



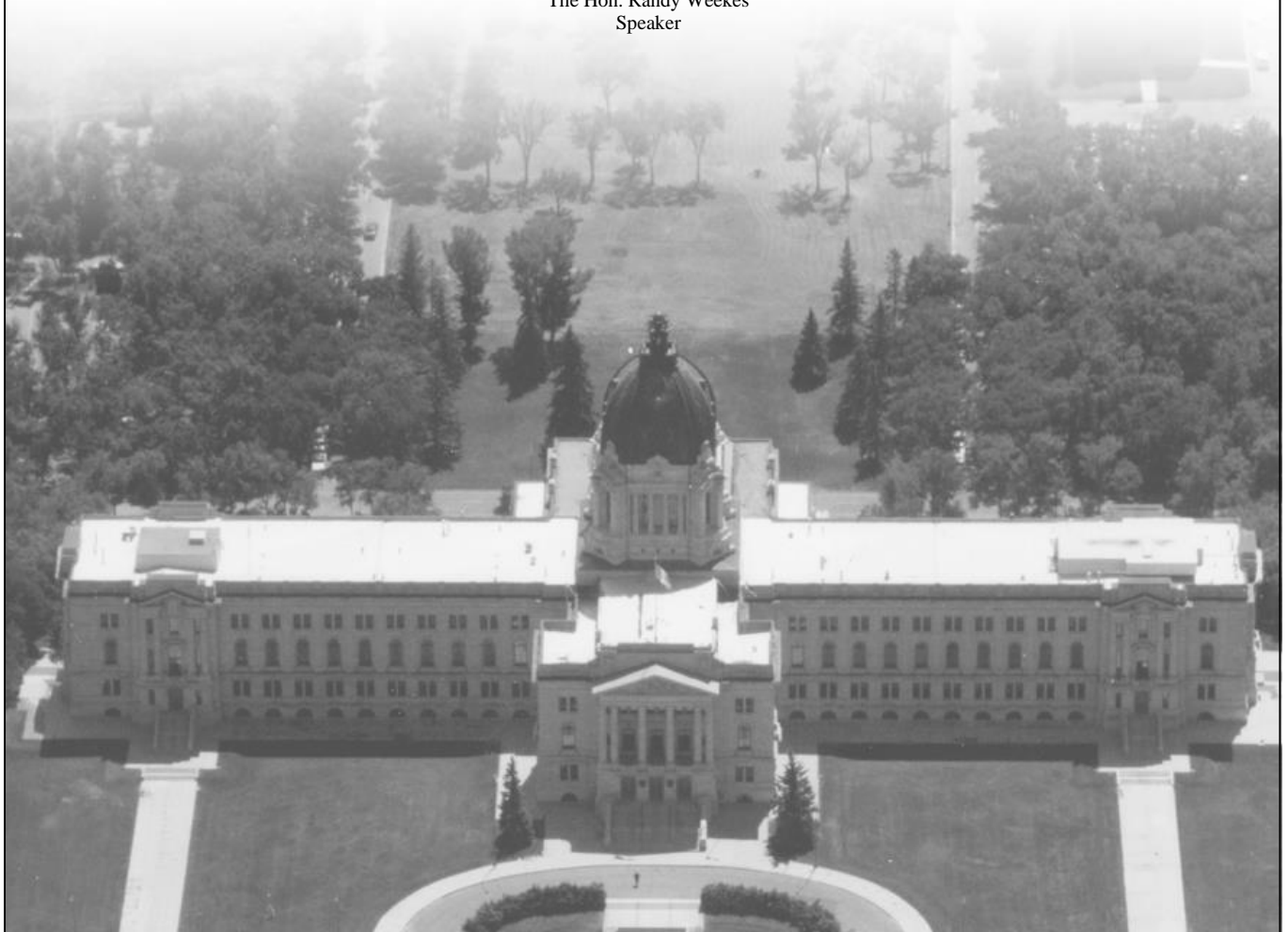
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

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Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
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Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Independent (Ind.) — 1

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce two gentlemen in your gallery — not often we get visitors from Meadow Lake — but two gentlemen who are visiting Regina as a part of the delegation from the city of Meadow Lake to the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention.

My very good friend Mayor Merlin Seymour, who has been our mayor in Meadow Lake for a number of years, does a great job. And also another gentleman I know fairly well: Tom Harrison, councillor, city councillor in Meadow Lake. So I'd ask that all members join with me in welcoming . . . He's also my dad. Thank you.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to introduce a couple of folks who are seated in your gallery.

I want to introduce Shylo Stevenson and Victoria and Payton Byrne, as well as five-month-old Rilah. These three individuals are very fierce advocates in our community of Regina, Mr. Speaker. They've been involved in the Regina Needle Recovery and Community Support group, which was a group of volunteers that provided kind of basic harm reduction services around the city, Mr. Speaker, and then eventually recognized that there was a far greater need. Basically they've been providing kind of volunteer-based wraparound services ever since.

They were instrumental in supporting the folks that were part of Camp Marjorie that then became Camp Hope. We all know that . . . I believe there was one death by overdose at the camp, which is a tremendous testament to their work. Since that camp, there have been over nine deaths by overdose, Mr. Speaker.

That speaks to the crucial and life-saving support that these folks created together with others. I have to say that there are others, but these are the three that are joining us today. And they are now part of the group Warriors of Hope, and of course that name derives its name from Camp Hope. This was a community initiative that really arose out of that camp.

I also just want to give a little shout-out to little Rilah. Rilah's middle name is Shylo, of course named after Shylo Stevenson. Rilah was born at camp. Her mother had been slipping through the cracks, and the community kind of stepped in to support that little baby. And Victoria has adopted Rilah, and she's a beautiful little baby girl, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to offer my welcome, to you and through you, to

Victoria, Payton, Rilah, and Shylo to this, their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I also would like to welcome Shylo Stevenson. Shylo, welcome back. I've had the opportunity to meet with Shylo in an official capacity, and seeing him down at Camp Hope. And I truly thank him for all of the work he does for the community. It's really appreciated. And of course, welcome to Victoria, Payton, and Rilah. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members, it's my privilege, as it always is but especially today, to rise and welcome 40 grade 7 students from Regina Christian to this, their legislature. Welcome, everyone. And they're of course accompanied by, I believe, two teachers, Rebecca and Erinn, as well as their parent chaperones, Karri, Korrie, and Christa.

Welcome to your legislature. I hope you enjoy the proceedings today, and I look forward to meeting with you afterwards. So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these incredible young people to this, their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in welcoming the grade 7 class from Regina Christian, one in particular, a young man who I know pretty well as well, named Mac Harrison, my son who is up there as well. So I'd ask the Assembly to join with me in welcoming him to his Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to protect Saskatchewan's water supply.

The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention the following: that water is essential for human health, recreation, health of our ecosystems, and our economy; that research from the University of Regina shows the water quality of Saskatchewan lakes is getting worse; that Saskatchewan sat idle as our water supply was threatened by the Government of Alberta's decision to rescind their coal development policy; and the provincial government needs to take an active role in opposing policies that have downstream impacts on Saskatchewan rivers and deltas.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to actively protect Saskatchewan waters from current and future threats

to our valuable water supply.

This petition is signed by residents from Avonlea and Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of mental health and addictions services in the North.

These citizens wish to bring to our attention that northern Saskatchewan has tragically high rates of suicide, and many in the North struggle with mental health and addictions issues; that the Children's Advocate has spoken many times about the lack of services in the North; many Indigenous and municipal leaders in the North have expressed the need for a wellness facility in northern Saskatchewan; that Saskatchewan people have long advocated for more mental health and addictions services in the North; and that the residents from northern communities need immediate attention to address the chronic mental health and addictions issues.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to treat northern Saskatchewan's residents with respect and dignity and immediately invest in more mental health and wellness programs and facilities in the North.

This petition today is signed by individuals from Saskatoon and Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to once again rise to present our petition calling for pay equity legislation in Saskatchewan. The signatories would like to bring to our attention the following points: that Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation; that Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender-wage gaps in all of Canada, about \$5-an-hour difference between what women make on average in Saskatchewan versus what men make on average; and that the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation — this was over 26 years ago this recommendation was made, and this has not been pursued to date by the Government of Saskatchewan; that while pay equity advocacy primarily seeks to address gender-based wage discrimination, it must also be mindful of ability-, age-, identity-, and race-based wage discrimination.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the signatories for the petition today reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise today, as it is every day that I have the opportunity, to present this petition calling on the Legislative Assembly to fund in vitro fertilization treatments here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition wish to draw to our attention the following: one in six couples in Canada experience infertility and that IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive, with one cycle typically costing at least \$10,000. This is before the cost of associated drugs, which, Mr. Speaker, we all know can run up to \$7,500. A single page of photocopying is charged at a cost of \$26.

Despite public health care being a right in Canada, there is no government financial support for what is a health issue, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status; and that investing in people determined to grow their families here in Saskatchewan makes moral and economic sense; and finally, that other provinces have created programs to financially assist with 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 treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today are from Bjorkdale and Tisdale. I do so present.

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be on my feet today to present the following petition. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: this government has been selling off Crown land and leases to the highest bidder; they haven't meaningfully consulted with impacted communities; they are leaving the taxpayers of this province footing the bill for its mistakes and losses in court; the first right of refusal needs to be offered to First Nation and Métis people in the treaty land entitlement process when Crown lands are being sold; and the province, the provincial government, must immediately stop selling off Crown land and leases and fix their broken duty-to-consult process.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately stop the sell-off of Crown land, and work with First Nation and Métis communities to develop a new duty-to-consult framework.

The signatories of this petition reside in Kamsack and Saskatoon.

I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Craft Council Recognizes Legacy of Handmade House

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Handmade House, situated in my riding of Saskatoon Nutana, was formed in the early 1970s and has been located on Broadway Avenue for close to 40 years. The Saskatchewan Craft Council, also located in Saskatoon Nutana, will be hosting an exhibition entitled *Rooted: 50 Years of Saskatchewan Craft* from March 25th until May 14th to highlight the history and legacy of Handmade House.

Handmade House was started as an artist co-operative by five women who believed in the importance of Saskatchewan crafts being accessible to Saskatchewan people. Their first venture was a Christmas shop. Over the years, it grew to become a full-time operation that currently represents over 100 artisans from all over Saskatchewan, working in a variety of mediums including fibre, glass, metal, clay, and wood. The *Rooted* exhibition has a diverse selection of art featuring both current working members and its past members.

The co-operative model is alive and well in Saskatchewan when it comes to arts and crafts, and Saskatchewan has a diverse array of artisans who have found a way to make a living with their art, connecting with other artisans and customers while living in Saskatchewan. It's exciting to see Handmade House continue to be a vibrant member of my community, and I congratulate them on this important milestone.

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

[13:45]

New Robotic-Assisted-Surgery Program in Saskatoon

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday on behalf of the Minister of Health, I had the pleasure of announcing the start of the Saskatchewan robotic-assisted-surgery program in Saskatoon. This program is possible because of the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation, led by CEO [chief executive officer] Lecina Hicke and her team, and the philanthropy of the Belsher family.

Mr. Speaker, the foundation embarked on an aggressive campaign to raise \$1.5 million. Merlis Belsher and his family is generously donating \$1 million as well as providing \$100,000 as a matched gift. The Ministry of Health will contribute up to \$1 million and cover the operating costs, \$800,000 per year.

Mr. Belsher is well known for his generous gift to the University of Saskatchewan, establishing Merlis Belsher Place as the home of the University of Saskatchewan Huskies hockey teams. Mr. Belsher also contributed to the gymnasiums at Luther College High School here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the surgical robot, the first of its kind in Saskatchewan, is a sophisticated tool that enhances a surgeon's ability to perform complex, minimally invasive surgeries. This can reduce complications and shorten patients' stays compared to open surgery, creating more capacity to perform more procedures.

I would ask all members to express our gratitude to Lecina Hicke and the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation team for their efforts, as well as to the Merlis Belsher family for their continued philanthropy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Second-Stage Housing Provided by SOFIA House

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a crucial non-profit organization here in Regina — SOFIA House. SOFIA House provides second-stage housing for women and their children fleeing interpersonal violence. Second-stage housing offers longer term safe accommodations with accompanying services that support families when they need it the most.

Without second-stage housing, women fleeing violence are forced to navigate a complicated system on their own. One can imagine how difficult that is after fleeing a violent situation, particularly given the isolation, control, and lack of self-esteem and confidence many women who experience interpersonal violence face.

Those who work with women fleeing violence report many barriers to accessing Saskatchewan housing services, including the requirement to provide proof of income and other paperwork such as ID [identification] or SIN numbers [social insurance number]. That's why second-stage housing is so important as they provide that safe haven combined with wraparound support needed to help women and families navigate a complicated system.

We would like to join with SOFIA House in expressing our disappointment in this government's decision to once again not provide operational funding for second-stage shelters in this budget. Saskatchewan has the highest rates of interpersonal violence and family violence amongst all provinces in Canada.

If this government cared about this issue, they would be doing everything they could to address it, which should include at a bare minimum, Mr. Speaker, providing operational funding for second-stage housing that nearly every other province in this country provides. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Unity-Area Residents Support Flood Relief Efforts in British Columbia

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past fall the province of BC [British Columbia] experienced severe flooding. Unity resident Lindsay Soderholm, along with dozens of people, businesses, and the local Legion quickly stepped in to help. Mr. Speaker, a collection of items, along with volunteers, was quickly

assembled. Within minutes of Lindsay's social media post, a local business offered a drop-off place while adding a meal that would donate money to the relief fund.

Often recognized for their community outreach, the Unity Red Apple store reached out to the neighbouring Biggar location to set up a collection spot at their store as well. Terry and Sharon Smith donated an enclosed trailer to transport the items, and the Unity-area collections were distributed to families in BC who were unable to afford extras before and after the flooding. Lindsay said she was inspired by knowing one simple act of kindness can change someone's world.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in thanking Lindsay and everyone for their contributions to the BC flood relief effort. Acts of kindness such as this during extremely trying times is invaluable, and the support from across our province is a testament to what Saskatchewan people are made of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Dubuc Figure Skater Advances to World Junior Competition

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Marty Haubrich from Dubuc, Saskatchewan, a small village south of Melville with a population of 60, continues to succeed in the figure skating world. Marty got a start at age three with Skate Esterhazy. Mr. Speaker, last year Marty moved to Brantford, Ontario to further pursue his figure skating career. He started with a new coach, Alison Purkiss, and a new pairs skating partner, Summer Homick from Tillsonburg, Ontario.

The junior pairs skaters practised and prepared this past summer by competing in a couple of small virtual competitions while also continuing to skate as singles. This was all leading up to their sectional competition this past November at Sherwood, Ontario. The new junior pair found chemistry quickly, Mr. Speaker, as they finished first, sending them to the Skate Canada Challenge in Regina, where they placed second overall.

That competition propelled them to the Skate Canada Canadian Tire National Championships in Ottawa. After nationals they went off to Oberstdorf, Germany to compete at the Bavarian Open, placing second and advancing to the upcoming junior worlds in Sofia, Bulgaria, which runs from May 3rd to the 9th.

Mr. Speaker, Marty is working hard to qualify for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy. I now ask all members to join me in congratulating Marty and Summer, their coach Alison Purkiss, and wish them all the best as they prepare for Bulgaria. Thank you.

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

Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize the work of Search and Rescue Saskatchewan Association of Volunteers, or SARSAV.

Provincial president Bobbi Buchanan of Porcupine Plain and her Saskatchewan team work to train search and rescue volunteers. There are three levels of service — searcher, team leader, and search manager — each requiring advanced levels of training. There are currently 20 active chapters with 450 members in the province.

Search and rescue chapters provide the response for overdue, lost, injured, or stranded persons and are commonly associated with outdoor activities and wilderness environments. SARSAV works under the jurisdiction of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], municipal police forces, Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, and Parks Canada.

Training is provided in actions like tracking, wilderness first aid, near-water search, and embankment or low-angle rescue. Additional training is provided in search theory; search types, patterns, and techniques; confinement and containment; clue awareness and detection; night searches; and urban searches.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in collectively thanking SARSAV volunteers for the work they do, and let's collectively reach out and encourage interested people across the province to look into how they can support or volunteer with this fine organization. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Request leave to introduce a guest.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to introduce a guest. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery, I want to introduce Alysia Johnson, a friend, a constituent, a community leader, to her Assembly. The other folks she's joined were introduced already by the member from Elphinstone.

Alysia is a tireless community leader that looks out for neighbours and friends and the most vulnerable. She works in business — in mortgage and in insurance — but gives back in so many ways, has served as the Chair of Carmichael Outreach, has been on the board, is always looking out for ways to help, and was a real pillar and leader at Camp Hope and now with Warriors of Hope as they work to support the lost, the hungry, and the forgotten, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to welcome Alysia Johnson to her Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — I ask leave for an introduction, please.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to welcome Alysia Johnson to her Chamber, Mr. Speaker. I also had the opportunity to meet with Alysia at a meeting a few months ago when Camp Hope was up and running. It was a pleasure to work with both her and Shylo at that point in time, and I'm sure we will meet again soon. So welcome to your Assembly, Alysia.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS (continued)

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

Saskatchewan's Helium Action Plan

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has some of the most attractive geology in the world for low-emission helium production. Helium is essential for medical technology, space exploration, fibre optics, nuclear power generation, and more. Mr. Speaker, that is why the government introduced our helium action plan, which includes targets to supply 10 per cent of the world's helium market demand, support 15 new helium purification and liquefaction facilities, and create over 500 new jobs.

We recently announced a \$140,000 grant to complete a helium liquefaction hub study. Mr. Speaker, this study will help companies make major investment decisions here in the province. Helium is currently produced and purified in Saskatchewan but must be sent to the US [United States] for commercial-scale liquefaction.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the home to Canada's largest helium purification facility. There are over 500 helium leases and permits for exploration and production, and we are expecting to reach 30 helium wells and five new helium purification facilities by the end of 2022. Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to diversify our energy sector and deliver our helium action plan and goals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for Health Care Providers

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister of Health was asked about an increase in COVID hospitalizations. There are more patients in hospital this week than there were the week before, which is more than the week before that. The minister calls this stable. But stable for who, Mr. Speaker?

Saskatoon emergency room physician Brent Thoma shared today that "Saskatoon has never been this over capacity. There are 105 patients in the 40-bed RUH children's hospital emergency department right now."

Does the minister recognize that redlining our health system capacity, while minimizing the experiences of those on the front

lines that are holding it together, is a recipe for burnout and mass exodus?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do recognize that we are having some challenges certainly in Saskatoon, but our overall capacity, as I reported to the media yesterday, is at 93 per cent across the province. Our ICU [intensive care unit] capacity is at 74 per cent. Mr. Speaker, obviously we've got some challenges and some hot spots, and we are seeing some seasonal fluctuations, Mr. Speaker. But most of those that are coming into the hospital are not COVID-related, which the member opposite is alluding to, Mr. Speaker.

This is exactly why, Mr. Speaker, we brought in our budget two weeks ago, to be able to deliver more people working within our health care, more funding to be able to support this expansion of ICU beds, high-acuity beds, Mr. Speaker. We're looking at bringing in more nurses from the Minister of Advanced Education, more nursing seats, Mr. Speaker. This is exactly what we're doing and this is exactly what they voted against.

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

Ms. Mowat: — He is the only one who doesn't see a problem with 94 per cent and thinks that this is stable, Mr. Speaker. The minister's answers are light years away from the realities that are being faced by front-line workers. The Saskatchewan Union of Nurses surveyed their members, and the results are staggering. A full 50 per cent of nurses confirmed that they had considered stepping away from registered nursing in the last year. Three out of five RNs [registered nurse] are ready to find other work.

According to SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] president Tracy Zambory, "Without immediate relief, more registered nurses are going to leave the profession. It feels like we're trying to dig ourselves out of a hole without a shovel." What immediate relief can the minister commit to nurses who are burning out and walking away?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, first off I'll thank the nurses that are out there, not just in our high-pressure areas but across our system, Mr. Speaker. They've done a tremendous job in managing through this pandemic, and as a government, it's our role to support them, Mr. Speaker.

That's why, since we've had the privilege of forming government, we've brought in 4,300 more nurses of all designations, Mr. Speaker. Imagine the complications that we would have if we didn't have those 4,300 nurses that are in there, Mr. Speaker, in all designations — registered nurses, psychiatric nurses, additional nurse practitioner training seats. This is all that this government has done to be able to help this, Mr. Speaker.

We do have our challenges, absolutely. But that's why we're out recruiting around the world, recruiting across Canada, and investing dollars in our nurses. But not just our nurses — our overall operating and our capital health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — It's empty thanks, Mr. Speaker. Health care workers have been calling on this government to fix the short-staffing crisis for over a decade, and they have been ignored. Choices have consequences, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

From SUN's release: "Saskatchewan's registered nurses are demoralized, exhausted, and losing confidence in provincial leadership." What is the plan to support health care workers so they don't leave the profession and the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — This is coming from an opposition that, during their tenure in government, lost — lost — 450 nurses. That when we had to form government in 2007, the Minister of Government Relations, the minister of Health at that time, had to go out and actively recruit and make up for that. Not just in pay, Mr. Speaker, in compensation for those nurses, but the actual, to be able to bring, physically, nurses into this . . .

We understand that there are some pressures out there. I understand. I saw the survey from SUN, Mr. Speaker, and that's concerning, that there are people out there that are considering leaving the profession. My job as minister, and this government's job, is to be able to support them however we can by bringing in more people into our system.

Obviously, if the members opposite didn't notice, there was a pandemic in the last two years and it was a little hard recruiting internationally, Mr. Speaker, at that. But we still maintained all of our nursing seats. We've now increased those nursing seats, and we'll continue to invest within our health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, they talk about 2007 like a broken record, but this survey was released today. This is their record that is on the line today, Mr. Speaker.

We have some of the hardest working health care workers providing care in our hospitals, care homes, and communities, but this won't be the case for long if this government doesn't change direction. The message from this survey was crystal clear: it's not an us problem; it's a you problem. Provincial officials were overwhelmingly given a negative rating, with the Premier and Minister of Health receiving a negative performance rating from 68 per cent of respondents, Mr. Speaker.

With nurses so burnt out and the minister dismissing their concerns, how does he think he'll convince them to stay?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just because the members opposite say it doesn't mean we're doing it. We are listening to our health care workers. We talk to them.

These are our friends and families and neighbours. And we continue to do this, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the survey was about 10 per cent of the nursing profession. So that is significant, Mr. Speaker. But we want to make sure that we're sitting down and we're not just addressing one of the problems. This is a problem that we need to be able to make sure that we have the right people in the right places at the right time.

That's why, Mr. Speaker, we're not just investing in our health care clinicians; we're also investing in the capital. We're expanding our ICUs, our high-acuity beds. We're putting in \$21 million for extra surgical on top of what the federal government's putting in, Mr. Speaker. We're working very hard, and we appreciate the hard work that the front-line health care workers are, to be able to address our surgical backlog but also to be able to maintain the high quality that the Saskatchewan people expect out of their health care system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the Minister for Education told the Assembly that he was looking forward to working with school divisions as they work up their very challenging budgets over the next few months.

Mr. Speaker, school divisions don't want help making another round of cuts. They don't want help making cuts to teachers, cuts to in-school staff. They don't want help making cuts like the 352 teachers that we lost this year. Does the minister understand that working with divisions must start with adequate funding so the cuts don't need to happen?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to speaking with members of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] in the next couple of days, I think on Thursday.

Mr. Speaker, we'll be able to have a discussion with them about the record level of education funding in this budget, Mr. Speaker: a 1.5 per cent increase to school divisions for their operating, Mr. Speaker; \$95 million in capital to continue on the important work of building new schools; adding relocatables to a number of schools, Mr. Speaker; as well as additional supports for learning — \$6 million in this budget. Mr. Speaker, \$1.99 billion in this budget for school divisions. So yes, I do look forward to working with them over the next number of months as they bring forward their budgets.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this minister's tired talking points prove that he either doesn't know the answer or he doesn't want to know. Maybe he doesn't want to know the tough decisions that are being made around school board tables right now.

To paraphrase Saskatchewan Rivers education director Robert Bratvold, he said that outside the teachers' contract, the leftover funds split 27 ways don't even come close to covering inflation. He says that there's nowhere else to look, and I'll quote him directly: "We have had to squeeze and restructure and refine many, many things. At some point, there just isn't a lot more room."

Now the remarks from school division leaders and the remarks from this minister couldn't be further apart. So who's got it right? School leaders who have suffered year after year of austerity budgets or the minister?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've said before in this House, school operating funding has increased 41 per cent, or \$576 million since 2007. That's higher than the 30 per cent increase in combined costs associated with the teachers' CBA [collective bargaining agreement] and enrolment since 2007, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that those are two of the largest cost-drivers. The teachers' CBA, that's about 50 per cent of a school division's operating budget, Mr. Speaker. So we need to recognize \$23 million in operating funding increase for the teachers' salary as well as enrolment, Mr. Speaker.

And what I was able to share with the member yesterday in estimates, we did not claw back for the lower enrolment than was expected in '20-21, 2020-21 year, Mr. Speaker, which equates to \$9 million in funding to school divisions for students that haven't even arrived in schools, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall any school divisions saying that we overfunded them in the last two years.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the minister brought up what happened in estimates yesterday because, by that minister's own calculations, he shared in committee that 96 per cent of the increase in operating funding to K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education will go to negotiated increases for teachers and non-teaching staff.

There will not be \$6 million for learning supports. There'll be more like \$1 million spread between 27 divisions, 625 schools, and 1,300 more students. Is the minister really okay with more students in schools and fewer teachers next year in Saskatchewan schools?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the budget does include \$29.4 million to operating funding, which does include \$23 million for the teachers' salary, which is a major part of operating for schools, Mr. Speaker. Nearly 50 per cent, in some cases over 50 per cent, of a school's operating funding are just teachers' salaries alone, Mr. Speaker. So for the member opposite to somehow want to not include that in the operating funding that we allocate to school divisions, Mr. Speaker, it's just . . . I'm not sure what that member opposite is trying to get at, Mr. Speaker.

A 1.5 per cent increase for the fact, Mr. Speaker, that enrolment is only going to be up 0.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and that doesn't include the nearly \$9 million in funding for students who were expected to be enrolled in school division schools in the last two years that never showed up, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Income Support Program

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members on this side are dizzy from that minister's spin. Oh my God.

Time and time, Mr. Speaker, time after time, Mr. Speaker, I've stood in my place raising concerns about the broken SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program and the mounting housing crisis. Time after time, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the minister, doubles down on this program, gaslights the people of Saskatchewan and denies that the problems exist. This minister continues to say that anyone who needs a roof over their head can get one, that the supports are sufficient, and that programs are out there, and anyone just needs to give her a call, Mr. Speaker.

If everything is so great, Mr. Speaker, why does the outcry continue? Are the advocates, the people on the ground who are doing the work, are they just wrong?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, we do have some of the advocates with us here today. They were all introduced earlier, and I would like to thank them for coming. And I really do appreciate the work that they do, and I know it's not easy work. They are out there day in and day out working with those individuals.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the new SIS program was introduced two years ago, came to completion in September. And then as we were going through our budget process, we re-evaluated that program, just like we did with the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program back when it was introduced years ago. We re-evaluated it and then we gave an increase at that point in time.

Mr. Speaker, we re-evaluated the SIS program, and it did get an increase this time around in the budget, Mr. Speaker. And as we move forward, we will continue to look at that program and see what improvements can be made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, people want more than thanks. They want solutions. And this Sask Party government is not just failing to address the housing crisis, they're actively making life worse by ripping away the supports that people need to make ends meet. Cuts to the excess shelter allowance, cuts to the rental housing supplement, more cuts under SIS, Mr. Speaker, when people were already struggling to get by.

It's no surprise then, Mr. Speaker, that yesterday there was a demonstration outside the Ministry of Social Services by folks that want this minister to recognize that SIS is a failure, that a buck a day is not a fix, and that a tent is not a home, Mr. Speaker. We're joined by some of those organizers today. They want to know when will we see meaningful changes to SIS.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as well as the SIS program, we have other things that we do to help individuals that need help. First of all, social assistance is a program of last resort, but when that does happen, Mr. Speaker, we have community-based organizations that may help out with things like trustee services. And, Mr. Speaker, within this budget we increased trustee services for people that may find themselves in need. We increased that from 300 clients to 600 clients, so we doubled the services that we're going to provide there to help people.

And the whole point of trying to help people is to help people overcome their challenges, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we work with clients on a one-on-one basis. Every single person is different. But the whole goal is to help them overcome their challenges to be able to move to employment or to participate in their communities to their ability, Mr. Speaker. And we as a Ministry of Social Services are committed to continuing to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Listen. Listen, Mr. Speaker. Advocates, community-based organizations, they are simply asking this minister to listen. And that should not be controversial.

One of the fierce advocates that rallied yesterday is quoted as saying, "The minister actually doesn't believe there's homelessness. And if she doesn't believe it, then we will prove it." Letters. Phone calls. Tent cities. Demonstrations. People literally dying in the streets, burning buildings down trying to stay warm. What exactly does this minister need to convince her that SIS is broken? And if the minister won't meet with me to discuss my report, will she commit today to meeting with these community advocates who have trekked out to their legislature, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course I'll meet with the advocates that are here today. I've met with them in the past. We've had good conversations. And if they're requesting a meeting, I'll happily meet with them again, Mr. Speaker. I've never said no to them.

Mr. Speaker, homelessness, houselessness, I have never said that is not an issue. But it's a complex issue, Mr. Speaker. The root causes are often intertwined with individuals' challenges. They may have disabilities, mental health, addictions, possibly even interpersonal and intergenerational trauma, Mr. Speaker. We know that these issues are out there. We've talked about them in this House, and I'm more than happy to meet with the advocates on the issue also. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Provision of Security at Legislative Building

Ms. Sarauer: — More absolutely out-of-touch responses from that minister, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've been debating Bill 70 for four months in this Assembly. It's been four months, and we still haven't heard the minister's plan with this bill. Now that the budget's been tabled, do you think she and the Government House Leader would have everything figured out? If they do, they sure don't want to share the details with anyone on this floor.

So let's give this another try. What is the minister's plan with Bill 70?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I have stated previously, we live in a changing and challenging world as it relates to increased threatening behaviour directed towards various levels of government. The significant social unrest has created an environment in which there is an increase in potential threats to public institutions. This is something that security and policing authorities across this country, such as CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service], have said is a national concern.

This unit will be proactive in nature while having the ability to respond when necessary. The people that work and visit in this building and surrounding grounds deserve to feel safe, and that's exactly what this government intends to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the same tired lines we always get from that minister and we got from ministers previous, and no explanation for how what the minister just explained is any different from what already exists today.

She did give a little bit of information about what her plans are, though, to the media when she told them that the budget for her new police force would allow for 11 new policing positions, but she didn't indicate just who would be filling these new positions. Do they plan to stick with hiring retired police officers like we've always done? Or would they like to hire a private security force similar to what was guarding our entrances a few weeks ago? Do they think they would do a better job, Mr. Speaker?

There's a lot of questions left unanswered here. So who exactly will be taking over the security outside of this Chamber?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The legislative district security unit — it is not a policing unit, correcting the

member opposite — will be composed of uniformed and armed officers who will be able to provide expanded security coverage in the legislative district. These individuals will be hired as special constables and be considered peace officers under *The Police Act*. This means that they will be accountable to the Public Complaints Commission, which is currently not the case, Mr. Speaker.

Once again this government is committed to ensuring that the safety and security of all that work here or attend to this particular building and the grounds are safe. And that's exactly what we intend to do.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, a little bit more information, but still didn't quite answer my question. Now will they be hired by a private company or not?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, there was a number of points that were made in that particular member's question, Mr. Speaker. As I have said, this will be a legislative security unit. It will be employed by those working with the Government of Saskatchewan in whatever capacity that may be. And I'm going to reiterate again: the people that work and visit this building have a right to be secure, and that's exactly what we intend on doing.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I hope that that minister isn't alluding that the Sergeant-at-Arms isn't already creating that peace and security that everybody in this building is very much entitled to. But she still didn't answer that question, Mr. Speaker. Will they be contracted by a private company or not?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member failed to listen to what was said. These members of the security unit will be employees of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We are not, we are not in any way looking at hiring a private security service to provide the safety and security to all members and those who visit here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Suicide Prevention Strategy

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, this is the fifth day this spring I rise on behalf of Saskatchewan families, today the Ratt family, who have lost a loved one to suicide. When will we see a real plan that saves Saskatchewan lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and on behalf of the provincial government, I extend my condolences to the family on the loss of their loved one due to suicide.

Mr. Speaker, in May of 2020, we released the Pillars for Life plan to address and prevent suicide. Mr. Speaker, we continue to provide additional funding towards this very, very important initiative for the Government of Saskatchewan — \$1 million for our suicide prevention plan in this year's budget, which brings our total amount of the investments, Mr. Speaker, to \$3.24 million.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to work with a number of groups and communities across this province, including the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity earlier this winter to travel up to the member opposite's constituency to visit communities, such as Sucker River and La Ronge, to speak to people directly in those communities about some of the concerns that they have and their ideas around this as well. And Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make sure that we're providing the necessary resources to help with suicide prevention here in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 80 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 80, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2022* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Trade and Export Development that Bill No. 80 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Meili: — I ask leave for a brief introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to call people's attention to a journalist who we haven't seen often in here, haven't had a chance to say hello to before. But this is Raphaële Frigon, who works for CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, we cannot . . .

Well then I will simply finish by saying: on a ici ma voisine. Je suis content de lui voir ici, et je suis très encouragé de lui voir présent. Merci à tous.

[Translation: We have here my neighbour. I am happy to see her here, and I am very encouraged by her presence. Thank you to everyone.]

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 61, *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*, without amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 61 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 61 — *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act, 2021*

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — I move that the bill now be read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 61 be now read a third time, passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Private Bills

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to report Bill No. 903, *The Collège Mathieu Act* without amendment and Bill No. 904, *The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021* without amendment.

I'm also instructed by the Standing Committee on Private Bills to report that it has considered Bill No. 902, *The Mennonite Union Waisenamt Amendment Act, 2021* and to recommend to the Assembly that the bill not proceed, and to present its fourth report. I move:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Private Bills be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

WITHDRAWAL OF ITEM OF BUSINESS

Bill No. 902 — *The Mennonite Union Waisenamt Amendment Act, 2021*

The Speaker: — I direct that Bill No. 902, *The Mennonite Union Waisenamt Amendment Act, 2021* be removed from the order paper.

I recognize the Chair of Private Bills. Oh, sorry. Sorry, I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — I request leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on Bill 903, *The Collège Mathieu Act* and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 903, *The Collège Mathieu Act*, that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 903 — *The Collège Mathieu Act*

Mr. Goudy: — I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 903, *The Collège Mathieu Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

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

Bill No. 904 — *The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021*

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 904, *The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021* and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 904, *The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021*, that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The member may proceed to move third reading.

Ms. Ritchie: — I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 904, *The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, 2021* be now read the third time and be passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 79 — *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*. This Act will support increased Indigenous participation in the economy and stimulate economic development in our Indigenous communities across the province. The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation, or SIIFC, will provide \$75 million in loan guarantees, which will improve access to capital for Indigenous communities and their development entities to invest in natural resource development and value-added agriculture projects.

Mr. Speaker, our province is fortunate to have a growing number of Indigenous-owned companies operating in a range of sectors, including mining, energy production, and forestry. They employ thousands of people, generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, and support important causes in our communities. The SIIFC will build on this and create more opportunities for Indigenous economic involvement, which our government believes is necessary to advance reconciliation. This initiative supports the truth and reconciliation Call to Action to build stronger economies in Indigenous communities. It also aligns with Saskatchewan's Growth Plan goal of growing Indigenous participation in the province's natural resource industries.

Input and engagement with Indigenous communities was prioritized with six Indigenous business leaders acting as advisors in the development of the SIIFC. This work continues as these leaders bring a significant depth of experience and First Nations and Métis perspectives, and it will continue after the launch of the corporation as well.

[14:30]

The Ministry of Trade and Export Development also worked with the Saskatchewan First Nations Natural Resource Centre of Excellence to identify barriers to increasing Indigenous participation in our natural resource sectors. Round tables were held with Indigenous leadership and officials from major resource companies. During this process, Indigenous leadership indicated a desire to benefit from the entire life cycle of a resource project, something that could be facilitated through equity ownership. We also saw resource companies indicate their interest in Indigenous equity ownership in these projects.

The primary barrier to achieving this was also identified — a lack of access to sufficient capital. The SIIFC will help address this by providing loan guarantees. First Nations and Métis

communities and organizations investing in eligible natural resource and value-added ag projects will be eligible for these loan guarantees. Minimum loan guarantees will be 5 million. Maximum loan guarantees will be approved up to the maximum remaining budget of the corporation.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not enact this legislation and provide these loan guarantees we will be missing out — missing out on supporting Indigenous participation in the development of important projects in our core sectors, missing out on improving economic prospects in Indigenous communities, and missing out on growing the economy and creating jobs. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity.

I can tell you how important it is to increase Indigenous involvement in our economy because I've seen the benefits firsthand in my constituency of Meadow Lake. Let me give you some examples. Flying Dust First Nation recently partnered with Genalta Power and SaskPower to build a cutting-edge, gas-to-power facility. Using flare gas that would have otherwise been emitted into the atmosphere, the project will generate low-carbon electricity, will be the largest flare-gas-to-power operation in the province, producing power for around 9,000 homes while helping Saskatchewan reduce emissions. This new project represents an estimated \$30 million investment and will create 50 jobs during construction and another 20 once the facility is in operation.

Another example is NorSask Forest Products, the largest First Nations-owned saw mill in Canada. NorSask is owned by Meadow Lake Tribal Council, with profits generated at the mill going towards economic development, community programs, and infrastructure in the nine First Nations communities represented by the tribal council. It employs approximately 100 full-time employees.

Meadow Lake Tribal Council is also behind another great story I would like to highlight, which uses waste from the saw mill to create renewable energy. The bioenergy centre is a carbon-neutral facility that will provide clean electricity for homes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve air quality for residents.

These projects are creating positive economic impacts in our Indigenous communities as well as our province, and the SIIFC will build on this success. There are Indigenous-led companies and investment groups anticipating this funding to become available once the corporation comes online.

The response to the announcement of this program has been overwhelmingly positive, and Indigenous communities and organizations are ready to apply to use this financing to build sustainable businesses and grow our economy. I'm confident we will see significant demand for these loan guarantees because Indigenous communities have long been asking for financial support to increase their ability to invest in natural resource development.

In forestry we've seen the benefits of Indigenous participation — 27 per cent of Saskatchewan's forestry workforce is Indigenous, while 30 per cent of the provincial timber supply is allocated to Indigenous businesses. Those percentages are by far the highest of any province in Canada.

Now imagine the possibilities if we can grow Indigenous participation in oil and gas, mining, energy production, and value-added agriculture. The opportunities are there, but we need to address the barrier of access to capital. And that is what SIIFC does. It will support the growth of Indigenous investment and participation in Saskatchewan's natural resource industries and value-added ag sector. It will support reconciliation and increased economic opportunities for Indigenous communities, and it will support Saskatchewan's Growth Plan. It will support innovation and development in key economic sectors. It will support job creation and help build a strong, sustainable Saskatchewan with our province and our economy on track.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to now move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Indigenous Investment Finance Corporation Act*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 79 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join today and enter into debate on Bill No. 79. And I appreciate the minister's comments laying out the importance of this piece of legislation and the impact that it will have on Indigenous-owned businesses and the economy in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We appreciate the investment in Indigenous-owned companies and understand its importance in furthering the goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in particular around the importance of economic reconciliation, Mr. Speaker. Understand the importance of this, if it's done well, what it could mean for not just Indigenous communities and Indigenous-owned businesses in our province but the economy of Saskatchewan as a whole, Mr. Speaker. Because as we all know, when those businesses are thriving, we're all thriving as a community and as a province, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to hear the minister's comments about the consultation that went on with respect to this bill, the round-table discussions that happened with respect to this bill. And I know the critic will be asking questions around that consultation piece and who was involved in the creation of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I'll have several colleagues who will want to weigh in on the debate around this piece of legislation. And I know the critic will be doing some work reaching out to stakeholders to gather their thoughts with respect to this bill. And in order to facilitate that work, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared at this time to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 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 Saskatoon Fairview.

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Normally I start off by saying it is a pleasure to enter into adjourned debate on a bill, but today I do not feel that way. I do not feel that it is a pleasure. I am shocked that this bill is still on the order paper and that this government is stubbornly plowing ahead with it despite the myriad of concerns that have been raised over the past four months.

This bill, for anyone who is following along — I have been assured from time to time that we have some viewers of the proceedings of this Assembly — for anyone who is following along, this bill, Bill No. 70, *The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, 2021*, seeks to fundamentally change the way that this building is protected. And it speaks to our values of democracy, of parliamentary tradition, and really of what this government sees as important at this time. And we'll get back to that, Mr. Speaker.

I have a number of questions, but I want to start by saying that this bill, Bill 70, is a partisan overreach and it should be scrapped. It hasn't been justified by the minister. We have repeatedly asked, the media has repeatedly asked, and we have not received a justification for this bill.

And I will say that it is atypical, unprecedented really, for a bill of this nature to come forward in this way. Our typical process that we have followed for years and years, which is the way we sort of do things around here, Mr. Speaker . . . As you know, we are an Assembly that is very rooted in tradition, formal and informal customs. The way that we have dealt with these issues in the past is through the Board of Internal Economy, which is an opportunity for us behind the scenes to have those serious conversations, to go in camera.

You know, if we're talking about security threats to the legislature, I absolutely understand the sensitivity of these types of threats, which is what honestly makes it awkward to debate in this Assembly. Because we've heard the minister say things like, "Well you know, we can't just bring the threats out onto the floor of the Assembly. We're not going to share the details of those threats."

But that raises a lot of questions, Mr. Speaker, about whether the government is implying that the Sergeant-at-Arms isn't doing their job heading up security around this place, which I would absolutely disagree with; whether it raises the questions around whether the structure isn't working, in which case, let's have a conversation about that; or whether there have been threats that have been unaddressed, Mr. Speaker.

And if that's the case, we certainly haven't heard about them, which raises a ton of additional concerns, as folks who are also walking through these buildings every day, bringing our families here, making sure that . . . our staff work in this space. We want to know that this space is safe and protected as well. And I have always felt safe and protected under our current structure. And if

there's a reason to change that, the place is the Board of Internal Economy, Mr. Speaker.

But let's talk a little bit about what the history looks like. I remember, back in 2019, having a number of conversations about how we were going to define the precinct. And you can look into the bill and see that this language is used. And this is, sort of, what is the jurisdiction of the Sergeant-at-Arms? And there were so many concerns at that point about how far the precinct was going to go. So it hadn't really formally been defined up to that point. And you know, we were being asked behind the scenes — in conversations behind the scenes where this normally happens — to consider, you know, should the Sergeant-at-Arms be able to walk people to their car; should the precinct be expanded to include the front steps?

And at that time, we asked a lot of practical questions around protest, the role of the people's legislature, access to the people's legislature because we wanted to ensure that none of the changes that were being made by this government would counter those efforts of protest because this is a democratic right of the people of this province to express their discontent in this way. If there's a place you should protest or you could protest, I would submit that this is absolutely an appropriate establishment for that activity.

And the folks here who have been called to serve, that's what we've signed up for. We have signed up to hear the concerns of the citizens and to act in a way that represents their interests to the best of our abilities, so it's not something that we should be running from. It is something that we should acknowledge as part of our day-to-day, which is a little bit strange for a workplace and sometimes a little uncomfortable because you have conversations you might not necessarily want to have. But at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, I have always felt safe in those instances.

And we went through this process in 2019 to expand the precinct, to expand the area that the Sergeant-at-Arms had jurisdiction over. And what is absolutely curious to me, and the first thing I said when I saw this bill, is that this bill seeks to do the exact opposite of what was done in 2019. It seeks to remove the role of the Sergeant-at-Arms running the security of this building, making sure that every person in here is safe, that our visitors come through in a safe manner. And it seeks to change that jurisdiction to only the floor of this Assembly.

And it's not really clear what that means. But you know, there's carpet around here, so if I look around, I think about . . . just the carpeted areas? Apparently the floor of the Assembly wouldn't include the galleries, presumably. So the Sergeant-at-Arms, if this bill passes, will have an entirely ceremonial role, and that raises a lot of questions for me, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that I would say is at the heart of the problem here.

So you might ask, if the Sergeant-at-Arms is going to have a ceremonial role, then who exactly is going to be protecting this building? And I'll say that we still don't have the answers to that question. This was the substance of question period today. Who exactly is going to be protecting this building? Why exactly is it that the Sergeant-at-Arms can't do that work or hasn't been doing that work? Because we've seen no evidence to that effect, Mr. Speaker, no rationale for who this agency is going to be, this partisan security force that the minister is going to be able to

appoint.

[14:45]

So instead of the Sergeant-at-Arms, it's going to be a position called a director, and the minister appoints that person. This is very different from the way we currently do business around here, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the Sergeant-at-Arms falls under the Legislative Assembly Service. This is the jurisdiction of the Speaker. This is not partisan territory.

And I will say that one of the most comforting things for me, coming in as an opposition member when I was elected, was learning about all the different roles of the folks at the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service] who keep this place running and do so in a professional way, regardless of their political leanings. We don't learn their political leanings. And I found it comforting, refreshing. It gave me peace to know that the Sergeant-at-Arms was not a political security force. It made me feel like this was a safe space that I was welcome into.

And I tell you, reading Bill 70, I don't feel that way anymore, Mr. Speaker. I feel as though, if the government has control, as the director is able to exercise all of these functions that the Sergeant-at-Arms is currently able to exercise, knowing who our visitors are that are coming into this Assembly . . . You know, typically we've seen a lot of visitors who have come through this space, Mr. Speaker. It's not exactly top secret information when you see someone walking through the halls, but there has to be a degree of confidence and discretion.

Some of the issues that are discussed with members of this Assembly are very, very important. Some of them are very personal to individuals who come through. There has to be a degree of trust with the security agency that these people are going to be looked after, and that the government won't ask this individual to look around and see who we're meeting with and know what our schedules look like.

There also has to be a degree of trust with our own office space. And I'm only talking about the role of the opposition here right now, but this is the role I live in, so it's easy for me to understand what implication this can have for day-to-day life. Putting a government security force in charge of a building that includes opposition offices means that those individuals would have access to our office space. They would be responsible for securing our office space. Again, maybe not state secrets being left around, Mr. Speaker — I hope not — but I just want people to really think about what the implications are of this change on a practical, everyday level.

If we want to get super practical, whenever we vote, those doors get locked. Is a government security force going to be able to come in here and lock those doors? When will they lock those doors? Will they wait until the agreed-upon time from both sides? These things should not be partisan.

And this is not the way that this happens, Mr. Speaker. This is not the way other jurisdictions run. There are a whole host of different models in different jurisdictions, but there are also different buildings, different arrangements, different office arrangements.

But I will say that this runs deep. This runs very deep in our traditions, and I'm not historically a traditionalist that's tied to every rule. You might be confused by that because I'm the House Leader and I have to learn all the rules, but I'm not a slave to the rules, Mr. Speaker. And when a rule should change, I can agree that it should change. But we have been provided with no rationale for why this rule should change.

And when we talk about just how fundamental the Sergeant-at-Arms is to this, this institution, how much of a part of this building the Sergeant-at-Arms is in our work, I want you to think about the proceedings every day and how they start with the Sergeant-at-Arms coming in with the ceremonial mace, showing protection over this entire group. The mace pin is what we wear to identify ourselves as members. It's how we show that we're tied to this institution, Mr. Speaker. Is the mace pin going to change? Is the significance of the mace . . . How does that continue to work?

We are so tied to this. We are tied to our parliamentary traditions. We are tied to this concept of privilege, which seems pretty abstract until you become a member and you start to realize all of the ways that you have privilege and can breach privilege. And it's seen as incredibly important, this role of privilege that we have. In the new bill, this director, this partisan security force director is responsible for the privilege of members. Please explain that to me, Mr. Speaker, and how that is going to work, or why that should work.

This is about an erosion of our democracy. It's completely unacceptable, and this bill should not go forward.

I have so many thoughts that I need to spend some time to consult my notes here. What does this new director have access to? There's security cameras throughout this building as well. There are cameras that watch what we do. I want people to think about that as well. Access to the building, who's coming and going, these should not be partisan activities, full stop.

Mr. Speaker, I said that this bill raises a lot of questions. And I still have so many questions. We have not gotten answers from this government. We have questions about what the true motivation is here. What is the rationale for bringing forward this legislation? We keep hearing the same refrain of, we live in changing times. I know that quite well, Mr. Speaker. I also want to ensure the safety of every person in this space. I also want to ensure that all the members here are safe, that the staff who work in this building are safe, the LAS, all the visitors that come through.

Everyone who makes this place special deserves to be safe. We have no assurances that that's not happening right now. We have no assurances that this is a better model, that this is going to make us more safe. And no rationale has been provided for why these changes would be necessary. It's a partisan overreach and, Mr. Speaker, I will absolutely not be supporting this bill.

With that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill 70.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:54.]

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