



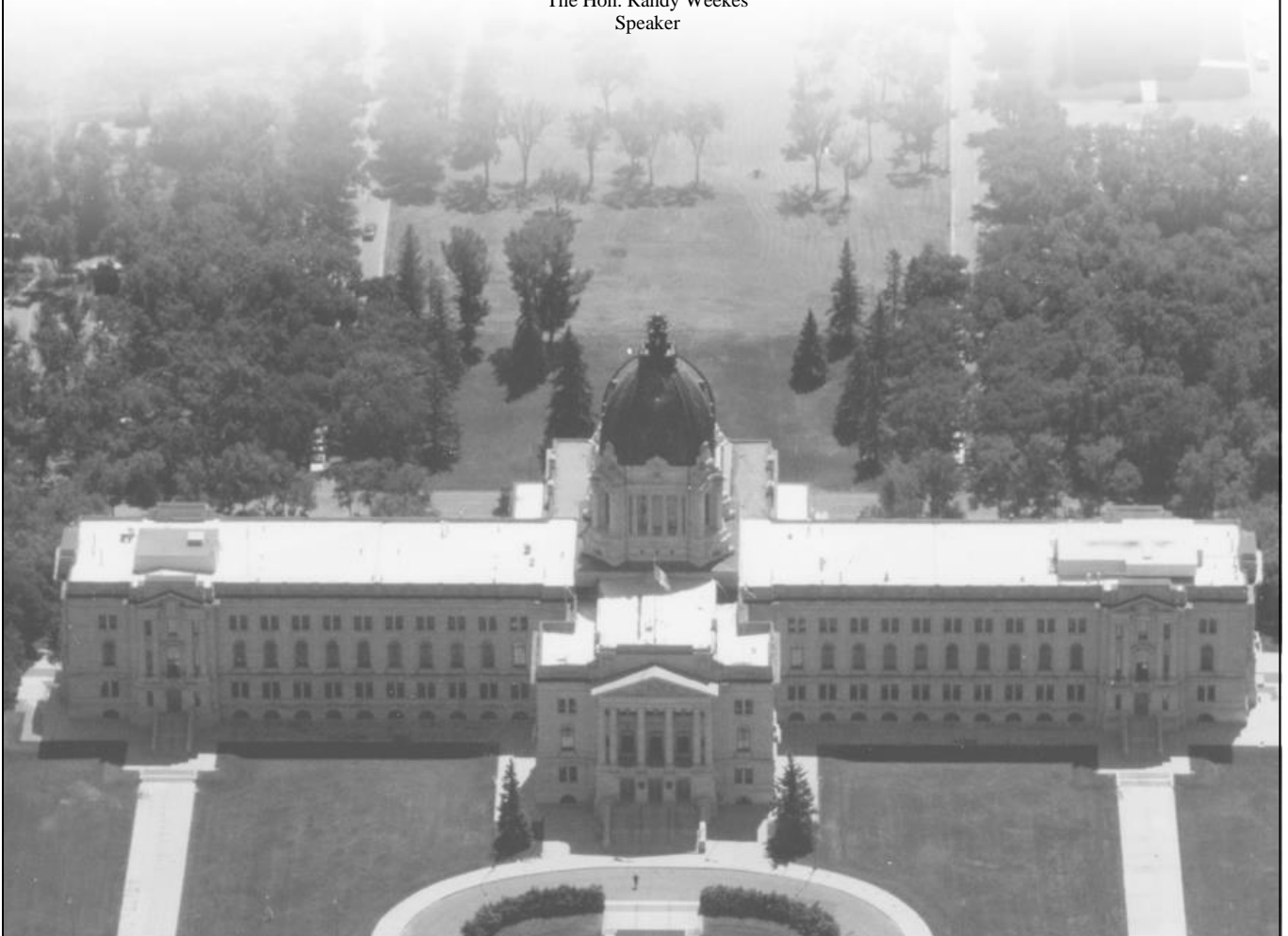
SECOND SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 29th Legislature

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

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

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
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Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
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Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
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)
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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Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

Deputy Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Pursuant to section 7(6) of *The Election Act, 1996*, I am tabling in the House today a report from the Chief Electoral Officer regarding actions taken during the constituency of Athabasca by-election.

In accordance with section 38(1) of *The Ombudsman Act, 2012* and section 23(1) of *The Public Interest Disclosure Act*, I am tabling in the House today the Ombudsman Saskatchewan and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner's 2021 annual reports.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm again on my feet to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to reform the infamous SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program. One of things that this petition calls for is the return to the direct payment of landlords and utilities, Mr. Speaker. It is an unfortunate barrier now that folks who have accumulated any arrears on their utilities cannot have that covered under this program.

And the government did announce that they would address this policy. I just saw today a post from Quint Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, that that really hasn't resulted in any changes on the ground.

So with that, I will read the prayer:

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

Of course this would address one of the major barriers that folks who are on assistance face, Mr. Speaker. And this petition is signed by the good people of Regina. Thank you. I do so present.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be on my feet to again bring forth a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for home supports for older adults in Saskatchewan.

One of the things that I'd like to point out today that the petitioners have brought to our attention is that older adults would like to have an increased number of options as far as the choices that they have to make as they age. And one of those options that they'd like to have is to be able to live and stay longer in their own homes and their own communities. This is an option that increases the autonomy that we all have as we age in

Saskatchewan and gives us more choices. And that autonomy leads to a better lifestyle, leads to a better quality of life, and better health outcomes. And quite frankly I think it's very cost effective as well, as it lowers the costs on other types of care provided.

I'll move on and read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with older adults, stakeholders, and municipalities to design a home supports program that will allow seniors to age with dignity and autonomy in their homes and communities.

The petition today is signed by residents of Regina. And I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present our petition calling for funding of in vitro fertilization treatments. The undersigned residents would like to call to our attention the following: that one in six couples in Canada experience infertility; that IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive for many, with one cycle typically costing at least \$10,000; that despite public health care being a right in Canada, there is no government financial support for Saskatchewan couples requiring IVF treatments; that Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status; that investing in people determined to grow their families here in Saskatchewan makes economic sense; and that other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing IVF treatments to those struggling to conceive.

I'll 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.

The petition today, Mr. Speaker, has been signed by folks from Unity, from North Battleford, and from Wilkie, Saskatchewan. 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 and present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for universal access for birth control. The signatories of the petition wish to draw to our attention that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the country, and that cost is one of the largest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know that this, as well as the cost, disproportionately impacts women, Mr. Speaker. We know that this can contribute to generational cycles of poverty, keeping

women and children trapped in them, who are all too often the sorry recipients of poverty and all of the associated ills that go with it. Having consistent and affordable access to contraception is essential for bodily autonomy, preventing unwanted pregnancies, and saving money on sexual and reproductive health.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraception available to all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today reside in Strasbourg, Regina, and Indian Head. I do so present.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — In the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to introduce someone who's no stranger to the legislature, Ms. Mary McFadyen, who is going to retire. And she's here of course for the tabling of her final report. So please welcome Mary to her Legislative Assembly.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Innovative Canine Therapy Research

Ms. Ritchie: — What a pleasure it is to share the achievements of my good friend Dr. Colleen Dell, USask [University of Saskatchewan] research Chair in One Health and Wellness, along with her colleague, Dr. James Stempien, provincial head of emergency medicine.

As both a dog lover and social researcher of many years, Dr. Dell has grown a reputation for spearheading innovative initiatives such as the therapeutic powers of canine therapy. She's specialized in treatment and healing for mental health, addictions, and well-being through animal therapy as a co-founder of the Paws Your Stress program.

With a research grant from Royal University Hospital Foundation, Colleen and her team, including another good friend of mine, Ben Carey, they recently discovered that dog therapy can also reduce the pain and anxiety of ER [emergency room] patients. The clinical trial was the first controlled trial of its kind in Canada and the world. The results? Just 10 minutes with a therapy dog in an ER can help ease both the pain and anxiety of patients.

Mr. Speaker, pets are being used more and more in treating anxiety and stress. Therapy dogs roam airports and vaccine clinics. We're excited to see groundbreaking research on this front right here in Saskatchewan. I ask members to join me to recognize my good friend Colleen Dell and her team for their contributions to therapeutic science and research.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Easter Message

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, trying times can challenge us; however we must always remember there continues to be the promise of joy and the hope for a new day — very relevant in the world today. This, proven two millennia ago when Jesus and his apostles shared their last supper before Christ was betrayed and turned over to be crucified. Beaten and humiliated before being hung on the cross, he forgave and willingly gave up his life.

Some would question the goodness of that day. John tells us, "no greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends." The goodness is his love for us, for me, and what is attainable through his sacrifice. Three days later he lived again, fulfilling his promise and confirming who he was, the miracle of his resurrection and the empty tomb confirming there is always hope for a new day.

On that day, on days for me that seem dark, if I reflect on God's love, the love of and for my family and friends, including these I work with here, the blessings are very real and many.

I think back only a few years ago at this time of the year, and during my cancer treatments and surgery I had doubts for my future existence. The Easter season and promise gave me hope for my new day and joyful days yet to come. I invite all of us to remember not to focus on what seems dark, but to be attentive to the many blessings we still enjoy, and look forward to the joys to come.

We can recall that Jesus faced his dark night and defeated it. He walks with us. It won't always be night. May God bless our province and its people this Easter and in the year to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Building Community through Sport

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to recognize an exciting event that took place last month outside of my constituency, Mr. Speaker, in the member from Indian Head-Milestone's neck of the woods at Mission Ridge Winter Park.

This event took place thanks to a number of leading organizations in my constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, including the Regina Open Door Society, the North Central Family Centre, joined of course by the Canadian Ski Patrol Qu'Appelle Zone.

About 30 young people residing in North Central, as well as many children of recent newcomers, spent a wonderful day at Mission Ridge, Mr. Speaker. Many slapped skis on for the first time ever, having never participated in any kind of winter sport. All costs and transportation barriers were removed, and the event covered lift tickets, equipment rentals, ski lessons, and lunch at the park.

Judging from the pictures and the many relieved smiles while the kids learned some skiing fundamentals, the tubing which capped off the day was a highlight. I understand this initiative may become an annual tradition, and of course that is great news.

I want to thank the organizations involved for working to build a strong and welcoming community through sport. It seems a fitting day, Mr. Speaker, to rise to recognize the good work of these organizations, working to promote and celebrate the beautiful Saskatchewan outdoors. Brr.

I'd ask all members to please join me in recognizing the success of this event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Radiothon Raises Funds for Humboldt District Hospital Foundation

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year's Equip to Care radiothon on Bolt FM had another great year. Humboldt District Hospital Foundation wrapped up their radiothon on March 31st and should be proud of their success.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people helped raise \$74,766 to help equip the Humboldt District Hospital. A large portion of those funds raised came from the spin-a-thon at Humboldt's Grind Coffee Bar & Spin Studio. This year's theme for the spin-a-thon was dubbed Pedaling 4 Obstetrics.

The Humboldt District Hospital Foundation reported that the event had raised \$47,580 for the obstetrics program. At the spin-a-thon 2,000 alone was raised by Brittany Craven, the largest amount raised by any one of the riders. Thank you on behalf of Humboldt and Saskatchewan to everyone who donated and made a pledge or pedaled for this important fundraiser.

Mr. Speaker, this year in honour of the late Bob Pitzel, the Humboldt District Hospital Foundation announced a new mascot, a bear named Big B.O.B., Bob. Bob Pitzel was very involved in our community, including having a passion for the hospital foundation. The B.O.B. bear, which stands for "bring our best," was donated by Failure Prevention Services in conjunction with JJ Stitch, which are two businesses in Watson, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, once again on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, thank you to everyone who made the radiothon a successful event.

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

Former Moose Jaw Warrior Makes NHL Refereeing Debut

Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A former Moose Jaw Warriors power forward and Western Hockey League enforcer made his NHL [National Hockey League] debut earlier this week as a referee.

Cody Beach needs no introduction in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. However those familiar with his WHL [Western Hockey League] career may be a little surprised to learn that Cody will now be enforcing the rules that he used to bend and often break as a former Warrior.

In fact during the 2011-2012 season, while playing alongside young superstars like Morgan Rielly and Brayden Point, Cody finished second in team scoring, which is particularly impressive given that he spent a league-leading 229 minutes in the penalty box that year. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, Cody can spot a penalty. And that's part of what makes him a fantastic official.

In only his second year as an official, Cody was named the top referee in the Saskatchewan Midget AAA Hockey League. In his third year, he moved up to the junior A level, reffing in the SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] and officiating his first Western Hockey League game.

Today, Cody resides in Moose Jaw with his young family, and he will always be considered a fan favourite, regardless of which side of the whistle he's on. I ask all members to join me in wishing Cody all the best in his future as an official, and we look forward to seeing him on the NHL ice for many years to come.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Recognizing Success of Regina Grill Master

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Regina's Rob Reinhardt has built a reputation as a world-class grill master. Cooking with backyard grills and smokers became a passion, and by 2008, Rob had started a part-time catering business. This would lead Rob to the world of competitive grilling. Since then, the owner of Prairie Smoke & Spice BBQ and president of the Canadian BBQ Society has appeared on the Food Network's *Fire Masters* and secured nearly two dozen cooking championships.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, Rob added to those accolades with his participation in the International Barbeque Cookers Association competition in San Antonio, Texas. This was the first time teams from outside of the US [United States] were invited to take part in the competition. You could say the stakes have never been higher, Mr. Speaker. But if you ask Rob, it was worth the brisket.

Out of 299 teams, Rob's team placed 14th. He said it was incredible to finish at such a high level. Mr. Speaker, we agree. Placing within the top 15 is impressive. And now, I'd like to ask all my colleagues on both sides of the House to please join me in congratulating Regina grill master, Rob Reinhardt, on a job well done.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Statistics Canada Numbers Show Economic Growth in Saskatchewan

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More good economic news for our province. This morning, Statistics Canada released wholesale trade and manufacturing sales numbers for the month of February.

Starting with wholesale trade, between January 2022 and February 2022, the value of Saskatchewan's wholesale trade increased by 5.4 per cent, the highest increase among the provinces. Between February 2021 and February 2022, it increased by 36.7 per cent, the highest increase in the nation.

Moving on to manufacturing sales, between January 2022 and February 2022, the value of Saskatchewan's manufacturing sales increased by 9.5 per cent, once again the highest increase in the nation. Between February 2021 and February 2022, it increased by 39.7 per cent, yet again the highest increase in the country. Two economic key indicators and Saskatchewan is leading in both.

Last week StatsCan released the labour force numbers for March 2022, and Saskatchewan had the second-lowest unemployment rate in the country at 5 per cent. Between March 2021 and March 2022, there were 27,700 more people employed, the second-highest rate of growth in the nation.

While the members opposite continue to talk down our province, on this side of the House, we stand with the people of this province and our businesses as they are clearly getting our economy back on track.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Health Care

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the first step to fixing a problem is acknowledging that you have one. The Health minister's flippant and dismissive answers yesterday are completely out of step with what's going on in our health care sector. At the same time that the minister was saying that he's confident the system can take care of patients, the individuals who are actually providing that care are saying something completely different. The registered nurses of Saskatchewan had this to say: "Saskatchewan ERs are collapsing. The safety of care is severely compromised." ERs collapsing, safety compromised — our system is on life support.

Will the minister finally admit that our system is not okay and provide support today to our over-burdened health care workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First off, I want to thank the RNs [registered nurse] and all the health care workers around that are keeping our system working, Mr. Speaker.

This government has made a significant investment this year, Mr. Speaker, in our health care facilities, not just in operating but also in capital, Mr. Speaker. We have created new surgical capacity. Almost 7,000 surgeries are going to be done this year, Mr. Speaker. We have created ICU [intensive care unit] capacity, a \$21 million injection. High acuity, Mr. Speaker, we have our urgent care centres, the announcement just a week and a half ago, Mr. Speaker. These are all areas that we are investing in to make sure . . .

The member opposite asks how we're going to staff that. I thank her for that question too, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan on what we're going to do. We're going to recruit from around the world. We're going to retain our individuals. We're going to incentivize them, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan that are graduating from our facilities, from

Advanced Education and from post-secondary have every opportunity to work here in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, the truth is the solutions that minister just proposed are years away from having an impact on the problems in our ER that are happening today. It's no wonder that health care workers feel abandoned by this Sask Party government and nearly 60 per cent of nurses are talking about walking away from the job.

Now we learned that this government was told back in February about the very scenario that we're experiencing right here today. They knew what was coming, Mr. Speaker, and they chose to do nothing. They had the modelling. And what did this government do to prepare? Nothing. They gave up in their fight against COVID, and instead they've left health care workers to clean up the mess that they've created.

We're five waves in, Mr. Speaker, five waves in and they haven't learned a thing. How on earth does this government expect to recruit health care workers to come to Saskatchewan when they so clearly treat the workers we already have as though they're expendable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — I'll tell you exactly how we plan on recruiting. We can plan on selling the Saskatchewan story of success in our province all around the world and around the country. But I could compare that to what the NDP [New Democratic Party] did and how they reformed health care, Mr. Speaker. I'll quote from minister Simard, Mr. Speaker. "This government made a fundamental commitment when it embarked on a course of health care reform, a commitment to ensure that the people of Saskatchewan . . ."

Mr. Speaker, their health care reform was closing down 52 hospitals. Mr. Speaker, they also closed 1,200 long-term care beds. They also had 173 doctors that walked out of our province, Mr. Speaker, and 450 nurses. They have no credibility on the health care system, Mr. Speaker. All they did was close hospitals and kick people out of our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, this minister is living in denial of the problems that we're facing today. We learned yesterday that this government quickly clawed back nearly 80 health care services that people rely on already just this year — primary care, home care, and surgeries in communities like Estevan, Yorkton, and Swift Current — all while this government pretended the pandemic was over and went on a victory lap in the name of freedom.

Where do people go when they can't get access to primary care? When seniors see reductions in supports in their homes, where do they go? When they can't get the surgery they need, where do they go? They go to the emergency room. Mr. Speaker, the

emergency room is where we see all of these failings becoming visible.

Does the Premier recognize that his choice to put pandemic politics ahead of people has created chaos in our health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Wow, Mr. Speaker, there certainly was a lot in that question. Mr. Speaker, as the members opposite know, we went and talked to Dr. Shahab about our re-opening plan, Mr. Speaker. We had a very comprehensive, a very well-communicated plan to be able to get Saskatchewan back on track, just not economically, Mr. Speaker, but the investments that we've done within our budget to be able to get our health care system back on track. These are the challenges that we are facing in our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, they can stand and yell all they want. They voted against all of the money that we're injecting to address the problems that they're bringing up in this House, Mr. Speaker. But they stood up and voted against that. And what was their plan? Crickets, Mr. Speaker. They had no plan whatsoever to be able to do anything. All they know how to do over there is sit and complain.

We are proud of what's happening in our province. We are proud of the people that we're going to bring in. We're not downplaying what's happening in Saskatchewan. We're selling Saskatchewan because we got a great story to sell. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, he just said it. He is proud of a system in collapse. He just said it. What a shame. Completely out of touch.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. James Stempien, this government's own provincial head of emergency medicine, put it bluntly, and I'll quote him directly to the minister who won't stop talking:

I can't emphasize enough how difficult it is when you come onto the ward to the emergency department when you're about to start your shift and almost every bed is full of admitted patients. And you just know you're going to have an entire shift where you're seeing patients in the hallway; you're seeing patients in the waiting room. I have an entire shift where I feel I'm putting my own patients at risk.

That's the head of emergency medicine for the province.

Nurses and doctors are now saying patient safety is compromised. ERs in collapse, patients at risk, a minister in denial. What is the immediate plan to get this situation under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I'd invite the member opposite . . . The immediate plan was the budget. That's exactly what we were doing, Mr. Speaker, is investing in people of

Saskatchewan, not just in our front-line health care workers, Mr. Speaker, but our facilities. We have an urgent care opening, Mr. Speaker. But since this government has formed . . . had the privilege of forming government, Mr. Speaker, we've opened hospital after hospital. Long-term care facilities have been opened across the province where the members opposite, their only solution was to throw people out of the province and be able to close things down.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that there are challenges within our health care system, but we have the dollars and the plan to be able to meet those challenges, Mr. Speaker. And again, I thank the health care workers for being proud of what we are here in Saskatchewan. And again, the members opposite got to stop downplaying this province. It's a great province to be in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government's Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's been remarkable to see that government's response to the backlash to their tax grab, Mr. Speaker. Families and businesses and organizations from every corner of the province have shared how it'll hurt their businesses, their bottom line, and ultimately their recovery. Instead of scrapping their half-baked plan, instead of providing fuel cost relief, this government has doubled down and cooked up some lines and tired talking points.

This government was elected to respond to the needs of Saskatchewan people. Instead they're proving themselves out of touch and making things worse. Why won't the Sask Party pull the truck over and help people who are snowed in by the Sask Party's piling on to the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, there's a number of increases in this budget. In particular, the priority was health care. Many of the initiatives that they themselves have asked for, we have in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, there is three major revenue streams to the provincial government; that is federal transfers, taxation, and resource revenues. We have committed as a government to not be reliant on resource revenues as we have in the past because when they go down, then there is pressures on the operations. So there are difficult decisions that we have to make in order to ensure our base revenue is stable in order to maintain stability in our budget expenses going forward.

Mr. Speaker, at least we know how we're going to pay the bills, unlike the members opposite, who keep on saying they want more spending, more spending, more spending with not one idea of how they're going to pay for it.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — That from a Finance minister and a

premier that have never balanced a budget, Mr. Speaker.

You know, everyone is singing from the same songbook on this. The Riders, the fitness industry, the arts industry — everyone knows this. Here's a quote: "The most severely affected industries were the performing arts and sports events sector, along with accommodations. Job numbers dropped by roughly 60 per cent in these areas." A 60 per cent drop in jobs.

Mr. Speaker, that quote, apparent concern from none other than the dear and precious Government House Leader, Mr. Speake, less than a year ago. Not only does he think that power rates are too high, he says, "these industries barely survived the pandemic" before this government's latest tax grab.

[10:30]

How does the Finance minister explain that government's hypocrisy as they slam these hard-hit industries with another tax grab?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Well it's interesting comments from that member that will never be a Finance minister.

Mr. Speaker, we will side with investment bankers' comments on our budget as well as the credit rating agencies. We have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] in the country as well as the second-highest credit rating in the country, Mr. Speaker.

And there is a number of comments on our budget that are very positive. The Sask Chamber of Commerce said this: the chamber, Saskatchewan chamber is happy with Saskatchewan, is looking to get back on track, and believes that the budget is reasonable, Mr. Speaker. NSBA [North Saskatoon Business Association] in Saskatoon say, NSBA is pleased with the fiscal direction that the government is heading, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatoon chamber said, we're on board with the province's plan to tackle the deficit, reduce operational debt, and make strategic investment. And I could go on and on with quotes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, if only arrogance could balance a budget, hey, Mr. Speaker?

You know, and that quote of course was from the Government House Leader. And even a broken clock is right twice a day, Mr. Speaker. So here's another quote from that insightful fellow: "The downturn in outfitting, hunting businesses has affected many northern residents who work in the industry. An estimated 2,500 people directly employed by the Saskatchewan outfitters were not hired in 2020." The Sask Party solution? Raise hunting fees and slam the PST [provincial sales tax] on outfitters, Mr. Speaker.

Those folks have to have heard from Saskatchewan people. They have to know that they're offside. They have to know that they're hurting Saskatchewan families and businesses, Mr. Speaker, at a time where they're just working and fighting to get back on their

feet. Why must the Sask Party forge ahead, add insult to injury, and tax our hardest hit sectors? Will the government finally do the right thing and scrap this tax grab today?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would say that our support for outfitters has been very significant over the course of the last two years. We came forward with a special program to support that industry, Mr. Speaker. We announced just as a part of this budget a \$5 million increase for Tourism Saskatchewan that will be allocated in large measure to support the outfitting sector, particularly in the United States. And I'd note as well, Mr. Speaker, if it were up to them, there likely would still not be the opportunity for those to come in and hunt.

But what I will say, Mr. Speaker, is I noticed in one of the earlier questions, the member for Rosemont mentioned a truck pulling over, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, maybe that member wants to have a conversation with his national leader, Jagmeet Singh, who is supporting Justin Trudeau's truck tax, Mr. Speaker.

We just found out in the last couple of days that Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and the NDP are proposing a new tax on trucks. A \$1,000 to \$5,000 tax on trucks, Mr. Speaker. Once again, could these members be any more out of touch with this province, Mr. Speaker? I don't think they could.

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

SaskPower Rates and Provincial Economy

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean it's clear. A truck tax is stupid. It's bad policy and it's completely offside.

And we know it's not called answer period, Mr. Speaker, but I didn't know that it was called denial period. And this government knows, surely they know that it was wrong to nickel and dime Saskatchewan families and industries at this point. They know their tax and fee hikes, 32 of them, are not being well received.

And they know an 8 per cent increase to electricity rates is the wrong call for Saskatchewan families, farms, and businesses crushed by an ongoing affordability crisis. Utility hikes at a time when regular working people, regular working farms and small businesses simply can't afford it. And it's not too late to make a difference, Mr. Speaker. So I will ask again to the minister: will you pull this 8 per cent rate hike?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, more very interesting commentary from the opposition. If that member is opposed to a truck tax, why doesn't she call her leader, Jagmeet Singh, and say this truck tax is a terrible idea? I guarantee you, I guarantee you that they haven't and they won't, Mr. Speaker. Instead they're going to continue to align themselves with Jagmeet Singh, with Justin Trudeau and show how out of touch they are.

Something else, Mr. Speaker, another proof point on how out of

touch the NDP are. This was just put onto their website a couple of days ago and it's called, Mr. Speaker, "Learning from the Couch." So this is a New Democrat plan for educating their members. I want to read one quote from "Learning from the Couch" from the NDP party: "... knowing what is true about rural places and people is a challenge." Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan NDP are advertising to their own members to have a seminar from their couch to learn about rural people because they're a challenge.

Mr. Speaker, this goes right to the reason that there are 12 members over there. They represent nobody in rural Saskatchewan and they never will again.

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

Ms. A. Young: — You know, Mr. Speaker, just another example of an arrogant and out-of-touch answer from a minister who's more interested in hearing himself speak in this Assembly than listening to people of the province.

And the Minister for Trade and Export Development, so eager to find his feet today, he knows that power rates are too high. He said it in his own words: "We're just more expensive here." So expensive, Mr. Speaker, that this same minister has suggested that industrial rebates need to exist. They're designed to offset our ever-skyrocketing power prices. Sixteen and a half per cent — that's the increase in rates since 2016.

Now the Minister for SaskPower listed a myriad of challenges and no solutions, and he's seemingly claiming that an 8 per cent power hike is just good planning. So once again to the minister: how does he square his proposed 8 per cent power hike with his own cabinet colleague's comments?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just picking up again on how out of touch the members opposite are. In addition to saying that understanding rural places and people is a challenge and offering to educate their NDP members, they also say in this very same thing: "Many lump all of rural Saskatchewan into one 'flyover-country' stereotype or the farmer in the Dell..." Mr. Speaker, that's a quote from the NDP educating... Who are these many? Are they, like, the members opposite? I think they probably are. But what I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is those farmers in the dell have done a heck of a good job in promoting this province and selling our product around the world.

And today, Mr. Speaker, there was some outstanding news on manufacturing sales and trade numbers. Mr. Speaker, incredible: first in the country month over month in both manufacturing sales and wholesale trade, and first in the country, Mr. Speaker, over the last year in exports, in manufacturing sales. A near-37 per cent increase in exports over the course of the last year. That's what our farmers in the dell do, Mr. Speaker, no matter how disrespectful they are to them.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is just embarrassing. No one in this province — not households, not farmers, not industry, not those in the manufacturing sector — no one is standing up and saying an 8 per cent power hike is great news. And, Mr. Speaker, this government will say and do anything to avoid taking action to make life and to make business a little bit more manageable for people here.

They've tried claiming poverty even while celebrating overflowing coffers of government revenue. We heard it again today. They've tried to claim they support Crown utilities, but then they raid them with dividends to help their own bottom line. There's a pattern here, Mr. Speaker. Money for them, good; money for anyone else, bad.

And just this week, Mr. Speaker, the minister, a new leap was taken. He tried to blame Crown workers that negotiated a meagre increase after years of zeros. Here is a credible line for the minister: will you signal a rollback of the proposed 8 per cent power hike?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are like everyone else in the province: they want, when they flick the switch, that the light comes on. When they plug in their car, it will start the next morning. When they turn on their furnace, warm air will come out. Mr. Speaker, we expect to have a good and reliable power system in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, we have that.

Without a rate increase, SaskPower would project losses of \$28 million in 2023, and \$105 million in 2023-24. I raised the issue and I'll raise it again, Mr. Speaker. We've got great workers there, great workers from Unifor, great workers from IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers]. And, Mr. Speaker, you know what those workers have been doing the last two or three days? They've been out fighting snow, putting up power lines back in the southwest corner of the province. So what else they could do? Pack up and go over and do the same thing in the southeast part of the province.

Mr. Speaker, I take a lot of pride in those people. We all do. Those people work hard. They deserve everything that they get, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to fight to make sure the power and the lights stay on in this province, in spite of what the members opposite want to do.

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

Social and Economic Support

Ms. Conway: — Quite the performance from that minister, Mr. Speaker. We learned last week that the Social Services ministry has no idea how many hotel rooms they're paying for, or what it is even costing the Saskatchewan people. On the one hand, this minister is broadcasting that no one will be turned away, that hotels will be made available to those that need it. But on the other, she has no idea how much this short-sighted approach is costing Saskatchewan people. She can't even give us a ballpark figure, Mr. Speaker, claiming the government doesn't track this.

Wilful ignorance? Incompetence? Maybe both?

It is absolutely right to call to have support for people struggling with homelessness and find them emergency shelter, but it is an incredibly short-sighted, reactive approach to a problem with a more simple fix. Connecting people with housing saves dollars and it saves lives. Has the minister finally figured out how much the people of Saskatchewan are paying for hotels through her ministry?

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, I believe that she asked this same question a few days ago in the House. And the answer that she got in the House is the same answer that she got when she asked the same answer in committee when the officials were there. When someone gets a hotel, Mr. Speaker, that hotel is tracked with the individual, and that's how it's done. And that's the answer that it was given.

Over the past year we've dealt with several things. There have been some anomalies, whether it be COVID-19 or having to shelter someone when they didn't have a place to go even if they weren't one of our clients, Mr. Speaker. And those hotels were used right across the entire system.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked to my officials and I have asked them to look into how we can track hotel usage better, Mr. Speaker, moving forward. With the new system that we have, we should be able to accommodate that. It will just be a matter of time, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it is unfathomable that this government doesn't know what they're spending on hotel rooms. And we will keep asking until we get a dollar figure.

Mr. Speaker, in committee last week, the minister told me there is a target of getting 25 per cent of SIS clients off the program this year. One out of every four no longer receiving support. When I asked where this number came from, no explanation, no idea what will happen to these people, Mr. Speaker.

Let's be clear: SIS is broken. It's sending people deeper into despair, deeper into poverty, addictions, homelessness, and worse, Mr. Speaker. But surely the minister knows the solution is to fix the program, not to arbitrarily drive people off of it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A couple of answers, maybe, to those two questions. The first is, when there is an individual that needs a hotel room, it's going to be provided by this government, Mr. Speaker. Second of all, the target of transitioning folks off of SIS is as we create, as the private investment creates careers in this province, Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything we can to transition them into a job and a career so that they can support themselves and their family.

Mr. Speaker, this is an interesting day. Listening here today, Mr.

Speaker, to a number of questions, financial questions some of them, Mr. Speaker, questions with respect and answers with respect to the rural engagement of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

Well let me put this on the record that the rural people, they actually built this province. They are not a challenge, Mr. Speaker. And what the rural people in this province do not like is a caretaker federal government, a caretaker federal government led by J and J, Mr. Speaker, that continue to impose taxes and unnecessary regulation on them and their families. It started with a carbon tax supported by the members opposite. Most certainly rural folks in this province, myself included, don't need a tax on our truck. Saskatchewan trucks do not need a tax, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to health care, we are going to build on the success of this government when it comes to recruiting physicians in this province, over 1,000 recruited. The opposition fired physicians during their time in government, Mr. Speaker. We're hiring physicians. The opposition fired nurses during their time in government. We're hiring nurses, Mr. Speaker. The opposition closed not 57, but 52 hospitals in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're building new hospitals. We're building new long-term care centres, Mr. Speaker.

And most certainly we are going to continue to listen to the people of this province, continue to build this province, Mr. Speaker, and most certainly we're going to continue to ask for the opportunity to govern and not take advice from the members opposite.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 71, *The Insurance Amendment Act, 2021* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill now be read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 71 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 71 — *The Insurance Amendment Act, 2021*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill 71 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.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 72, *The Life Leases Act* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill now be read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 72 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 72 — *The Life Leases Act*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 72 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.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 75, *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 2021*, a bilingual bill, with amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 75 and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 75 — *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 2021* *Loi de 2021 sur les organisations sans but lucratif*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading. I recognize the Minister of Justice.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 75 — *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 2021* *Loi de 2021 sur les organisations sans but lucratif*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill 75 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.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 76, *The Non-profit Corporations Consequential Amendments Act, 2021* with amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill and its amendments be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 76, that the bill and its amendment be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize the Minister of Justice.

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 76 — *The Non-profit Corporations Consequential Amendments Act, 2021*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 76 — *The Non-profit Corporations Consequential Amendments Act, 2021*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill now be read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill 76 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.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 905 — *The Amity Trust Act, 2022*

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Mr. Kirsch: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 905, *The Amity Trust Act, 2022* be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 905, *The Amity Trust Act, 2022* be now read a second time. 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.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to an order of this Assembly dated April 5th, 2022, this bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Canada Health Transfer

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you once again to everybody. It is a great privilege to stand here in the House and speak on such an important issue as health care in our province. But before I get into the speech, I do want to take a moment to thank our health care providers for not only the job they've done over the last couple of years, but for the job they do each and every day in our facilities and around our province.

I think a little bit of context to set up this motion is important. So I want to read into the record what our Saskatchewan Party government is all about. This is from the Saskatchewan Party's policy book, under the heading of health, HE5-2, negotiating with federal government to maintain adequate health care funding:

Be it resolved the Saskatchewan Party government will negotiate with the federal government for adequate funding to maintain equitable health services in Saskatchewan.

Now as we've seen over the years, the federal government has whittled away and whittled away and whittled away at their share of funding health care in our province. And our government will note that the latest NDP-Liberal federal budget has an emphasis on one-off programs like dental care or, surprisingly, parachuting in \$60 million for surgical wait times with no real plan. And we don't know how many strings are attached to that.

Our government is . . . We're appreciative of that money, but it's a one-time thing. It is not predictable. It is not stable. And that's where the funding should come from, through reliable, predictable, fair, level funding.

Our Premier had this to say about the NDP-Liberal budget:

While it appears federal NDP and Liberal priorities have been addressed, this budget misses the mark for provincial priorities when it comes to the Canada Health Transfer.

All premiers are united in their call for an immediate long-term commitment by the federal government to increase the CHT from 22% to 35%, ensuring the sustainability of Canada's health care systems.

Now this isn't new, Mr. Speaker. At one time though, the federal government and the provinces, we were equal partners, 50/50, when it came to health care funding. But those days are long gone

and they're only getting worse with this new NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa. Right now the provinces are on the hook for close to 80 per cent of the tab.

Now for years, our Premier and his peers around the Council of Federation table have been requesting the feds to live up to be proper partners. What do they get for answers? Well the Prime Minister tells former premier of Manitoba, Pallister, "I'm not your banker."

Well respectfully, Mr. Prime Minister, you sure like to spend the people of Saskatchewan's money. You sure like to tax the people of Saskatchewan, but then you want to attach strings to send back health care money.

Even the NDP Premier of BC [British Columbia] and Chair of the Council of the Federation, John Horgan, had this to say, and I quote:

The federal budget missed an opportunity to address the major health care challenges facing Canadians. Increased, predictable and sustainable federal health funding would make a real difference in people's lives. Unfortunately, the federal budget failed to deliver on this priority.

In 2020, the House of Commons, a Bloc Québécois motion asking the federal government to increase health transfers by the end of 2020 was adopted by 176 votes to 148 with the support of the Conservatives and the NDP. So I'm not sure what's happened over the last 18 months, but now the NDP have gone back on that and decided to jump right into bed with the federal government and the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, the *Constitution Act* of 1867 clearly defines in subjects of exclusive provincial legislation, section 92(7), "The Establishment, Maintenance, and Management of Hospitals, Asylums, Charities . . . Institutions in and for the Province, other than Marine Hospitals" is provincial jurisdiction.

The division of jurisdiction has been further tested at the Supreme Court where again the view that the general jurisdiction over health matters is provincial. These strings should not be attached to funding. They shouldn't be being designated when money comes in. Stable, long-term, predictable funding through the Canada Health Transfer is what is needed.

Now Saskatchewan is a proud member of this nation, but it becomes more and more difficult to feel like partners out here when you start seeing carbon taxes, when you start seeing taxes on pickup trucks, and when you start seeing that we contribute to this nation as much as anybody out there, yet we can't get our fair shake. In our Confederation, our residents aren't seeing a willing partner in the federal government right now, and even less that the NDP have jumped into bed with them lock, stock, and barrel. So too have the members opposite. As we've heard, they support Jagmeet Singh. They support this budget coming out of Ottawa right now.

Now despite all that and despite all the lack of funding, this Saskatchewan Party government has continued to provide excellent health care for the people of Saskatchewan, the health care they expect and the health care they deserve. Since 2007 our province has seen the hiring of more than 4,300 nurses. It's seen

the hiring of more than 1,000 doctors.

Now the NDP don't like hearing about that because we're talking about 2007 and that's yesterday. But what about today? What about tomorrow? \$6.8 billion investment into health care in this budget alone. \$21.6 million to help address the surgical wait-list. \$1.5 million to develop recruitment initiatives, including settlement and relocation incentive program to recruit 150 health care workers from the Philippines.

There's 12.5 million in new funding adding 11 additional ICU beds across the province, Mr. Speaker. Over the next two years, we'll add another 20 ICU beds. New investments in hospitals in Weyburn, in Prince Albert. There's \$15 million for the construction of the urgent care centres in Regina and Saskatoon that will help take some of the pressures off our emergency centres in the hospitals and will also provide a stream for those with mental health and addictions issues.

[11:00]

There's another \$3.5 million in this budget allocated for physician recruitment and retention initiatives, particularly when it comes to physicians working in rural Saskatchewan. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker. \$6.5 million for another 117 continuing care aides. We're building on the three-year plan and commitment to get 300 new continuing care aides hired. All this and more without the support of the NDP and Liberal coalition in Ottawa not supporting the people of Saskatchewan properly and the members opposite not even supporting this budget that's investing in the people of Saskatchewan.

Now the total Canada Health Transfer is about \$45 billion. And I did a little napkin math. That would show up to be about 1.5 billion for Saskatchewan. Now what our Premier and the premiers across this country unanimously are asking for is for the feds to fund at 35 per cent. That's about an extra \$28 billion. That would mean approximately \$900 million for Saskatchewan. It isn't like the people here don't deserve it. It isn't like the people here shouldn't have access to it, Mr. Speaker.

I want to take a little look back, and there's a thing called the equalization program that is federally. Well for 15 straight years, the Saskatchewan Party government has not received one cent through equalization in the federal program. Now we support the equalization program. Now we want to tweak the formula a little bit. We do think it's a little bit unfair. But we do believe in a strong nation and our contribution to it.

The NDP was in power for 16 years and received about \$4 billion worth of equalization payments. And what did they do with that money, Mr. Speaker? Did they invest it in health care? Did they invest it in our roads? Did they invest it in our schools? I'm not sure where that money went, Mr. Speaker, but I don't see any of that investment.

I want to just take a quick second here and talk about my upbringing and my time in Midale. When I was a two-year-old boy, I had the misfortune of actually being caught on fire. My dad was trying to light a hibachi barbecue, the coals, and they wouldn't light. So he poured gas on it. Unbeknownst to him it was lit, and there was a fire got away.

I was rushed to the Midale hospital at that time. You know, it was about six minutes away. And I was very grateful and very lucky to have that facility there, Mr. Speaker. You know, if it wasn't for that, I don't know what really honestly would have happened to two-year-old little Derek in Midale. And I have a few scars and they remind me of how lucky I am and how lucky I was to be growing up in a province at that time that had invested in rural health care across the board.

But when I think about that and I turn back the clock, Mr. Speaker, I do have to take pause. Today does mark a dark anniversary in the history of our province, Mr. Speaker. April 14th, 1993, 29 years ago, and I'll read from the press release, Mr. Speaker, that was issued that day from the NDP government Health minister, Louise Simard, announcing funding levels for a number of Saskatchewan rural hospitals and integrated health facilities. I quote, "Twenty-eight hospitals and 23 integrated facilities in rural Saskatchewan will continue to receive funding for their acute care services for the next six months only." The closure of over 50 hospitals in the blink of an eye, Mr. Speaker. That is the record of that party opposite. That is the record of that NDP.

Now they will claim, and I can hear them coming from the benches right now, they will claim that wasn't them. They were in grade school back then. Well, let's bring it up to modern times then, Mr. Speaker. In her recent budget reply, the member from Saskatoon University urged the members on the government side of the House to listen to the experts, Mr. Speaker, while referencing a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] article in which academic Stephen Lewis described rural health care recruitment and retention as too hard. The member opposite left out that Mr. Lewis's proposed solution in the article was, in his opinion, retention would be . . . improve if the rural health care system was redesigned to have care to be consolidated to a few centres. In layman's terms, Mr. Speaker, close more hospitals.

And guess what? Mr. Lewis is back in the news again today, Mr. Speaker. He's taking more shots at rural Saskatchewan. The NDP's so-called expert is saying from his ivory tower at Simon Fraser University that we should once again consolidate rural health care. He describes rural Saskatchewan as like Siberia and dismissed our strong and vibrant rural communities as "half a dozen dying towns." That is their expert, Mr. Speaker, that is who they support, and that is who they are relying on.

They want to run from their record of closing over 50 schools and say that that's not them. It is exactly them because that is who they are listening to. On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, our government is not going to listen to their experts. We're going to continue to open more hospitals, hire more doctors, hire more nurses, and continue to go after the federal government, the NDP-Liberal coalition propped up by them. And yes, they can't deny it. They absolutely cannot deny that. They support this NDP-Liberal budget that does nothing to provide for the people of Saskatchewan and health care.

Under article 1 of the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party constitution, revised just last year, Mr. Speaker, it says, "1.2 The party shall constitute a section of the New Democratic Party of Canada . . . 1.5 In any matter not dealt with by this Constitution, the Constitution of the New Democratic Party of Canada shall prevail."

They can try and separate themselves from their federal counterparts and they can try and separate themselves from Justin Trudeau but, Mr. Speaker, we know and the people of Saskatchewan know they are all one. They won't support this budget that is investing in the people of Saskatchewan in \$6.8 billion, but they will support Justin Trudeau and his budget that does absolutely nothing to provide for stable, predictable funding to the Canada Health Transfer.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get to the motion here right away. And I seem to have misplaced it, but I will endeavour to find it. Thank you. But I understand why they want to run . . . I understand why they want to run and not be associated with Justin Trudeau and Jagmeet Singh. But I'm going to pose the question to the members opposite. It's time to find out where the Saskatchewan NDP really stand. Will they put Saskatchewan people before their politics or will they side with their federal counterparts, Jagmeet Singh and Justin Trudeau? Because in the name of Tommy Douglas, I cannot understand how they could not support this motion being put forth to support the people of Saskatchewan. So we will find out, Mr. Speaker.

So in closing, our Saskatchewan Party government will ensure that Saskatchewan residents have access to high-quality health care services in a timely manner, and continue to have the best interests of Saskatchewan people as our guiding policy. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move the following:

That this Assembly condemns the tax-and-spend federal budget of the NDP and Liberal parties for its inadequate support of our health care system and calls upon the federal government to increase the Canada Health Transfer to cover 35 per cent of the health care costs as requested by all provincial governments across the country.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by member from Regina Walsh Acres:

That the Assembly condemns the tax spending federal budget of the NDP and Liberal parties for its inadequate support of our health care system and calls for the federal government to increase the Canada Health Transfer to cover 35 per cent of health care costs as requested by all provincial governments across the country.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Eastview, or Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Saskatoon Eastview. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know I'm maybe going to steal a page from the member from Melfort, who in previous 75-minute debates, when we brought forward motions about this government's COVID response, said that he read the motion and thought it was a joke. And I can't quote him directly. He said, how could this be serious? And that's exactly what I thought when I looked at this motion. I paused and I said, seriously? Seriously. Seriously. Are they serious? Seriously. And I once I snapped out of that I said, seriously? Seriously. And it took me a while but I'm still in the same spot. You know, seriously? Seriously.

So I'll take my time here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to go through

some of the things that kind of surprised me that this government and the member from Walsh Acres brought forward such an unserious way to debate, you know, really significant things — government taxes and our health care system. These are serious. These are serious issues. This isn't a serious motion.

So the first issue that I have with this motion is, you know, that this government is living in a perpetual state of hypocrisy when it comes to blaming the federal government for the very same things that this Saskatchewan Party government is doing. You know, I mean that's the very definition of hypocrisy, saying it's wrong when someone else does it but it's okay if we do it. And if this government just could for a moment, on any of the issues that come before this Assembly, show the ability to be self-reflective, to look inward at what they're doing instead of blaming everyone else, they would see that this motion before us today is just hypocritical from the beginning.

So the member from Walsh Acres is asking us to consider condemning the federal government for taxing the people. Well I'm going to take a moment to read all 32 fee and tax increases that this government has brought forward just this year: agricultural property tax, residential property tax, commercial and industrial property tax, resource property tax, tobacco tax, vape product tax, PST on sporting events, PST on concerts, shows, movie theatres, museums, zoos, historical sites, fairs, rodeos, trade shows, arts and crafts shows — that one stings — conferences, seminars, professional theatre tickets, gym memberships . . . Seriously? Like seriously, gym memberships? Seriously? Golf memberships, curling fees in Saskatchewan, hunting guides, fishing guides, increase of hunting licence fees, increase on fishing licence fees, increase to SaskPower rates, increase to Crown land rental rates or outfitters, ecotourism, and access roads; an increase to gravel permit fees; increase to cottage land lease fees; an increase to cannabis store fees.

Thank you to the Health minister for interjecting here. This has to do with the hypocrisy of this motion and this government to blame everyone else for the problems that their policies and their failed leadership has created for this province, in particular that Health minister's failed leadership and the impact that that has had on our health care system.

So I'll move there right now. We have a health care system in collapse. We have an ER emergency medicine that is in collapse. And while that Health minister is choosing to sit here and heckle me throughout . . . You know, I addressed this in question period today, so let's go to some of those notes. This is a minister who's in denial. And instead of addressing the real challenges that are created by his failed leadership, he's choosing to reference statistics and decisions made decades ago. Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, "Saskatchewan ERs are collapsing today." Today they're collapsing. "The safety of care is severely compromised." ERs collapsing, safety compromised, and a minister who denies it.

This is the same minister who asked his officials at the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority], who asked Andrew Will, at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], in his words said, "He needs to get out of his tower and visit those facilities to see what's really going . . ." But that minister is unwilling to do that very same thing. Hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. Let's blame the federal government for the exact same things that

we're doing. Hypocrisy. Let's tell other people to get out of their towers to go see what's really going on, but I am unwilling to do the same thing. That's hypocrisy, and this motion . . . Like seriously? Seriously. Seriously? Unbelievable.

Let's look at some more information as far as what's going on in our health care system today. Okay. Now I read this quote already today, and I know that there was some noise and yelling at the time.

[11:15]

Dr. James Stempien, this is the government's own provincial head of emergency medicine — not in the '90s; not in the 2000s — today. He is the head of emergency medicine for the province today. And his words condemn this minister's leadership because of what's happening today. I'll quote him again:

I can't emphasize enough how difficult it is when you come onto the ward to the emergency department. You're about to start your shift and almost every bed is full of admitted patients. And you know you're going to have an entire shift where you're seeing patients in the hallway. You're seeing patients in the waiting room. I have an entire shift where I'm putting my own patients at risk.

This is a very serious issue and with a very unserious motion. To put the blame on Justin Trudeau and the federal government is irresponsible. Now I will say, Mr. Speaker, that we absolutely support more funding for provincial health care. We support that call for the federal government to increase health care transfers to the provinces. That's absolutely necessary.

But it does not get this government off the hook for their decisions that have led to our situation where nearly 60 per cent of registered nurses have said that they're ready to walk off the job. We're seeing the exact same messaging coming from other folks who work in our health care facilities whether they be long-term care, acute care, hospitals. They're burned out.

Now I've talked to several health care professionals directly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And these health care professionals have served this province well. Many of them have not had a vacation in two years. They're not able to take vacation because there are not enough workers to stay in our facilities to serve those residents and patients. But out of a commitment to their profession, out of a commitment to the residents that they care for and serve, they're staying on the job. They're not taking vacation days. They're not spending holidays away to see their own families. They're staying on the job, serving their residents.

And we absolutely have to thank those workers for the service that they provided. But they have not had the support of their provincial government. And they're upset; they're angry, Mr. Speaker, what this provincial government has done to lead to an ongoing collapse of our health care system.

And I said this today during question period, the place where we see these issues becoming visible is in the emergency room. And I wish that the Health minister would stop yelling and listen for a moment because we need a Health minister who will be reflective of his practice and his professional duties. But he has not stopped talking.

The emergency room is where we see all of these shortcomings becoming visible. Do we need increased health transfers? Absolutely we do. But we need a provincial government that will make reasonable, effective, and immediate decisions to alleviate that strain today. This will not be solved with investments that won't have an impact for years down the road. Our emergency rooms cannot wait for years when they're treating patients separated by partitions in a waiting room, like they were just yesterday at St. Paul's Hospital.

So this motion is full of hypocrisy. There's so much to debate here. I'm looking forward to hearing from our other members in opposition as we examine this level of hypocrisy. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to rise today and say that I fully support the motion by the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

But before I get to that, seriously I want to talk about hypocrisy. Day after day members opposite stand in this House every single day and demand more funding for health care. And what do they do? They support a federal Singh-Trudeau coalition budget that does not fund health care. That is hypocrisy upon hypocrisy.

All premiers in this nation have consistently asked for funding for the Canadian health Act. And I am going to at this time walk through a bit of the history of the Canadian health system and how important this is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, health in Canada was traditionally a commodity where patients paid their doctor at the time the service was provided. So if we go back historically, that was how the health care system was designed and developed.

And then — this of course is pre the famous movement by the Tommy Douglas government — but in 1929, the government of the day under R.B. Bennett, a Dr. Kenneth MacKenzie spoke on the issue at a medical services conference saying, "If there is an evil there must be a remedy, and that remedy, as I see it, must be some form of distribution of cost among the people at large." So back as far as 1929, well before Tommy Douglas, there was conversation about what the cost of health care is in this nation.

The first hospital care Act was designed and developed in 1946, as all members know, and *The Saskatchewan Hospitalization Act* was developed. And it guaranteed full hospitalization coverage paid for by the government for every resident.

But it's interesting that in 1957 the *Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act* was passed. And this system was financed 50 per cent by the federal government — 50 per cent. We have to come back to that 50 per cent number all the time because ever since then provincial governments have argued that the agreement was 50/50. And as we all know, that has never been the case since.

So shortly after the then premier, Tommy Douglas, introduced the Act, it's interesting that the very next premier, Woodrow Lloyd, almost immediately decided to mess it up — typical NDP

policy. So when the Saskatchewan medical care insurance bill was introduced in 1961, they of course immediately complicated it and created a doctors' strike in early 1962. And guess what? In typical NDP fashion they chased out doctors out of the province. It was in fact about 10 per cent of all doctors in the province left the province in 1962 because of NDP policy. And the strike didn't last very long, but it was a very, very unfortunate reminder of how bad the NDP are at managing health care in this province.

And in fact shortly after that it was left up to communities across the province, local citizens' groups opened medical clinics and hired doctors to work in them. The medical care insurance Act, or medicare, was introduced in 1966. And medicare allowed each province and territory to initiate a universal public health care plan, and this system is still in place today. But in 1984 the *Canada Health Act* was passed, and that was the plan that prohibited extra billing.

So I want to go on and just remind everyone in the House that the medical health system is a single-payer public health care insurance system, and it's financed through the tax system. The members opposite, members of the money-grows-on-trees policy party — yeah, I think that's clearly what they believe — they think that money comes for all of these things just, as I say, it grows on trees. So obviously there's no problem with supporting the Trudeau-themed budget because, you know, the money is just there. Don't worry about it.

So the single-payer system is financed through the progressive tax system. And Saskatchewan of course was the first province to establish universal public hospital insurance. And it's important to just remember that particular point because there's much more to the health system than hospitals.

I just want to step ahead to . . . in 1984 the *Canada Health Act* was developed. And Canada's federal health care insurance legislation codified the national principles which underpin federal funding for hospital and physician services. It's important to note that the provincial and territorial governments have primary jurisdiction in health care administration and delivery. This includes setting their own priorities, administering their health care budgets, and managing their own resources.

The federal government, under the *Canada Health Act*, defines the national principles that are to be reflected in provincial and territorial health insurance plans. But I want to state again that the provincial and territorial governments have primary jurisdiction in health care administration and delivery.

And if we skip forward a few years . . . Before I get to that, I just want to say the public administration criteria pertains only to the administration of provincial and territorial health care insurance plans and does not preclude private facilities or providers from supplying insured health care services as long as no insured person is charged in relation to the provision of health care services.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a review of the *Canada Health Act* as it stands today. So it was under the former NDP leader's leadership that the incursion into provincial territory really began. The Romanow report which was struck, really left the provinces wanting, because it's kind of been since the Romanow report was tabled that we've seen the federal government, year

after year in budget after budget after budget, step more and more into provincial jurisdiction. And the result of that, of course, is what we get today, is that with virtually every piece of health care funding there are strings attached. And we know that when it comes to the federal government, those strings usually have significant consequence to the provincial government.

And we've seen that in virtually every ministry, but in particular in health care where they design and develop some theory of what health care should look like across this country, not recognizing for a second that health care in Saskatchewan is vastly different than health care in downtown Toronto.

And I think that that's one of the things that we need to keep reminding the federal government, and of course the Singh-Trudeau coalition, that health care in the provinces is extremely challenging, is extremely different from province to province and from region within province to other regions in the same province. And we need — as a government in Saskatchewan we do an incredible job with our health care support, and the people in the health care system are unbelievably dedicated people — but we need the flexibility in the health care funding model, and we need the full 35 per cent, despite what the members opposite support. So thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, some disagreements, but a real privilege to sit and listen to that last speech by the member from Kelvington-Wadena. I say this, and I know that I say this with a bit of jest because of course *Hansard* doesn't show tone, but there was a bit of backtalk at the start between myself and the Minister for Health. And he's saying, I believe somewhat amicably, how, you know, our problem is always looking back, looking back. And just as he's going on about that, we have the member opposite begin in, I believe, 1929 with the late, great Tommy Douglas. So it was a fun moment of levity here.

[11:30]

And you know, despite those disagreements, that was a thoughtful and considerate look back at history, and while I disagree on some points, as I've noted, a really enjoyable entry into debate here, actually looking at some of the historical pieces that have led us here as well as the substantive issues around legislation, the *Canada Health Act*.

You know, and with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll turn to the motion at hand. And let's be clear that the motion before the Assembly — you know, that we call upon the federal government to increase the Canada Health Transfer to cover 35 per cent of health care costs — is requested by all provincial governments across the country. Like, absolutely. You betcha. NDP governments have led on this.

And while I don't pretend to have perhaps the historical experience of the member for Kelvington-Wadena, it is factual and it's well known that NDP governments in Saskatchewan have always stood up to the federal government and actually achieved results for Saskatchewan people. NDP governments, CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] governments in

Saskatchewan have not been afraid of taking on the federal government regardless of partisanship, regardless of who was in office federally, and they were leaders in working across party lines.

Look at the record of Allan Blakeney. Look at the record of Roy Romanow. You look at the work that was done with premiers regardless of partisanship: Bill Davis, Peter Lougheed. We had incredible things done for the people of this province, incredible victories that made this province stronger under leaders who were willing to do the work and not just score cheap partisan points, and who were willing to stand up to federal governments regardless of their partisanship.

Unlike the members opposite, this Sask Party government who complains . . . You know, the member from Regina Walsh Acres led off with an expansive aria on equalization and there's some — you know I'm a student of history myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker — there's some questionable lapses in that retelling. And as much time as the member seems to have for research, maybe taking his cues from Frank Hardy from the Battlefords over there, he forgot it's his own government that rolled over on equalization, that abandoned that fight.

As soon as Prime Minister Harper was in office they rolled over. They walked away, leaving \$800 million a year on the table that could have gone to Saskatchewan people, that could have gone to the Saskatchewan economy, which the members opposite have been clear: they're walking away from natural resource revenue as a source of provincial revenue, and they're going to be relying on federal transfers and taxation.

So to the member from Walsh Acres: if we want to talk about equalization, I look forward to an accurate recounting of history and for your government standing up and fighting for what's right for the people of Saskatchewan, not just trying to score points for your federal conservative counterparts.

But let's talk about the motion at hand. Thirty-five per cent, 35 per cent for health care costs, as requested by all provincial governments in this country. I've been clear, Mr. Speaker, I've been clear in the . . . My God, five minutes I've already managed to ramble here today. Yes, absolutely. And it is the premier of NDP BC, as the members opposite like to talk about, premier of NDP BC, and it is fantastic to see the Sask Party following his lead as he holds the federal government to account on behalf of all jurisdictions in Canada who desperately need this money to support their health care systems. You will see no argument from us on that.

But the members opposite, where I sincerely struggle with them is this inconsistency in either retelling or this inconsistency in understanding. You know, it's appalling for the federal government to do X, Y, and Z. And you won't hear argument from us, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But when they do the same thing, crickets. And they can't reconcile that the actions that they take are the same ones that people in this province are frustrated with today.

They talk about the need for stable, long-term funding. Yes, this health care system, mental health care and addictions, this is a sector in this province that is dying through a thousand pilots. There have been great programs, great programs initiated by the

hard-working civil servants of Saskatchewan that have seen true results. And they get a year or two of funding, maybe four years if they're lucky, and then they're scrapped. And we see this time and time again, community after community after community, because there is not that stable, long-term funding.

And you know, we're talking about critical issues for the province, whether it's long-term care, mental health and addictions, primary health care, investing . . . and I know the members will likely shriek if I say this, but investing upstream, preventing some of those things that see people relying too heavily on the health care system over the course of their life due to preventable issues.

And you know, we've debated this like many times in the Assembly. I'm not going to go back into it, but this is not just a record for, you know, the CCF where the member for Kelvington-Wadena started. This is something that this government I truly hope is going to invest in. And if you're successfully, successfully and equitably reducing surgical wait times, you will hear no criticism from us. If you are successfully achieving better outcomes in mental health and addictions, you will hear no criticism from us. But there are areas that have long gone neglected, and that have gone neglected even in the 15 years that this party has been in government.

I'll take my last couple minutes here to talk about one of them that's near and dear to my heart, and it's maternal health care, health care for women and especially mothers. Maternal health care, Mr. Speaker, the past 15 years in this province has seen the highest infant mortality rates and perinatal death rates in the country. In some parts of our province, specifically the Northwest, these rates are 10 per cent — 10 per cent.

That's a massive problem. That is a problem. That is not just tragedies that happen every day. And I'd encourage all members to look into those numbers. Those are problems. Those are tragedies that have ongoing impacts, whether it's on mental health care, whether it's on addictions, whether it's on costs for ambulance, for STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service] having to transport people.

We see challenges even here in the cities where there is greater access due to geography to some of these health care systems. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the limited investment, the inability of so many to get care, especially mothers and young children in whom we should be investing, is appalling. We've canvassed this in the past couple weeks in the legislature. We've talked about the inability of expecting mothers to access care today in this province — not 20 years ago, not under Louise Simard, not under Woodrow Lloyd, but today.

And these are the challenges that this government needs to be addressing, not laughing, not slapping themselves on the back, not, you know, having a great hurrah because it's a Thursday morning and everybody wants to get their clip for Instagram or Facebook or what have you. These are real challenges, and this government needs to pick a lane when addressing them because these are happening.

And this is something I experienced recently, just in the past couple weeks here. You know, when my daughter was born there were concerns about her hearing. And this was flagged, and an

appointment was made for us at Wascana Rehab to follow up on this. And she'll be 18 months next week and we just had her follow-up appointment. We finally just got access two weeks ago.

And you know, while, Mr. Speaker, thankfully there's no cause for concern and she hears certainly better than I do and some members opposite, 18 months for an infant focused on language development, on hearing, on all of those important things. Those are waits that are occurring here today in the province.

And you know, I don't know what the Finance minister is heckling about, but you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I've been clear, yes, let's increase health transfers. But these numbers need to be focused on outcomes, especially when they've doubled the size of their government since forming it.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was interesting, the member from Saskatoon Eastview mentioned that I had said, for one of their motions, that I was a bit shocked by it. I was shocked, but what I was actually shocked about was the fact that in their motion they were condemning us as a government. And you know, when I read over this debate motion that we put forward, we were actually not condemning the people or the government. We were just condemning the tax-and-spend federal budget and their inadequate support of our health care. So you know, kind of important not to condemn each other.

At the end of the day, we're working together as a family. You know, I think sometimes, Mr. Speaker, my wife and I, we work together pretty good. And you know, we have debit cards and credit cards. And the Sask Party guiding principles, there are a few. The first one is, you know, concerning the economy. Second one is smaller, less intrusive government. And the third one is gradual reduction in taxation and spending to keep us . . . or sorry, with a constant commitment to balancing the budget.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's two types of relationships in a family, and one is dependent, and that's a healthy relationship. And the other one would be called what they call codependent. And codependency is an unhealthy relationship. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we don't have a problem in the nation of Canada today, with what we just saw with the NDP and the Liberals joining. We've all seen some funny memes that we've laughed at but, you know, there may be a serious problem at the end of the day.

And if we've developed leadership that are codependent, it's not something that, you know, can be joked about or laughed at because codependency causes some real addictions. And those addictions . . . If you give somebody a credit card who has an addiction, that can really rack up problems in a family. That can rack up problems in a community. That can rack up problems in a nation. And if you've got leadership of the government who have a codependence personality, we could have a problem.

And so some of the things that I've noticed in the time that I've been in government is that there is that relationship between the federal and the provincial. One of the things that I just saw lately was something that was a bit alarming. And it was when the federal government offered a billion dollars to Saskatchewan to increase our child care. You know, child care and education is a

provincial jurisdiction that was, you know, at the beginning of our Confederation, that was agreed upon. Nobody better than the front line to look after the children. No one should be telling the parents or the families, you know, what their children are going to be taught in school. And so education, put it at the front line, put it in the provincial jurisdiction. We have locally elected school boards because they look after their own children. Best let the people make the decisions at the front line.

Last time I looked, Mr. Speaker, I don't see any federal Liberal or NDP MPs [Member of Parliament] in Saskatchewan. So I don't know how they would really know what's going on in Saskatchewan when it comes to day care or education. But they felt that they should put a billion dollars, saying that if you will follow our direction we'll give you a billion dollars.

Well the crazy thing is in this codependent kind of — they're trying to make us dependent on them — relationship is that we know better where that money needs to be spent, because actually those are my children. Those are the people in this building's children and our grandchildren, and we have a better idea where this money needs to be spent than somebody who's living in Ottawa.

But that's the thing about codependent people. They desire to have others, to have others depending upon them. There's something that they're addicted to, that they need that dependence, that power. And so, Mr. Speaker, when I see what happened with this federal support in the provincial administration of health care, the way that things go, if you're going to be a gift giver to get codependency started, you start off and say, hey, I will give you this money. I'll commit this to you. But over time you can't perform. You can't, you know, bring up your commitment to that relationship. And so they've dropped off over time down to 20 per cent, and here we are, Mr. Speaker, trying to carry that burden.

I remember I was phoned one day by . . . I got a phone call out of the blue and some lady says, hey there, I have your piano. And I was like, how do you have my piano? I didn't know I had a piano. She says, I got your piano. And I said, well could you explain it a little bit? She says, well aren't you the pastor at the Baptist church? Oh yeah, I'm the . . . Well you guys had a piano. And this was in Tisdale. I was like, wow, okay. And she says, and I'm moving and you need to get your piano out of my house right now.

And so all right, and so I told my wife, I guess there's a piano in Tisdale we got to go . . . So I had to borrow a truck; didn't have a truck at the time. So I said, I don't know, my wife's pregnant. I can't lift, but I'll be there. So she says, yeah, I've got a son. My son will help you lift the piano and we'll load 'er up for you. Okay, so I borrowed a truck, headed off to Tisdale.

[11:45]

Get to this mobile home here and go in and this lady, she's kind of upset. And I'm sorry, I didn't know I had a piano. So it turns out her son's got a bad back. And so I'm like, oh, great. So I don't know if you've ever moved a piano — I'm sure you have, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but I had to drag that piano from one end of the trailer to the other end.

And picture it in your head, Mr. Speaker. My wife was pregnant. We had our little, older one in a car seat. Are you kidding? I've got to get this piano out of her house. So I put it onto the steps, and I figured it out actually. I tipped that piano up on its side, backed the truck in, put the . . . It wasn't going to make it through the day. But anyways, I pushed that piano down, legs on the thing, and finally got it up into that truck.

Mr. Speaker, that was . . . They promised, hey, you know what, you carry half; we'll carry half. Got there and it ended up that's not what was going to be. It was big commitment — come get your piano. But when I got there it was, you're all alone.

And to some degree, the federal government with this . . . Or maybe it hasn't historically always been this way for the federal government, but currently with our leadership of Canada, it seems like they want others to be dependent on them. But when it comes time to lift their part of the load, they're not there. There's all sorts of promises and starting things, but can you finish what you begin? Can you finish what you start?

And you know, if somebody has a gambling addiction where they're spending here and there, they start stealing and start robbing. And you know, when you're in government, you have the ability to tax. We have guiding principles in the Sask Party that . . . You know, they're right over there. It's been hard to balance the budget over the last number of years. So we got, you know, we don't throw stones when you live in a glass house.

But we represent the people because that's our absolute desire, is to gradually reduce taxation and spending with a constant view of balancing the budget. But if you're a codependent person, Mr. Speaker, you want people depending on you. We want to be smaller, less intrusive, more efficient government, not bigger, more intrusive government that the people need us.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm just really concerned about the health of our country. The last five years in Canada, we have record debt. When I graduated from high school, Canada had per capita \$11,000 debt; today, \$33,000 debt. The last five years, there's been more added to our national debt, including inflation and all the rest, than over the history of Canada.

I think we have leadership that have a problem. And it's not just like, oh, Canada has a problem. You know, Mr. Speaker, I was at a school board meeting and all of us trustees were there, and the vice-president of Scotiabank came in and he was giving us doom and gloom, really. And he said, you know, if you guys are trying to keep your outcomes — like your PISA [programme for international student assessment] results, world PISA results — based on spending, you guys are in trouble because Canada is kind of levelling off with all of our GDP. But you got India, China, Pakistan, Brazil, Russia — they're all going up. So if you're basing your outcomes off of how much money you're spending in education, you're in trouble.

And we all stood there, just flat-footed, thinking oh my goodness, that is bad news. And so, you know, remember this is the Scotiabank vice-president, and so nobody was going to say anything. We were all pretty depressed. So I got up to the microphone and I said, so basically what you're telling us is that we aren't richer than we think. And that didn't go over very well with the guy at the time.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think that our leadership of the Canadian government figures that we're richer than we think, but we're not. And we're in trouble and we need leadership that are going to stand together. So we would ask them, instead of coming out with new initiatives, all these new things that they're going to pay for, making more people dependent on you, stick to your commitments from the past. So, Mr. Speaker, I am supporting this debate motion, that, you know, I would condemn this tax-and-spend federal budget.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on my feet and enter into debate on the motion put forward by the member from Walsh Acres. And as I look at it, I see that there's kind of basically three components to it that I will address in my remarks.

And as I reflect on all of the comments and entries that have been made so far this morning, it's been rather illuminating listening to, for instance, the member from Kelvington-Wadena talk about all the way back to 1929 and how health care has been viewed and the way that the funding has evolved over time. But I'm not so sure that he got it right in that retelling. It seemed to be certainly a bit of one perspective on how things rolled out, certainly not one that I would share with the member opposite.

But nevertheless at the end of the day we, as has been already mentioned, of course support an increase to the Canada Health Transfer from its current level up to 35 per cent. Certainly the desperate need we have here in the province was well canvassed here earlier today in question period, in earlier remarks. And there are several aspects of that that I want to touch on and in terms of the hypocrisy, the inconsistency that the government opposite has taken when it's come to the equalization formula.

And you know, this is . . . It's hard to take any of this serious actually. I mean, this is very much a political, charged debate. It's one that's trying to create a frame around our federal budget as a tax-and-spend federal budget — their words. And yet this is coming from a government that just introduced 32 new taxes. And so it's a little bit of the pot calling the kettle black here, I would argue, because who indeed is the tax-and-spend government of record here today?

And I would submit that the budget that was brought forward by this government to this legislature in this session was certainly not one that, you know, set any kind of example in terms of how to ensure that we're creating the right balance that takes into account the real needs that our citizens are facing coming out of a pandemic. And I hesitate to say even that, because clearly we're not out of the pandemic yet. We are seeing successive waves.

We're seeing a government that has absolutely failed on protecting its citizenry. It has taken systems that were already broken now to the point of crisis. We are seeing failures in health care and in education. We have leaders in health care who are publicly speaking about the challenges that they're facing in their jobs, in emergency rooms, and throughout the entire system. We've had people come to this legislature in absolute dire, desperate circumstances to plead with their government to take responsible action so that health care can be provided, so that

people on surgery waiting lists can get the care and the treatment that we need.

I was so touched and I was so honoured here to have residents from my constituency of Saskatoon Nutana here earlier this week, Gillian and Brennon Dulle, with just an incredibly sad story of someone experiencing the most excruciating circumstances, needing to have surgery to correct and fix his condition of epilepsy. And they were let down. They were disappointed by the response from the Minister of Health. It displayed a disgraceful lack of compassion and empathy towards the situation that family is facing. And they are only but one example. There are countless more.

We've heard from those brave enough to come to the legislature, but they represent legions, legions of families throughout this province suffering silently, in pain, unable to get the care that they need. We've heard countless stories about their experiences of presenting to emergency rooms and having to wait in hallways, receive medicine in waiting rooms. This is not a system experiencing seasonal variations. My goodness, this is far beyond that. And the constant gaslighting that we've endured from the members opposite, downplaying the crisis in health care that we're facing.

And so when we look at this motion that is talking about the need for, you know, health transfers, and yet they had the opportunity to work collaboratively when there was a government in power federally that was of the same political stripe, they completely blew the opportunity. I mean, they backed off entirely and refused to advocate for the people of Saskatchewan.

And so you know, while they'd like to sort of broad brush and associate our caucus with our federal counterparts, make no mistake. Please make no mistake whatsoever. We're here to represent the interests of Saskatchewan people. That's the bottom line and has already been mentioned here today. Of course we support an increase in the Canada Health Transfer to 35 per cent. We've never said otherwise. And we support the work of Minister Horgan in British Columbia in leading that charge. And I don't know why you don't get behind him. He's advocating for all the people across the country, and yet the only thing that your government seems to be able to do is pick fights.

We heard the member from Melfort talk about codependence. And while . . . Don't get me wrong, I really appreciate the member's quaint stories about hitchhikers and pianos, on codependence and the like. But I have to say, I think that your government is in a very toxic relationship with the federal government.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I caution the members opposite when they suggest to us that, you know, somehow that there is a codependence here that's preventing us from having a democratic and healthy institution here. Because we've seen time and again that this government is refusing to act co-operatively, refusing to take common issues to the Board of Internal Economy, and that is only just one example in the short time I have remaining. I will not be supporting this motion going forward.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute period for questions and answers period will begin. I

recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too enjoyed the comments from the member from Melfort. Sincerely, the parable of the piano — great piece. But he made some comments that I believe will be deeply, infuriatingly offensive to working families in this province, especially working women.

[12:00]

So my question to the member from Walsh Acres: do you believe child care, accessing child care, is codependency?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the question to the member from Regina University. We certainly support the fine work that our Minister of Education did on securing the funds from the federal government as it pertains to reducing health care costs for people across the province of Saskatchewan because we do, in this side of the House as a government, invest in the people of Saskatchewan. And that is why we are continuing to ask the federal government, the NDP-Liberal government that they support over there, to get our fair share of the Canada Health Transfer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Skoropad: — Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina Lakeview is definitely ready to be the next NDP leader. When asked earlier this month if it was a mistake by the NDP to close 52 hospitals, she refused to answer the question. The week prior to that, the member for Saskatoon University was quoting people saying we need more consolidation of services in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the NDP's election post-mortem report actually pats themselves on the back saying they were saving health care by closing hospitals.

To the member for Saskatoon Nutana: will you take this opportunity to apologize to rural Saskatchewan or will your party continue to be the party of consolidation and closure?

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question because I am so truly, truly, truly sorry that the people of Saskatchewan have been so abysmally failed by this government. We have 36,000 people on a wait-list that was supposed to have been zero for a decade when they took office.

And so when we talk about apologies, what I would like to see is an apology from this government for their failures, for their record of red lining our health care system. That's right. That's right. You have absolutely no leg to stand on when it comes to criticizing us or defending your own record. And certainly I would go on to say that . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Next question. I recognize the member

from Saskatoon Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, this motion put forward is very quick to blame the federal government for their tax decisions. But to the member from Walsh Acres: I'd like to know, does that member support his own government's decision to tax folks who want to go into Mosaic Stadium, support our Saskatchewan Roughriders in a year when they're hosting the Grey Cup? Or is he interested in putting more barriers to getting folks back in those seats?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for the question. What I do support and what I am very proud of is this budget that our government has put forward this year, investing \$6.8 billion into health care despite not having a fully funding partner in the federal government, the NDP-Liberal budget, propped up by those members across.

What I also support is fiscal stability, and as the Finance minister has explained several times to the members across the way, that we only have three streams of income in this province. We are moving away from our reliance on resource revenue so that we have fiscal stability and long-term planning, something that they can't seem to figure out because when they drive, they look at the end of the hood of the car and not down the road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Grewal: — Mr. Speaker, balancing revenue and expense is essential when presenting a budget plan. And the total budget for health this year is \$6.8 billion, a 4.4 per cent increase from last year.

The members opposite continue calling for more: more beds, more staffing, more money, Mr. Speaker. Under this government, we have more money, more beds, more staffing, Mr. Speaker. To the member for Saskatoon Eastview: now that you have voted against all health care initiatives, will you finally share with the NDP, what would NDP do differently?

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I sincerely thank the member opposite for the question. I'll make a few notes here. First of all, speaking about difficult budget decisions, I know that that's hard for a premier and a Finance minister who have never balanced a budget.

The second thing that I'll note is, what would we do differently? First of all, we would not disrespect health care workers who are working in ERs that they describe as collapsing. We would not disrespect those health care workers who worked for two years through a pandemic serving this province and they come to this government asking for help and they get nothing but lip service. That's what we wouldn't do. We'd respect those folks. We'd make sure that they are working in a system that has our full support so they're not working in a system that's under collapse.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A fun Thursday and Happy Easter to all, sincerely. But to the member from Walsh Acres: Member from Walsh Acres, you know, who was the Prime Minister when the Canada Health Transfer escalator was cut from 6 per cent to 3 per cent? And what did his government say at the time?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And what I would like to say is, the members opposite continually want to bang on us for looking backwards. We look backwards to this day 29 years ago, Mr. Speaker, and guess what: 50-plus hospitals closed — 50-plus hospitals closed by an NDP government.

What we're talking about today, 2022, is every single premier in this country is asking the federal government, the Liberal-NDP budget, to live up to their expectations and fund health care at 35 per cent of the cost, not 22, leaving a billion dollars for Saskatchewan people on the table. That's who they're supporting. They're not standing up for the people of Saskatchewan. They are just playing politics.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On this day in history, April 14th, 1993, the NDP told us what they would do differently. They would, and I quote, "manage change." That meant closing 52 rural hospitals, including four in my constituency: Dodsland, Eston, Macklin, and in my home town of Eatonia, a brand new facility shuttered by that government. Former Health minister Louise Simard: "We are not telling the people of Saskatchewan because of the financial straits of the province they will lose health care service. We are managing change."

To the member from Saskatoon Nutana: does your party still believe in managing change? And why do you not support our government's plan to hire more nurses, retain more physicians, and get surgical wait times back on track?

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Well you know, thank you very much to the member opposite for the question. You know, I find this such a bizarre set of questions. What the member opposite is failing to recognize is that they're the ones who put our health care system in the crisis that it's in. They redlined the system. They refused to enact and maintain public health care measures that led to the failures that we're seeing here today. It's a lack of investment in health care, upstream supports, and public health measures that have created the crisis we see before us here today.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Earlier today we heard the Health minister say that he's proud of a system that's

currently under collapse. To the member from Walsh Acres: would you tell your constituents that you are proud of your government's record today with a system that's described by nurses as under collapse and by doctors as putting patients at risk?

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

Mr. Meyers: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I do have several health care workers that live in Walsh Acres who I talk to on a frequent basis. And I just want to say to them, thank you very much. Thank you very much for the commitment that you have put forward to the people of this province for the last couple of years and for your entire careers.

What I will say to them also is that, you know what? This government has hired 1,000 new doctors. This government has hired 4,300 more nurses. This government is committing to opening 150 more nursing seats. We are spending \$3.3 million in this budget alone on physician recruitment and retention initiatives, particularly for rural . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The 75-minute debate period has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 606

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Bowes that **Bill No. 606 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Paid Sick Days) Amendment Act, 2021*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my privilege and honour to rise today to speak about our private member's bill, Bill 606, which has been drafted to provide crucial support for Saskatchewan workers. This bill would provide 10 paid sick leave days for workers and 14 during a public emergency during a pandemic, Mr. Speaker.

Workers in Saskatchewan currently face the indignity of receiving Canada's lowest minimum wage — poverty wages, Mr. Speaker. To add insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, many of these same workers, and indeed half of all workers across Saskatchewan, don't have the benefit of paid sick leave.

Perhaps the first lesson of this pandemic was how essential front-line workers are, Mr. Speaker, to our economy, to the rhythm of our lives, to the province's overall success — gas attendants, Mr. Speaker, cleaning staff, food service workers, retail workers, warehouse workers, store clerks, EAs [educational assistant], care aides, Mr. Speaker.

This government loves to pay lip service to these working people,

thanks them when they can, says they're the pandemic's front-line heroes. But they have not been willing to back this up with action, to back this up with legislated protections, to back this up with material support.

As a result, working people have again and again been asked to bear the brunt of this pandemic which is now five waves running, Mr. Speaker. This government was fine to let them go in to their jobs, risking their well-being so that Saskatchewan people could continue to access important and essential services, but hasn't been willing to bring in paid sick days to protect these workers, to protect the public, and to protect the integrity of our health care system.

This legislative framework proposed by the NDP opposition would create new employment standards that would ease the burden on workers who currently have to choose between going in to work sick and losing pay. Paid sick leave would mean that getting sick will not mean further financial hardship for workers who have been hard hit during this pandemic and now, with the rising cost of inflation, are struggling more than ever.

Workers who now have to pay, under this government, more for sporting events, more for concerts, more for shows, more to take in a movie, more to go to the museum, Mr. Speaker, more to visit the zoo, more to visit local historical sites, more to take in a fair, a rodeo, a trade show, a craft show. They're paying more, Mr. Speaker, and they're already being crushed from all sides. They're paying more for gym memberships, for curling fees, to hunt and fish and do the things that they love when they get a break from their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, they're being burdened with higher residential property rates which will hit low-income folks, folks on fixed incomes the hardest. Many of these workers, Mr. Speaker, have to choose between going into work sick and facing financial hardship. For many of them, given the low wages that they are offered in this province, that's the difference between making rent that month, putting food on the table.

[12:15]

An Hon. Member: — Any thoughts on the motion?

Ms. Conway: — I'm not speaking to that motion, Minister. I'm speaking to our priority bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Regina Elphinstone-Centre there are so many people working for minimum wage or slightly higher. Many of them are single parents, and I can't tell you how many of them are working multiple jobs to boot. They're not able to see their kids as much as they'd like to. They're also not able to afford child care, although we're hoping that will change in the coming months and years if the Minister for Education rolls up his sleeves and does the hard work under that Canada-wide child care agreement. And in addition to that, they face the indignity, when they wake up sick, of not being able to stay home.

There are so many reasons to implement paid sick leave, Mr. Speaker, and move to address gaps in the federal program like so many other provinces have done, I would note — provinces like BC, provinces like Ontario. And of course we know that the most

common reason that folks go in to work sick is because they don't have access to paid sick leave, Mr. Speaker. We also know that low-income workers make up the majority of workplaces where paid sick leave is absent.

We know that this lack of protection we're seeing from the Sask Party government disproportionately impacts women, it disproportionately impacts newcomers, and it disproportionately impacts young adults, young adults aged 18 to 25. We have the largest outflux of these young people, Mr. Speaker, and it's no surprise given the lack of supports. Many times these workers are single parents, like I alluded to earlier, and sick days are a key component of an equitable approach to decent work.

It's not just other provinces across Canada that have implemented paid sick leave to great success, Mr. Speaker. Most countries around the world provide some type of paid sick leave. I believe it was my colleague who introduced this bill, the member for Saskatoon University, that pointed out that even in the United States, the hotbed of free enterprise and capitalism has 16 states and 23 cities and counties that have enacted paid sick days.

And contrary to paid sick leave opponents' dire warnings, in New York city, Seattle, San Francisco, 86 per cent of businesses surveyed indicated their approval. And that's not surprising, Mr. Speaker, because in addition to offering basic dignity to working people, paid sick leave offers many advantages to employers. That's right; employers actually benefit from having healthy employees, Mr. Speaker.

Paid sick leave improves attendance. It reduces sick time due to folks being able to access faster treatment, better prevention. It reduces contagion within the workplace, so it reduces the overall number of people getting sick. It improves recruitment and retention. It enhances your reputation as a good employer, someone that people want to go out and work for, Mr. Speaker. And it results in stronger health outcomes for all of us. Perhaps most importantly recently, Mr. Speaker, paid sick days actually save lives, saves the lives of your employees, Mr. Speaker.

So it's more than a tool for infection control. It's more than a public health measure. It's more than just about recognizing the basic dignity of working people. It's also about creating economically efficient workplaces.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud that the NDP opposition has introduced this bill. This is a bill that will support working people, not just with words, not just with thanks, but with actual material support. And it's something that will support them at a time when they're struggling more than ever, not just as they work to come out of a pandemic, not just due to inflation that we have not seen for decades, Mr. Speaker, but also because working people are struggling more than ever with the imposition of this government's 32 tax and fee hikes, Mr. Speaker.

So this bill is crucial to building a stronger and more robust system to support workers. It will entice more workers to come work in this province, in a province with some of the lowest growth rates, Mr. Speaker, some of the highest rates of out-migration, a province where fewer and fewer of working people see a future for themselves here and for their families. This is one of those policies that could address these damning economic

facts, Mr. Speaker.

And this bill is about this opposition's universal call to provide more relief to working people, not just through our calls to raise the absolutely shameful, lowest minimum wage in the country because this opposition believes that working people do not deserve to live in poverty; that an honest day's work should entitle you to an honest day's pay; that an honest day's work should entitle you to put food on the table for your family and a roof over your head, and God forbid, a bit left over to take in some of these recreational activities, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that families will now be paying more for those activities that give working people relief.

This bill is part of that universal call to provide relief to working people, Mr. Speaker, and it's more important than ever given what we've seen in this budget. People were calling out for relief and they got an anchor with this budget, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 606, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Paid Sick Days) Amendment Act, 2021*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned till Monday, April 25th at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:24.]

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