to get a new health card will create barriers. Will this government redistribute all health care cards to treaty Indians both on- and off-reserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the R on health cards has been removed as of March 1st this year. This was a government that took that very serious. We reached out to the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] to be able to discuss this multiple times, Mr. Speaker. We have done consultations with our Indigenous communities and our First Nation communities, and that has been pulled off.

If somebody does have that R on their card and they want it removed, all they have to do is contact Health and we will issue that again, Mr. Speaker. We will reissue them another card. If they want to keep their original card, they can do that. We have lots of options for people to be able to take that off their card. There will be no more Rs issued on any health cards, and we'll

continue to work with our Indigenous partners to make sure that this is rectified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Addressing Racism in Saskatchewan

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. Today's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. However racism continues to thrive in Saskatchewan. Statistics Canada recently revealed a 60 per cent increase in police-reported hate crimes in Saskatchewan from 2019 to 2020. This is unacceptable. What will the Sask Party government do to address the increase in hate crimes in this province?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, our government has been very, very clear that racism has no place in Saskatchewan. We have strong human rights legislation and the Human Rights Commission has a strong record with respect to ensuring that steps are taken, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

I'm very proud of the fact that this was the first government in the country to bring forward treaty education in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. Quite frankly, education is the key, is the key to combatting racism in this province. Citizenship education through the Human Rights Commission and through the Ministry of Education has been very, very strong in helping to deal with this. This government has a very, very strong record when it comes to combatting racism in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I regret that I don't have time to answer another question to talk about what the record of this province is with respect to combatting racism in this province.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 61 — *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege today to engage in Bill No. 61, *An Act respecting Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training and making consequential amendments to other Acts*.

After consulting with some students . . . I went to some of the post-secondary institutions myself and I talked with the students. And I found that their concerns are founded. They're talking about economics and lowering the quality of education. This performance-based funding would allow the province to implement accountability measures for funding. But what kind of responsibilities will the minister have, and what broad powers will the minister have as well?

So we're asking, and the students are asking, as to what are these broad changes being made in nurses, care aides, teachers, doctors, which I might add we are very short of employees in these areas. So the students also voiced their concerns there about the expansion of the powers of the minister, as I said, and we hope that the government is not reprogramming or repurposing post-secondary institutions for a different mission.

We want to continue to foster creative and well-rounded students. Saskatchewan is known for the very strong, strong population, and of course the citizens of Saskatchewan are saying we would like to continue to have a very well-rounded and balanced education. So this new model is based on graduation rates, on job placements, and potentially expand the powers of the provincial government.

The bill doesn't clearly state what accountability measures are. It says it's supposed to establish reporting requirements and new data-reporting abilities, except it hasn't further broadened it. We do have some questions regarding that. Critical thinking, which is sometimes lacking in the province, we want to improve critical, independent thinking. Communication skills for well-rounded people of Saskatchewan, we have to have a bit of give-and-take, some listening, which perhaps needs to be addressed more often.

Another area of concern, as I said, is the data collecting. In section 10, student information with respect to a student of a post-secondary education institution, personal history, and health information as defined in *The Health Information Protection Act*, some of the students said, what about our disabilities? Do we have physical disabilities that need to be addressed? Is this going to be in this bill? As defined in the human right codes, there are some questions regarding section (d), subject to regulations and accountability, monitoring the finances and governance of post-secondary institutions.

So we believe it needs more of a framework. Maybe it's got a skeleton, but we have to fill it out. We need more consultation. And we're also wondering what the long-term effects and impacts on the students are. The bill summary is to full repeal and replace, replacing Act from 2000. So it does provide legislative oversight, but we just have a few more questions, and we're hoping that they will get answered.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. We just need a few more answers, but I'd like to move to adjourn debate on Bill 61, which is an Act representing post-secondary education and skills training and making consequential amendments to other Acts. 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. 65

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 65 — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be asked to speak on Bill No. 65, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act* of 2021. Mr. Speaker, I have no comments on this. I'm sure the critic will have more to say in committee on this bill, so miigwech.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill 65 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 68

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 68 — *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act, 2021/Loi modificative de 2021 sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter in the debate on Bill No. 68, *The Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation will increase options for maintenance enforcement, a very important piece of the family justice pie, Mr. Speaker. This will also give more discretion to the director for enforcement for payments that are in arrears less than three months. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, some individuals were abusing this rule so it's, I think, the government's attempt to tie up a gap in the legislation that some folks were taking advantage of, Mr. Speaker.

It also allows for the maintenance enforcement office to go after

a payor's pension if they're refusing to pay for their arrears, Mr. Speaker. Maintenance enforcement office does incredibly important work in this province, Mr. Speaker. They're very much overburdened, I would say, with the amount of work that they have to do, Mr. Speaker, helping families recoup, recover payments from payors in this province that are refusing to pay their child support dues, Mr. Speaker. Many people in this province do pay their child support as they are obligated to, but for those who don't, there is the maintenance enforcement office that allows for the process of recouping those payments to occur by a third party outside either of the spouses, Mr. Speaker.

I'm looking forward to asking some questions of the minister and the committee as well as the officials about this bill, in particular the legislative changes, but also the maintenance enforcement office generally speaking. And in order to facilitate that work, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to allow this bill to move on to its next stage.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill 68 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 70

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 70 — *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021/Loi modificative de 2021 sur l'Assemblée législative*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to enter into debate here today on Bill 70, the legislative precincts bill.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is an odd piece of legislation. Centralization, additional control under this government, it's an odd tack for conservatives. When I grew up, they were supposed to believe in smaller and less obtrusive government, but the rub of this, Mr. Speaker, is that this bill is ahistoric and anti-democratic. It's unprecedented, it's partisan, it's devoid of transparency and accountability, and ultimately it makes us all less safe. These are the points, Mr. Speaker, that I'm going to be trying to keep my remarks to, although I look at this piece of legislation and I really feel like I don't have enough arrows in my

quiver.

But to contextualize Bill 70, when this was introduced the minister said at the time, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, we live in a changed and ever-changing world. We have all seen examples of where threats have escalated into violence. This should not happen in any workplace, any place in Saskatchewan, whether it's here or in the Legislative Building.

The safety and security of the Legislative Building, the staff, and visitors is of the utmost importance to our government, and we take this responsibility very seriously. We want to ensure that we create the safest environment for our employees who work in this building, and for those members of the public who come visit their Legislative Assembly.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this bill in its thoroughly frenetic rollout has seemed fast, whimsical, and fevered, and at worst capricious. So let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. There's been no ask for additional funds for security, and the Sergeant-at-Arms and his team come to work every single day and they protect us, and they protect us through any means necessary. And I hope all government members who are in support of this bill and who stand behind it are confident enough in their as-of-yet unarticulated support of this bill, to look these folks in the eye every single day when you come into this building. If the Sergeant and his team come to work every day ready to take, at worst, a bullet for us, the least that you can do is look them in the eyes when you come to work every day.

But, Mr. Speaker, what the minister is seemingly incapable of defining or explaining, whether in this Chamber or in the rotunda, is what the Sask Party's vision for security in the building truly is. It's unclear, Mr. Speaker, because quite simply she keeps saying, don't trust the professionals; trust me. Again, Mr. Speaker, an odd message from that government — don't trust law enforcement; trust the politicians.

So, Mr. Speaker, again to circle back, this is an unprecedented bill. Currently, Mr. Speaker, the precinct extends to the curb, and under the government proposal it will only cover the floor of this room — not the galleries, not the lounges, not the hallways, not the offices of the staff, not caucus, not rooms, not computers, or property, or vehicles — just the floor of this room. It's unclear, Mr. Speaker, if that even involves the doors.

Now we've seen changes in other assemblies, Mr. Speaker, even in this country. I grew up outside of Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, and we've seen very significant changes made to security at that building, very different than what I grew up with when you could just kind of roll willy-nilly all over the front lawn. And teenagers — not myself, Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear for the record — would occasionally go smoke pot on the front lawn of parliament. Of course, Mr. Speaker, at that point it was illegal and a very bad thing to do. But, Mr. Speaker, Parliament Hill has undergone significant changes, significant changes even before the most recent occupation.

But, Mr. Speaker, even in Ottawa where the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] are a significant part of security, they

still report to the Sergeant-at-Arms and to the Speaker. Be interested to know, Mr. Speaker, if that's currently the case in this building.

[14:30]

But under this bill, Mr. Speaker, the security force proposed will control who comes in, who lets in visitors, guests for question period, validators, who gets to sit in the gallery, how protests are handled, and how security is established for members and in constituency offices. This bill will remove the independence of this office, which is unheard of. Even the bill most recently cited by the minister, the bill in Manitoba, does not go as far as this reckless piece of legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to talk about the sad, petty, partisan nature of this bill. Mr. Speaker, as you well know, the Speaker is responsible for the privileges of all members in this Assembly, not just the government members. And despite the minister — I assume mistakenly — saying it's a government building and we're the government, this building is the people's building. That minister was quite simply wrong.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a mechanism in place currently to address security concerns in this building, with which by now all members are well familiar, the BOIE [Board of Internal Economy]. Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the BOIE is not in fact a committee of this legislature. Anything said in BOIE is not protected and is subject to judicial review. And the BOIE provides funding for the Legislative Assembly but it does not control the employees or the services of the legislature.

And again, circling back to the BOIE, which again is the proper place for security concerns to come despite efforts by this government to control and take authority for that which they do not have, they remain unable or unwilling to share any information as to what has prompted this. When questioned the minister said, and I quote:

The government has had a number of incidents reported to us. Some of them we have witnessed. Some of them we have been involved in. And some we've received from the staff and the public.

I'll go on to quote the article itself, Mr. Speaker, "Those incidents were not handled by the current security staff to the government's liking," Tell said."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister has been unwilling to disclose even in aggregate or anonymous form what, if any, incidents have occurred and what constitutes something not being handled to the government's liking. Mr. Speaker, are these real concerns? Are these real threats to which all members and all staff and journalists and visitors to this building should be made aware, or is it simply a matter of Indigenous people on the lawn in tipis? Some protesters good, some protesters bad.

Police independence seems to be a problem for this government, whether it's with Bill 70 or with the Regina police's unwillingness to drag Tristen Durocher off the west lawn. So, Mr. Speaker, what is the problem that Bill 70 is trying to solve? What is the problem that the minister, cabinet, every member opposite, and this Premier is trying to solve? They won't tell us.

They won't say it in this Chamber, and every time they get out into the rotunda in front of a microphone, it seems like they say something a little bit different . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . If they don't run away. That's a good point from the Leader of the Opposition. Sometimes they just amscrum right out of a scrum.

Mr. Speaker, this is also about transparency and accountability. It's important for the minister to be able to address whether consultation with the RCMP, PCC [Provincial Capital Commission], and RPS [Regina Police Service] has occurred. Have they been consulted on this bill?

You know, Mr. Speaker, more recently the minister has spoken about the role taken by the government in the brief occupation of Albert Street. Remarkable to hear really, and I look forward to hearing her share more details. It was surprising to myself and likely to all members to hear that the current legislative security did not liaise with RPS or coordinate. I imagine every person in this room would be surprised to learn that those ensuring the right to peaceful protest, as well as the rights and safety of citizens of Regina and staff in this building, were not included by that government in establishing security protocols.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the government has not and will not share concerns, and this should be concerning to all members. Mr. Speaker, to be quite, quite clear about this, I do not trust, I do not feel safe, and I do not feel comfortable sharing security concerns, threats, or personal information with somebody reporting directly to a minister of this government. And it's clear why. We've already seen a politicization of this. If there are real issues, bring them to BOIE. This is the appropriate place to bring those concerns forward. Speak to former members of this Assembly, and they will tell you that is the appropriate place to bring these concerns forward.

And again, Mr. Speaker, if there are real and valid concerns, have the basic decency to share them with your colleagues who work, yes, on opposite sides, but still side by side with every single one of you every day here. There are guests, journalists, officials, staff, and children who come into this building.

You know, Mr. Speaker, up until the introduction of Bill 70, due to personal circumstances, I had my baby here almost every single day. And I will say, outside of the circus and pageantry of question period, if I find out as a mother that there were significant security concerns in this building and they were not shared by the government with members on this side for some sort of petty and low partisan reason, I will be horrified, I will be deeply saddened, and I will be incredibly disappointed in every single member on the government side, not just the minister.

You know, how would you feel, Mr. Speaker, if you're simultaneously being told that there are real significant threats and concerns, but nah, you don't get that information? Nah, we're not going to tell you. And no, there's no information you need, but also there is this pressing concern to spend hours and hours and hours of legislative time, money, political capital, and process on this bill that those members and that minister will not and cannot explain.

And, Mr. Speaker, again this is the crux of the issue. The minister cannot or will not explain the purpose of this bill and what problem it's trying to solve. So either there are legitimate

concerns that have not, shamefully not been shared with all members of this Assembly or staff, let alone to those responsible and accountable for the safety and security of all of us, or the government is simply frustrated that they can't dictate what security forces in this building do.

So let's talk about safety, Mr. Speaker, because ultimately this bill will make us all less safe. I've heard stories shared by members on both sides of the aisle concerning stories — worry for security, stories about people coming to their house, people making inappropriate comments, people hassling them or their staff in public. And while it's not typically new to members who've sat in opposition before, nor members in government, I understand this may be novel for some. It is part of this job, but it can be inappropriate, and it can cross the line into concerning.

People showing up to your house is unacceptable. I know people know where I live. I know that looks a whole lot different if you live in a smaller community and every single person there knows which house is your house. That's not acceptable, Mr. Speaker, and that needs to be addressed. Bill 70 will not address these concerns.

And, Mr. Speaker, these experiences that we have as all members, these are shared experiences. It's hard to understand if you don't have this job. I understand there is nuance in different communities and different experiences, but we all share the same job of being elected, being accountable, and sometimes being hated by members of the public. The last thing that we need is for such an important issue addressing our personal security and that of every single person in this building to be politicized and partisan. This is a government that likes to chirp about mending divisions. This bill will make us more divided and it will make all of us less safe, and some of us even less so.

So let's get down to some brass tacks, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, the opposition has not blocked a single proposal brought forward by members of the government to BOIE. If there are concerns, if there is a need for additional funding or support, bring them forward. We will have a discussion. You will have our full support if it is a matter of making this building safer for every person in this province.

There is no other jurisdiction, Mr. Speaker, in Canada that functions as proposed by Bill 70. We hear, Mr. Speaker, that there are growing security concerns. Every single member in this House lives that every day. We know this, Mr. Speaker. And again, this is a shared concern and a shared experience. If that is the driving reason behind this bill, bring it to BOIE.

But nothing has been brought forward. There are recommendations from 2014 which remain outstanding, recommendations following the shooting in Ottawa, which to my knowledge have not been implemented.

And there are ongoing discussions in other jurisdictions about best practices, about improving security. Ontario's having conversations about how to expand and afford real protection to constituency offices. And our staff who do that work in the community deserve a safe working environment. And I know that that is currently afforded to them under the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms. But if there's interest in discussing that, Bill 70 does not ameliorate that.

Digital and cyber continue to be huge risks and concerns. Bill 70 does not make that better. There are no new asks, no implementation of outstanding recommendations that were undertaken by a third party and have been outstanding for eight years.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let's talk about violence against politicians because really that's what Bill 70 is trying to skirt around. But violence against politicians, Mr. Speaker, it is real and it is not new. You know, Mr. Speaker, there are many women who serve in this building on both sides and for whom these threats take on a particular relevance. But for all members, violence against politicians, even in a place like Canada, is real and it is not new. There's been a lot of discussion to date about the 1980s and what took place, and what took place as a consequence of what happened in the '80s and what has taken place in other legislatures. And you know, there's even further back that we could go, Mr. Speaker, starting with the War of 1812, but I'm going to try and wrap this up and keep it in this century.

But let's start, Mr. Speaker, in 1966. A bomb blew up in the Canadian parliament. A bomb blew up in a washroom accidentally detonated by Paul Joseph Chartier, whom it was believed was planning to bomb the House of Commons.

Changes were made to this legislature, as we've heard from the minister a number of times, in 1985. And while *Hansard* is largely silent on the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms in this building, in 1984 there was a mass shooting at the Quebec legislature when Denis Lortie stormed the building and killed three government employees, shot them to death: Camille Lepage, Georges Boyer, and Roger Lefrançois. Mr. Speaker, the killer entered the building intent on assassinating the premier, René Lévesque. Instead he killed a receptionist, a courier, and then opened fire in a smoking room and in the cafeteria — a terrible, terrible incident, Mr. Speaker.

And how was it resolved, you ask? Mr. Speaker, the National Assembly Sergeant-at-Arms René Jalbert was informed that there was a man in military uniform with a gun in the Assembly Chamber. Upon stepping out of the elevator, the assailant asked him why he came and then fired his C1 submachine gun inches from the Sergeant-at-Arms' face. The Sergeant-at-Arms Jalbert said that he too had been soldier with the Royal 22nd Regiment, and that if Lortie would allow him he would show him his discharge card. He agreed, after which Jalbert persuaded him to show him his own identification.

After this exchange, in defusing the situation, Jalbert persuaded Lortie to come into his office to discuss the matter, release other civilians in the Assembly Chamber. He talked to him for more than four hours, ultimately promising him that he would be able to surrender to military police as he was unwilling to surrender, I believe, to civilian police. After which four hours of work by the Sergeant-at-Arms, Lortie surrendered to the officers of the SQ [Sûreté du Québec], Quebec City police, and the National Assembly security.

For his actions, which likely prevented further death, Jalbert was awarded the Cross of Valour several months later in the same National Assembly Chamber that Lortie had burst into.

In 1988, Mr. Speaker, an armed gunman attacked the Alberta legislature. Robert Crawford had gone through an unhappy divorce and, in his own words, struggling to get back on his feet, he blamed Social Services for his problems.

[14:45]

He entered the building loaded with guns, and the Commissionaire Herb Bushkowsky, a World War II veteran, saw Robert Crawford loading shells into a gun, locked the doors and called the police. Mr. Crawford then prowled the building, trying to provoke security by shooting at windows, and provoked the police into a shoot-off, hoping to die by suicide by cop. He fired at officers, trying to provoke this terrible confrontation. The two constables then ended up taking cover and tried to talk this individual down. On realizing that Crawford had his weapon aimed at the constable, he yelled, "Put down your gun." Denouden yelled, "We don't want to shoot you, Mr. Crawford. Throw the gun down."

Mr. Crawford did not, and instead the constable fired four shots and Crawford fell to the floor. I'll quote from a *Calgary Sun* article, I believe:

While they waited for the paramedics to arrive, Denouden, the constable, cradled Crawford's head in his own arms and wept, asking Crawford why he'd done it, assuring him that the security team and police hadn't wanted to shoot him.

This was not, unfortunately, the first shooting at the Alberta legislature, Mr. Speaker. In 1977, a 21-year-old secretary to a minister in Peter Lougheed's government, Victoria Breikreusz, was murdered by her ex-boyfriend, shot while she worked at her desk.

Even more recently, Mr. Speaker, in 2019, somebody tragically committed suicide on the steps of the legislature, shooting themselves with a handgun. And again, Mr. Speaker, in 2014, in Ottawa, Corporal Nathan Cirillo was shot and killed before his attacker was shot 31 times by members of the RCMP and the then Sergeant-at-Arms.

We can look internationally, Mr. Speaker, to Sweden where Anna Lindh was murdered, stabbed to death in 2003. And I know I think often of Jo Cox, a labour politician in the UK [United Kingdom], a rising star, spirited and brilliant politician and mother to two young children. She was on her way to a meeting at her constituency office and she was shot twice in the head and stabbed 15 times in the chest with a hunting knife — a young woman, mother of two. And just this year we saw Sir David Amess, also stabbed to death in his constituency surgery.

In this building there have been serious protests, though nothing as tragic as the accounts I've just given. I think of former minister of Justice Nilson who was accosted in the halls of this building in 1997. There have been significant protests, Mr. Speaker, and protesters who have refused to leave and security concerns. And I raise these issues to draw attention to one common thread. Despite these horrifying and terrorizing crimes, never once, Mr. Speaker, not one time was the response of these legislatures to remove or limit the independence and role of their Sergeant-at-Arms and the security personnel. Not one time.

So, Mr. Speaker, if there are real security concerns and real fears on the government side, I'm real sorry to hear about that. And we will support you through the BOIE process through additional funding or support to the independent office of the Sergeant-at-Arms. But Bill 70 does not make us safer.

Fundamentally, what the minister has said time and time again is, don't trust the police; trust me. Don't trust the folks with decades of first-hand experience in gangs, in vice, in the army; trust me.

And with the utter chaos of this piece of legislation and the minister's inability to answer basic questions, and the palpable discomfort from some members on the government side with this, how can any member in this building believe that this is a sound and earnest piece of legislation?

When we talk about security, when we talk about the livelihoods and also the actual lives of people in this building, how can anyone agree with the statement, don't trust the professionals, trust us, trust the politicians?

Mr. Speaker, with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 70.

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. 71

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 71 — *The Insurance Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my honour as always to stand in my place today and enter into second reading debate on this bill, Bill No. 71, *The Insurance Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Regina University so eloquently just canvassed, one of the questions that we should be asking ourselves any time that we see a bill in front of this Assembly is, what is the problem that this bill is trying to solve? Why is it here? Who's asked for it? And certainly our role as the official opposition is to provide the oversight and scrutiny necessary to ensure that not only are there no unintended consequences of legislation, proposed legislation that we see on the floor, but also no reasonably foreseeable consequences.

And I think that unlike Bill 70, which I think has been very well canvassed by my colleague, the case with Bill No. 71 is quite a bit more straightforward. In fact a lot more straightforward.

The minister in his second reading remarks, this was back in November of last year, did a very thorough job of outlining why we saw this bill in front of us — namely to codify a recent Court of Appeal decision with regard to the limit on the amount of funds that can be held in side accounts for insurance policies.

And that seems to be rather straightforward.

There are also a number of provinces who have undertaken similar legislation. I believe, again my colleague from Regina University noted in her second reading remarks, this is the case in Alberta, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. So nothing out of line there, Mr. Speaker. It is reasonable, in fact I think required of governments, when there is important legislation or rather important decisions made within the courts, that those decisions find their way into legislation. That's one of the mechanisms to improve legislation and is an important part of our democracy.

So as is often the case when looking at second readings, you're bound to learn something new if you dig far enough. And the fact that there are side accounts attached to insurance policies is something that, I'm not sure, maybe everyone else in the Assembly knew that. I did not know that, but that is what this bill in its substance addresses. So currently there were no limits on the amount of money that could be deposited on side accounts associated with life insurance contracts, something that left a liability for both insurers and consumers.

So what this bill proposes to do is to not only impose limits but sort of prescribe the mechanisms by which those limits will be imposed. Subsection (2) in section 8-128(2) sets out the maximum amounts that may be held in side accounts and how those accounts are to be determined by an insurer. Subsection (4) — and I'm just skipping down the sections here, Mr. Speaker — confirms that any amount that exceeds the limits as prescribed in subsection (2) is not a premium and has never been a premium. And that, I think, is rather clear. And it cannot be held under a contract or its associated side account no matter when the policy was issued. I think that there was some thought that the legislation would only apply back. This clarifies that it doesn't matter when the policy was issued; these new rules would come into play.

Mr. Speaker, there's one more piece that I wanted to address here, and that is how these limits are arrived at. And that is contained in section 8-128(2)(b), with respect to a contract that is not an exempt policy, the amount that may be held under the contract together with any associated side account must not exceed the amount required to pay for future costs of the insurance, related tax premiums, and administrative fees.

So anything in excess of that would not be allowed in that side account. And the amounts mentioned in clauses (a) and (b) are to be determined from time to time — which is an interesting clause in legislation, but I guess that will be perhaps more defined in regulations — by the insurer or on an actuarial basis using the remaining lifetime of the persons then insured under contract. So from time to time that amount, the amount that can be held in that side account, will be looked at by the insurer and adjusted based on how old the person is and how much those other fees are.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that both the minister in the second reading remarks and my colleagues in the official opposition have had ample opportunity to this point to address the bill, what it's intended to do. I think that there's been a great deal of oversight provided, but I believe that there may be a few other of my colleagues who still would like to enter some comments into the record.

I believe I've come to the conclusion of mine at this point, Mr. Speaker, and with that will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 71.

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. 72

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 72 — *The Life Leases Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to give my comments on Bill No. 72, *The Life Leases Act* of 2021. So this is new legislation, and it's giving . . . The lease owner will have 10 days after the life lease is signed to be able to cancel for any reason. Mr. Speaker, it's important legislation, and happy to see that the government is moving forward with recommendation on Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan.

So what I do want to say is . . . Well I don't have very much to say on here because I'm sure my colleague, the critic in this area, will have plenty to say regarding this bill. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I won't say too much on this, and I'm sure my colleagues would also have more to add to this. But for myself, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 72, *The Life Leases Act* of 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. 73

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Marit that **Bill No. 73 — *The Animal Production Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet today, speaking on Bill No. 73, *The Animal Production Act*. This is a bill that's intending to replace four pieces of legislation: *The Animal Identification Act*, *The Animal Products Act*, *The Line Fence Act*, and *The Stray Animals Act*. Obviously a lot of common ground that's being covered under these former pieces of legislation, which the new animal production Act is intending to combine into one comprehensive piece.

And I do have some comments and questions I want to flag in my

remarks here this afternoon, but I'll just make some introductory remarks first of all. First off, the Act is proposing to bring together government oversight, broadly speaking, of livestock production. I note that there are a number of provisions in the Act around the establishment of a committee and an appeals process, so on and so forth. I'll speak to that in a moment.

[15:00]

Also the Act will cover livestock and animal product inspections related to licences, rules for administrative agreements, authority for the handling of stray animals, fence cost-sharing rules, and arbitration processes for settling disputes.

These are all important matters that require appropriate governance and legislation to ensure that our producer sector is able to function cost effectively and unencumbered by unnecessary administrative overburden and red tape. And so obviously what we're looking to see here is that the goals that have been set for this legislation are truly being fulfilled while at the same time ensuring a proper governance framework for this sector of our economy.

Also it's notable that the government intends to consult with stakeholders and bring forward regulations in the coming year. I'm sure that our Agriculture critic will have a lot of questions and a keen eye to ensure that these consultations are broad and encompass all of the affected stakeholders to ensure that this legislation is hitting the right balance and taking into account the interests of all those stakeholders that are going to be affected by this Act. Certainly we've seen in many areas of legislation in the past years where the government has done a rather light touch on that consultation. We want to make sure that they haven't just ticked the box on that.

Of course innovation and growth in our agriculture sector is a priority for our opposition. It's a vital part of our economy. There's tremendous opportunity to grow the sector and also implement innovative approaches. We're very much in support of that going forward and want to see a legislative framework that's going to also facilitate that happening.

Of course our ag sector is a very diverse one. It's an important one to Saskatchewan's culture, its history, its economy. And you know, we're looking to ensure that our communities remain vibrant, that they continue to prosper as ag producers in these areas of animal production in particular. And we're very much in support of that and look always to efficiency and modernization and legislation that can facilitate that happening. Our primary interest here is to ensure that the government gets this right, gets the right balance, that they're putting in place the right message to ensure that we have a healthy industry with the right checks and balances, I would say as well.

Obviously there is a number of important considerations for the health and growth of this sector, not the least of which is, you know, ensuring that we have humane treatment of animals that are being governed by this Act, that we're preventing the spread of diseases, that there is adequate inspections happening of animal production facilities and the production of a safe supply of food products and that, as in all things, that we're ensuring adequate environmental stewardship along the way.

We know that our ag producers are very proud of the manner in which they are able to be stewards of the land, whether that's protecting source water and natural habitats through these measures. And we just want to make sure that that continues to be the case, that there's improvement in these areas going forward, and that the legislation is providing for that as we go forward.

So with those introductory remarks, I'll maybe get down into some more specifics. I had a little bit of time this afternoon — not much, and there never is enough time it seems but I did try to go through this new Act and understand its scope and application.

I note that there is a definition for “animal” provided in the preliminary matters section. That includes bovines, camelids, caprines, cervids, equines, fowl, fur farm animals, insects, ovines, etc. But certainly this, as I understand it, is an Act to cover off animals “. . . owned by a person for the purposes of animal production, competition or personal use.” So I think that's an important, obviously, definition to understand as it is covering off I think primarily on animal production, but not exclusively. And I think that there may be a little bit of confusion with the name of the Act, which is animal production Act and doesn't give any reference whatsoever to that of competition or personal use. So I think it might create a little bit of confusion for people — and I note that in particular in the section around stray animals — because I certainly was confused on its application to people's pets. It doesn't seem really clear to me whether those are excluded or not.

Obviously I'm not the critic for this area. I come into this with really no working background and so, you know, some of my questions are going to be very much of a sort of first-glance nature. But that's probably a good thing, I would say, because obviously, you know, if there is unintended ambiguity in the legislation, we should try to get that cleared up before it gets passed. And I would encourage the minister responsible to have a closer look at that. I know that our critic for the area will have many, many questions. I know that he's consulting extensively with stakeholders and will ensure that these types of matters are being addressed adequately going forward.

So I guess it stood out to me, the mention of fur farms. I think that's an area that has come into public awareness of late. You know, we've had cases where different fur farm animals had to be culled because of infectious diseases. And certainly that's not exclusive to that category of animal but just one that's been particularly vulnerable of late, and want to ensure that the measures here are adequately addressing the issue of infectious diseases, you know, through the application of inspection processes and other means as described in the Act.

I also just want to take a moment at this time to, you know, address one of the goals that was identified when this Act was being presented, around consolidating, streamlining, building efficiencies into legislative processes. And I would just caution that as we're doing that, that through some of the streamlining effort that still that the legislative framework is maintaining its robustness because certainly there are many risks. It's always a balance trying to get that right in terms of providing a degree of flexibility. But at the same time we also need to have rigour in our legislation to ensure that minimum standards are being upheld, that the right checks and balances are part of the

framework so we're preventing either the spread of diseases and other ill effects in their absence, or if we get that balance wrong.

I'll just maybe move on through the various sections here. I do note that, you know, in section 1 there is the provision for the delegation of powers. Under section 1-3(3) that:

The minister may, in writing, delegate any or all of the minister's powers or responsibilities pursuant to this Act . . . [etc.] to another person with terms and conditions that the minister considers appropriate . . .

I guess I'm always a little bit cautious when . . . I mean obviously we see this kind of delegation in many legislative Acts. And it's always with a view towards, you know, the administration agreements that are going to be in place to ensure that as those powers are delegated through an administrative agreement, that there's the right frameworks in place both to ensure that there is, you know, qualified individuals that are performing the work, that they have the right credentials, that they're able to ensure that the goals of these programs are being achieved. Obviously we know that the Provincial Auditor, in their role, is overseeing that. And that's just one of the areas that I know our critic for this area will be diving into in greater detail.

So that whether it's with respect to administrative agreements, licences, inspections, the powers of inspectors, so on and so forth, that we're protecting this industry going forward, ensuring that it can continue to thrive and prosper and contribute overall to the economy here in Saskatchewan and the vibrancy of our communities.

And so with that, I will conclude my remarks and move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 73, *The Animal Production 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. 75

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 75 — *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 2021/Loi de 2021 sur les organisations sans but lucratif*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to briefly enter into debate on Bill No. 75, *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 2021*. When the minister was giving his second reading speech, he talked about how this bill is modelled off of the new business corporations Act that was passed a year ago now, that the attempts are to modernize, which I think any time we hear about modernization, it certainly seems welcomed. But we have to do our due diligence to make sure that these are actually positive changes.

We have this bill allowing for the use of electronic filing and

electronic board meetings. We know that these have certainly been required during the pandemic, and it's encouraging to see changes that will increase access on these fronts as well and allow for more accountability.

It also allows for non-profit corporations to have Indigenous names, and it is shocking to me at this point that we don't have that yet, so I would say 100 per cent welcome these changes. You know, it's one step toward reconciliation that we can make. So yeah, happy to see that this change can come through.

Certainly the modernization makes sense. It removes the requirement that a board consist of at least 25 per cent of Saskatchewan residents, which puts us in line with other jurisdictions, and also removes the ability for a non-accountant to conduct audits or reviews.

This is a big bill. I know that the critic is going to be engaging with a lot of stakeholders. And with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 75 for today.

[15:15]

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. 76

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 76 — *The Non-profit Corporations Consequential Amendments Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter in on Bill No. 76 today. This is a bill that is partnered with the Bill 75 in that it makes consequential amendments to other pieces of legislation. As a result of the changes in Bill 75, there are consequential changes required in other pieces of legislation, and many different moving parts.

The legislation that's being changed is *The Condominium Property Act*, *The Credit Union Act*, *The Métis Act*, and *The Municipalities Act* — many different various pieces of legislation here. It changes the definition of "municipalities" by striking out "means a city, town, village, rural municipality, municipal district or northern municipality" and amending a number of different clauses as well around corporations and other terminology, Mr. Speaker.

There are a lot of moving parts here that will impact many different pieces of legislation and that stakeholder outreach will be ongoing. But with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill 76.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:18.]

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