



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

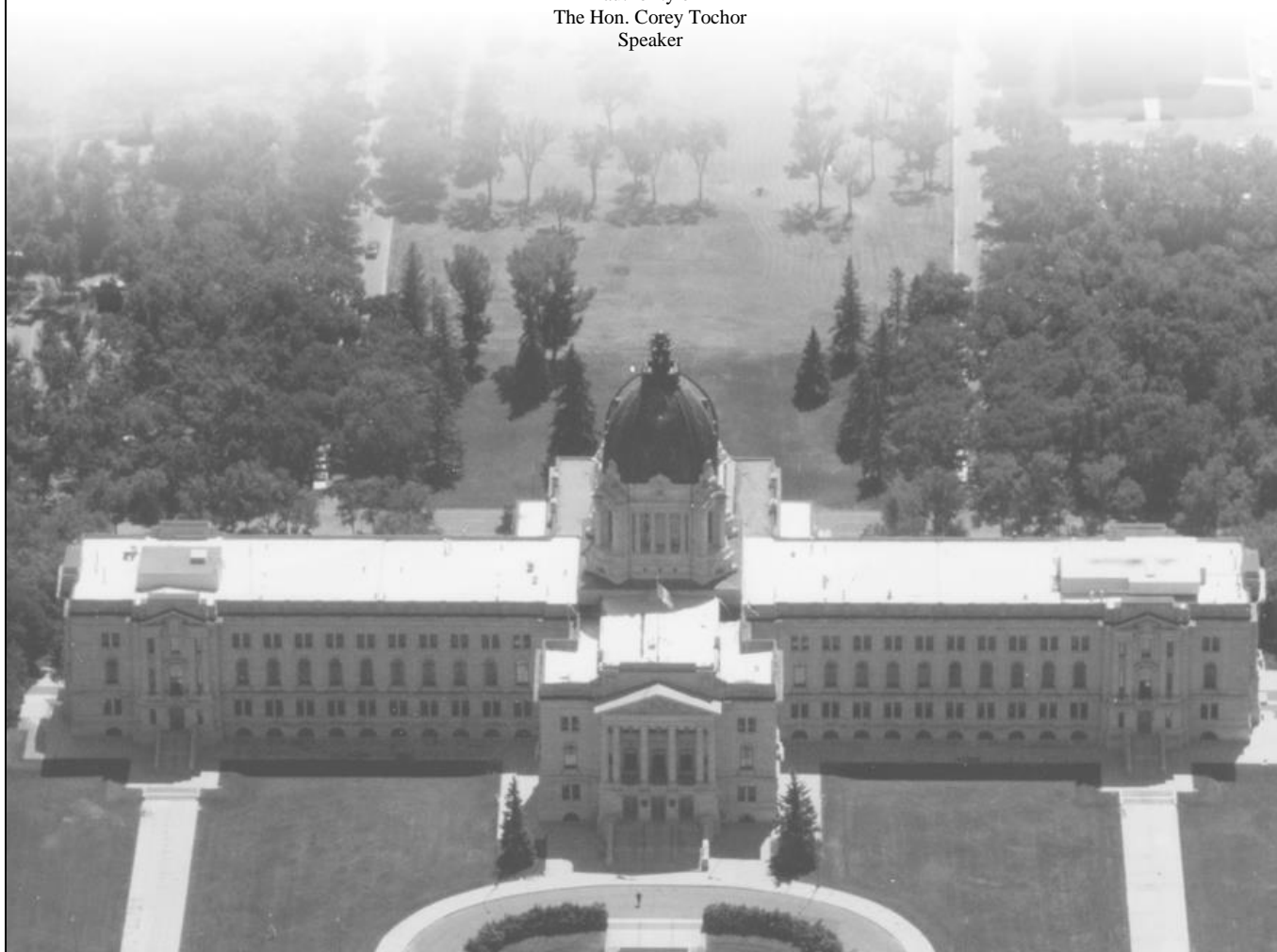
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 28th Legislature**

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

**Beaudry-Mellor**, Tina — Regina University (SP)

**Beck**, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

**Belanger**, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Hon. Bill — Kindersley (SP)

**Bradshaw**, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

**Buckingham**, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

**Campeau**, Hon. Jennifer — Saskatoon Fairview (SP)

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

**Chartier**, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

**Cheveldayoff**, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

**Cox**, Hon. Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

**D'Autremont**, Dan — Cannington (SP)

**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

**Docherty**, Hon. Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

**Doherty**, Hon. Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)

**Doke**, Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

**Duncan**, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)

**Eyre**, Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

**Fiaz**, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

**Forbes**, David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

**Hargrave**, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

**Harpauer**, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

**Harrison**, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

**Hart**, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

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**Kaeding**, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

**Lambert**, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

**Lawrence**, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

**Makowsky**, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

**Marit**, David — Wood River (SP)

**McCall**, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

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

**Merriman**, Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

**Michelson**, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

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

**Morgan**, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

**Nerlien**, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

**Olauson**, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

**Ottenbreit**, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

**Parent**, Roger — Saskatoon Meewasin (SP)

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

**Rancourt**, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

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

**Ross**, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

**Sarauer**, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

**Sproule**, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

**Steele**, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

**Steinley**, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

**Stewart**, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

**Tell**, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

**Tochor**, Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)

**Vermette**, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

**Wall**, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

**Weekes**, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

**Wilson**, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 51; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 10

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Buriandyk

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to introduce to you and through you to all the members in the Assembly this morning a great group of students from Fairview School in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. Maybe they could give us a wave. They're grade 5 students, Mr. Speaker, and they're joined today by their teachers: Rochelle Finell, Anthony Rolheiser, and Jolene Hornung. And I think the chaperones include Brandy Westbury, Jenn Berg, Darryk Noble, and Jody Knutson, Mr. Speaker.

I am a proud alumni of Fairview School. I went there for grades 1 through 7, and it only took me the seven years to get that done. And it is a great school; it's a very important part of the community in which Tami and I and the family live as well. And we're grateful, not just to the teachers that work there, but to all of the staff at the school and their community involvement on the south side of Swift Current. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce three gentlemen seated in your gallery this morning. I'd like to introduce Gil Le Dressay, the vice-president of refinery operations. These gentlemen are all from our Co-op Refinery here in Regina: Brad DeLorey, the director of public affairs — give us a wave gentlemen, please — and Andrew Swenson, communications manager.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rochdale will be reading a member's statement later this morning highlighting some of the great work that is being done at the refinery right here in Regina. So I would ask all members to please join with me in welcoming these gentlemen to their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Requesting an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join with the minister opposite and welcome some economic leaders that are here with us today from the Co-op Refinery Complex.

I had the pleasure of joining these leaders at the unveiling of an incredibly innovative waste water recycling system that they've built out at the Co-op Refinery, a system that makes this operation incredibly sustainable, actually eliminating the draw on Regina water. And of course this is a very important project to our province as a whole and to Regina. At a cost of over \$200 million, this is impressive, forward-thinking leadership, the kind of leadership that I think will be exemplary for industry not just across our province but in North America, a biological process in fact that they've put forward.

And of course this refinery is incredibly important to the economy not only of our province but certainly of Regina, and that expansion that they've put forward is something very important to all of us. So to Gil Le Dressay, vice-president; Brad DeLorey; Andrew Swenson; and certainly Scott Banda and the entire team at Federated and your entire team over at the refinery complex, thank you so very much for your leadership and your investment here in Saskatchewan.

And while still on my feet, I'd like to welcome other economic leaders within their Assembly, leaders within the credit union movement in our province, representatives of SaskCentral. I see Keith Nixon there. I see Leslie. Of course we have an incredibly strong credit union system across our province. I believe they're here for some announcements around legislation. We look forward to that and making sure that that puts our credit unions on the proper foundation for success well into the future. Of course we know their contributions historically have been immense, and they have a big role to play well into the future. I ask all members to welcome these leaders in our credit union movement to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Leader of the Opposition to take a few moments to as well introduce a number of members that are sitting in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, Ministry of Justice and Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority staff along with members of the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation and SaskCentral have been working diligently over a long period of time to develop a new supervisory framework to administer new legislation respecting and regulating SaskCentral. Today the fruits of their labour will be heard, as the Leader of the Opposition has indicated. We'll be putting forward a motion for first reading of Bill 18, *The Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan Act, 2016*. And as noted, with us in the gallery today are Keith Nixon, president of SaskCentral; David Meldrum, SaskCentral's associate vice-president of legal; and Leslie Trobak, government relations with SaskCentral.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that there's been a tremendous amount of work and collaboration between the FCAA [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan], the Ministry of Justice, and representatives of the credit union system, all to ensure proper credit union regulation in Saskatchewan and in turn, of course most importantly, the protection of the public through consumer protection, Mr. Speaker. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these

fine people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to make an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, and to all the members in this Assembly, I would like to introduce the intern that I'll be working with through the SLIP [Saskatchewan Legislative Intern Program] program, Marnie Howlett. Just give a wave; she's sitting in the Speaker's gallery there.

Marnie's from Saskatoon and attended high school at the Marion M. Graham Collegiate, where she finished at the top of her class throughout grades 9 to 12 and was the top graduate in the Saskatoon public school division in 2011. During that time, she also served as the student council president and executive member of both the canoe club and the environmental club, directed the school's variety night, and was involved in the school's musicals and dance academy. She also played basketball, volleyball, curled, and wrestled, as well as travelled with the travel club to Brazil and Vietnam.

Outside of school, Marnie has always been equally as involved. At the age of three, she began Ukrainian dancing and continues with it today, as well as has taken classes in jazz, lyrical, hip hop, and ballet. Marnie has also taught Ukrainian dance in Prince Albert and Prud'homme, as well as ballet, jazz and hip hop classes. In addition to dancing, she enjoys singing in the Ukrainian Orthodox choir and acted as the director for the Green Grove Ukrainian Orthodox youth camp in the summer of 2015.

Following her high school graduation in 2011, Marnie began her post-secondary education at the University of Saskatchewan. Combining her love of travel and passion for politics, she recently completed her Bachelor of Arts degree with high honours, a degree in international studies with a major focus in international co-operation and conflict.

During her time at the University of Saskatchewan, Marnie was involved with the Greystone Scholars first-year committee and the International Studies Students Association. She was also a tutorial leader for the beginner Ukrainian language class and a marking assistant for the department of political studies. Further, she acted as an intern at the Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City, aiding in the organization of a self-advocacy workshop and community justice course.

In May 2014, Marnie was fortunate to study the Ukrainian language abroad in the Ukraine. There she became involved with the Canadian organization, Help Us Help the Children

which hosts summer and winter camps for orphan children in Ukraine. Since May 2014, Marnie has returned to Ukraine three or more times to volunteer at these camps as well as at rehabilitation workshop for families that lost their husbands and fathers to the current conflict in the eastern parts of Ukraine. Back home in Saskatoon, she also supports the organization by doing presentations, hosting events, and collecting donations of clothing and other goods to send to the children.

Upon completion of the internship, Marnie hopes to further her education in a master's program and pursue a career in international development or humanitarian aid. I look forward to working with Marnie and learning from her.

I would like to ask the members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming Marnie to her Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I am absolutely delighted to welcome a good friend of mine to this Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, just some quick background. This gentleman was in town for a conference a couple of weeks ago. He was going to come visit the Legislative Assembly, and I was looking forward to introducing him. At the last minute he had to cancel.

At that point, Mr. Speaker, I took a lot of cheap shots from members on this side of the House about having an imaginary friend. Particularly noteworthy was the comment from one hon. member who asked me, his question was, is your imaginary friend, is his name Mr. Snuffleupagus?

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Snuffleupagus is in the House. He's here. He's alive. He's well and, Mr. Speaker, he's seated in your gallery. He also goes by the name of Don McCallum. He's a former colleague, long-time administrator for the RM [rural municipality] of Cut Knife, and a good friend of mine.

And I'd ask all members to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce my friend, Nadeem Naz. He is sitting in the west gallery. Can you please raise your hand. Nadeem Naz has been migrated in Saskatchewan since 25 years ago, and he has been living since that in Regina, Saskatchewan. And he said, I am loving it, living in Regina, Saskatchewan.

He is a very good volunteer. He has been working since 14 years as a volunteer in radio station CJTR 91.3 FM, every Saturday from 1 o'clock until 2 o'clock. And, Mr. Speaker, he is also a very good musician. He is here to see how the proceeding works.

Thank you. I would like to ask all members to join me welcoming him in his own Legislative Assembly.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition again to improve PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that post-traumatic stress disorder can severely impact the lives of Saskatchewan workers, that the delay in diagnosis and treatment for PTSD can be detrimental to recovery. I had an opportunity a few days ago to speak to someone. It took them four months to be able to get coverage under workers' compensation before Workers' Compensation paid for their treatment, Mr. Speaker. The petitioners point out that many workers suffering from work-related PTSD are burdened by these lengthy investigations and approval processes, and that presuming PTSD is work related will reduce stigma and allow workers easier access to services and supports. That's certainly what I've heard from workers, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Saskatchewan government to make the necessary changes to ensure that if Saskatchewan workers are exposed to traumatic events on the job and are then diagnosed with PTSD, it is presumed to be caused by the worker's employment, and the worker will subsequently be covered under workers' compensation and receive the same benefits as others with work-related injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Yorkton and Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise in the Assembly today to present a petition as it involves cell service for northern Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To cause the provincial government to improve cell service coverage for northern communities like St. George's Hill, Dillon, Michel Village, Dore Lake, Michel Point, and Sled Lake to provide similar quality of cell coverage as southern communities currently enjoy. This would provide support to our northern industries as well as mitigate safety concerns associated with living in the remote North.

[10:15]

And the people that have signed this particular page, as many thousands have signed many other pages, are primarily from Camp Carmel and the Dore Lake area. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition from

the individuals that would like to bring to our attention the following: *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act* is an old and outdated piece of legislation that remains largely unchanged despite amendments over the years. It is in desperate need of modernization to reflect the current challenges that farmers and ranchers are facing today. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the government of Saskatchewan to introduce legislation that would modernize *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act*, classify land value as industrial rather than agricultural when oil and gas development takes place, remove pipelines and flow lines from the surface rights Act, and establish a new maximum in compensation be paid for damages.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who presented this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of funding heritage languages here in Saskatchewan. And we know that after 25 years, the Government of Saskatchewan is discontinuing all support for heritage language learning here in Saskatchewan.

Since 1991 heritage language schools have depended on this modest funding from the Ministry of Education to help sustain their programs. And as a result of the announcement by the Ministry of Education, many of these non-profit heritage language schools will be faced with the difficult decision of whether they can . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order.

**Mr. Forbes:** — . . . continue to operate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In addition, the heritage language schools contribute to the retention of immigrants in Saskatchewan by helping people to maintain their culture, identity, and traditions while at the same time learning about Canadian ways of life. Furthermore, studying additional languages offers many benefits for all Canadians, especially in today's growing international markets.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following actions:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to reconsider this decision and restore funding for heritage language education in Saskatchewan heritage language schools.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today are from Saskatoon. Thank you very much.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Qu'Appelle.

### Waste Water Improvement Project

**Ms. Ross:** — Or Regina Rochdale. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today and talk about the newest project at the Regina Co-op Refinery Complex.

Last week on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I attended the announcement of a \$200 million waste water improvement plant. Mr. Speaker, this environmental project will reduce the refinery's use of fresh water by the equivalent of 3,100 Regina households while cleaning over 2 million gallons of waste water per day. The waste water will be purified and then used for steam production, which will reduce emissions and odours from the refinery. This means, Mr. Speaker, that our refinery right here, right in Regina, will be the only refinery in North America that can clean and recycle all of its waste water. It is expected to be fully operational in the fall of 2016 when it will begin recycling water for the use in the refinery.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, I am proud that Saskatchewan will be at the forefront of developing industry-leading technology. A strong Saskatchewan means that corporations are prepared to invest right here, right in our province.

I will ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating the Co-op Refinery Complex as they near completion of their innovative waste water project. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Recognizing Pride Month

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly today in recognition of Pride month this June. We know that the folks in the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] community contribute so much to our province, and we're all very proud to stand with them to kick off Pride here in Saskatchewan. This year we're seeing more and more Pride events across our province, including Regina, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and now Beardy's and Swift Current. And I know that we'll be seeing more communities join in in the very near future.

Pride month is very important because there is so much more work to do in the fight for equality for everyone, including our queer community. In too many of our schools, workplaces, and public spaces, people turn a blind eye to homophobia and transphobia. In 2016 we need to be doing so much better to build a province where everyone is treated with dignity and the respect they deserve and where their basic human rights are respected.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially recognize a recent human rights victory that we can all celebrate. Laura Budd is a trans woman who took the government to the Human Rights

Commission to fight for her right to have the right gender marker on her driver's licence, and she won her case. She shouldn't have had to take the province to the commission to get her gender marker corrected. This is one more important milestone for the LGBTQ community here in Saskatchewan.

I ask all members to join in me recognizing Pride month here in Saskatchewan. And let's all get out and join in the Pride parade in our nearest community. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### University of Saskatchewan College of Arts and Science Awards

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to congratulate the University of Saskatchewan College of Arts and Science graduates who recently received awards. This week I had the pleasure of attending the College of Arts and Science convocation awards ceremony to bring greetings on behalf of the province. Joining me were Dean Peta Bonham-Smith, Chancellor Blaine Favel, and President Peter Stoiceff.

This is a very exciting time of year for graduates as they embark on their next adventure, and it was a pleasure to join them at their ceremony. Mr. Speaker, during the ceremony, awards were handed out for most distinguished graduate in the following categories: fall 2015 and spring 2016 overall academic, humanities, fine arts, social sciences, science, and interdisciplinary programs. Also during the evening were the faculty teaching excellence awards awarded to Dr. Wendy Roy, Dr. Joseph Garcea, and Dr. Nathaniel Osgood.

Mr. Speaker, also this week the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] held its convocation ceremony for all of its graduates. It takes a lot of hard work, dedication, talent, and vision to make it to a convocation, so congratulations to all the students.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members of the House to join me in congratulating the recipients of the College of Arts and Science convocation awards. Your hard work has not gone unnoticed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Accomplishments of Northern Student

**Mr. Vermette:** — Robin Louis is a constituent of mine who has so much to be proud of. He has never missed a day of school since starting kindergarten at Gordon Denny Community School in Air Ronge. This year Robin will complete his final year at Churchill Community High School in La Ronge.

But Robin isn't just a great student. He is also a star football player. Robin plays with the Churchill Chargers in the Northern Football League. Just recently he was selected to play in the 2016 Ed Henick Senior Bowl in Saskatoon. Robin's team won, and after the game he was asked to play in the CanAm Bowl. Yesterday, Robin signed with the Saskatoon Hilltops for their upcoming season where he will be suiting up for one of the best

junior football programs in the country.

These are amazing accomplishments for any student to fulfill. As a member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Robin is a role model for many young people in the La Ronge area. His advice to young students is simple: go to school. It's free and will determine the kind of life you will have.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Robin on his remarkable accomplishments in sports and academics, and in wishing him all the best in his bright future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Africa Day

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this past Saturday I had the privilege to bring greetings on behalf of the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport to the attendees at the 53rd annual Africa Day celebrations at the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that Saskatchewan is made stronger from many people's strength. That's why our government is proud to support multicultural activities, programs, and recognize like this one through the funding provided from SaskCulture, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport.

This year the Africa Day theme was Understanding African-Canadian Heritage to Develop Strategies to Support Successful Integration. Mr. Speaker, immigration plays an important role in keeping Saskatchewan strong. Our province's increasing growth contributes to the diversity and continued success of our economy.

The host of this event, the African-Canadian Resource Network Saskatchewan Inc., is the leader in the community as it supports the development of the diverse African-Canadian community in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members of this Assembly to join me in acknowledging 2016 Africa Day and to thank the organizers and sponsors of the amazing event held last weekend celebrating Saskatchewan diversity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Fundraiser Supports North Central Family Centre Kitchen

**Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure to attend the kitchen fundraiser of the North Central Family Centre, representing the Minister Responsible for Sask Gaming, on the weekend. The North Central Family Centre is an important part of the community that empowers youth and families by offering a wide range of proven, successful, structured programs and activities. This year's fundraiser was an amazing success as funds raised went toward upgrades to the centre's kitchen, which serves daily meals to between 50 and 70 people every single day.

Casino Regina and Sask Gaming committed to matching up to \$50,000 raised at the event. Mr. Speaker, I can share with this Assembly today that the event was a resounding success. The total raised, including Casino Regina's contribution, was \$136,000. Mr. Speaker, the approximately 280 guests who gathered showed the strength of the organization and the pillar it is in the community.

It was further great to hear from the special guest introduced by my hon. colleague, the Minister of Finance: former Canadian Forces chief of defence staff, General Rick Hillier. It was incredible to hear from General Hillier as he talked about how a leader must listen and collaborate with their peers. It was both inspirational and humorous.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the North Central Family Centre, Executive Director Sandy Wankel, and organizer Pam Klein on a successful fundraiser, and to thank Casino Regina and all the sponsors and attendees that made the event a success. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

### Gender and Sexual Diversity Pride Month

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport and the member from Regina University attended the raising of the Pride flag outside the legislature, recognizing that the province has proclaimed June, Gender and Sexual Diversity Pride Month. This flag raising marks the beginning of activities throughout the month. It is a province-wide celebration of both recognition and support.

Our goal continues to be to support the strongest quality of life. Having everyone be part of a proud society that strives to eliminate discrimination through inclusion and recognition is instrumental to this quality of life. Contributing in any way possible, drawing from the creativity and innovation of our increasing diversity, is one way to achieve that.

In terms of human rights and the struggle of many different groups for acceptance and respect, our society has changed profoundly over the province's first century. For many of us who are a bit older, we learned about the LGBTQ community through media coverage of the struggle for equality.

Making every effort to contribute to an inclusive, welcoming, and understanding society will remain a priority for us. This is because diversity is one of the strongest attributes of our province, and we see great value in that. I ask all members to join me in recognizing June as Pride Month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Government's Fiscal Management

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Sask

Party is out of touch with the reality faced by Saskatchewan families. But, Mr. Speaker, honestly I believe that many of my colleagues opposite are actually really smart people. So after almost two years of slumping oil prices, I don't think all of them were surprised that it's hurting our finances.

But, Mr. Speaker, that's how they all acted when they campaigned. That's how they all acted when they rise in this Assembly, denying the true state of our finances and hiding their budget and their planned cuts. But after a decade in government they're still refusing to take responsibility.

Let's be clear. Their deficit, their climbing and now record debt, are not the result of supporting our kids' classrooms or helping seniors get their medication. It's the result of Sask Party mismanagement during boom time. Their waste, their fiascos. In fact even in this budget, their bypass boondoggle and its billion-dollar overrun is still getting a half-billion dollars. Will the Premier stand up and accept that it's their decade in power, their mistakes, and their mismanagement that led us here?

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

[10:30]

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just share with all members that our government was elected in 2007, late 2007, so we're hoping to be around for a decade but it's not been quite 10 years.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will say this with respect to the record of the government over those eight years, is there has been certainly good fortune from a revenue perspective for the government early on, and so our government took some important steps in those early years to invest for the future with these additional revenues, these unexpected revenues that were coming in.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, we paid off \$2.7 billion of operating debt. This is the debt of the province that's unsupported in a structured way to be retired. For example, it's more like a credit card versus a mortgage. Mr. Speaker, it is true that the government has moved, like almost . . . well like every provincial government in Canada, we've moved to finance long-term capital with a long-term perspective. But we have reduced by \$2.7 billion that credit card that we inherited from previous governments, certainly not these members opposite, but the government before that.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to point out that as a result of actions we took because of some additional revenue, we have reduced taxes in Saskatchewan by \$6 billion — for families, for farmers, for business people. I think that's part of the reason why we've seen unprecedented economic growth in the province as the market and the economy responds to lower taxes, Mr. Speaker.

And finally, over and above what the NDP invested in their last seven years, we've invested \$8 billion in infrastructure investment. He might consider that as a loss or poor decisions. I think the people of Saskatchewan might disagree.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier certainly doesn't let the facts stand in the way. Their own budget document, page 50, Mr. Speaker, that clearly shows that during a period of record resource revenues, this government's jacked up our debt in a major way — 80 per cent, in fact, \$6.5 billion in just five years to well over \$14 billion.

And, Mr. Speaker, in this year alone, Saskatchewan lost well over 9,000 jobs. Bankruptcies are on the rise in Saskatchewan. Wages are declining. But yesterday, did we hear about a plan to diversify the economy to help Saskatchewan people get back to work and create jobs? No, not a mention. In fact they're making it harder, cutting the programs that help people get back to work and to create jobs. Everything from apprenticeship to post-secondary education, youth and adult skills training, to adult basic education. Mr. Speaker, they even cut economic development, trade, and export. All of these cuts from a government that said nothing about them during a campaign.

So will this Premier finally get to work helping the people of Saskatchewan find and keep good-paying, family-supporting jobs? Because this budget clearly hurts them.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, this budget was precisely about keeping the economy strong in Saskatchewan. That's why, unlike other provinces that are facing shortfalls in revenue, we didn't increase any taxes in this budget.

What would have happened if members opposite would have been on the government side? They campaigned, in the middle of these economic challenging times, they campaigned on tax increases. They were going to increase taxes in the last election. It's in their platform.

Mr. Speaker, what's important for this economy is stability, is continuity in royalties, stability in the tax rate. That's what this budget delivers.

And here's something else it delivers, Mr. Speaker, and this is very important. In this challenging year for our economy, our government's going to continue with our building program, with our infrastructure program to the tune of I think \$1.7 billion, \$1.8 billion. That's the largest infrastructure investment ever, and we've been making some significant investments in infrastructure. That's also about maintaining jobs and creating new jobs in the province of Saskatchewan.

Our record on this side of the House with respect to the economy and our growth plan, Mr. Speaker, while there's always more work to do, I think is widely regarded as fairly successful, and this budget will build on that record.

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

#### **Funding for Employment Training Services**

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, this government really likes to talk the talk when it comes to jobs, but we don't see them walking the walk. Mr. Speaker, Social Services is shifting away from the Saskatchewan assistance program and pushing people



towards the transitional employment allowance. Certainly helping people transition to employment is a great option if you are actually focusing on getting people into the workforce. But yesterday's budget clearly shows that this government is not interested in that.

The TEA [transitional employment allowance] program requires people to participate in pre-employment programs and services, Mr. Speaker. So why, Mr. Speaker, why were the programs and services to help people get jobs chopped in their budget yesterday? How can the minister possibly justify this cruel irony? How can she tell people to get a job, get job ready, and at the same time make it harder for them to get the training and work readiness they are looking for?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's just factually incorrect. In our budget yesterday, we actually increased funding for the Canada-Saskatchewan Job Grant, as an example, over \$6.9 million. The program has been incredibly successful in terms of training new . . . training individuals who are employed already, bringing new folks into the workforce. And our record is clear, Mr. Speaker. We've seen, over the course of the period from 2007 to 2015, full-time employment increase by over 60,000 people, Mr. Speaker — our population reaching an all-time high, more people working in the province than at any time in our history.

So as the Premier indicated, Mr. Speaker, our record on economic development, our record on the economy I think is fairly well acknowledged across the province and across the country to have been a very successful one. And we're going to continue to invest in job training.

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

### Funding for Health Care

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, we just heard about one program where the government wasn't upfront about the reality of this situation. We see the same misleading tactics from other ministers. Mr. Speaker, yesterday this government said we were seeing an increase in health funding, but the increase is so small it won't even allow for us to keep up with the status quo.

Let's be clear. There will be health care cuts in this budget. But this government is effectively pushing the buck to the health regions. The minister said that this would mean we are going to have to make some tougher decisions. But in reality, they have pushed those hard decisions on to the health regions. When will this government finally stop the spin and acknowledge they are simply pushing those cuts down the line to health regions and on to families?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, it was interesting to hear the Finance critic yesterday for the NDP [New Democratic Party] talk about how anything less than a 6 per cent increase in health would be considered a cut, Mr. Speaker. Well if the members opposite

actually looked at their own platform, they would see that they didn't actually budget for 6 per cent health increases in their own platform, so they were looking for . . . Under their own definition, they were also going to be cutting health care spending.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to work very hard with the regional health authorities, as we have over the last number of years, of bending the cost curve when it comes to health spending in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members I think in this House know, as the public are starting to become more and more aware, that the fact that health, education, and social services takes up 75 per cent of the provincial budget, Mr. Speaker. We need to do our part, and our regional health authorities certainly understand that. And our partners, such as the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] and others, know that we need to do our part to continue to bend the cost curve so that we can have a publicly funded health care system 10 and 20 and 30 years down the road.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, we see the consequences of this government's mismanagement passed on to the health regions. But it gets worse. They are also passing them off to seniors and children. This year seniors and children will be required to pay 66 per cent more for their prescriptions. That's a significant increase for seniors who are living on extremely tight budgets and families who are struggling to get their kids the care they need. We saw a few things go up in this year's health budget: the cost of drugs for seniors and kids and the minister's salary.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government choosing to make up for their mismanagement by further burdening Saskatchewan families? Why did this government choose to put this on our eldest and on our youngest? Why are they the only ones who have to pay more?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of things that are going up in the health budget this year. The number of cancer drugs that the government is funding, that's going up by 15 new cancer drugs. The fact that we're fully funding drugs for hepatitis C patients, Mr. Speaker, that is also up in this budget, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have found, in a very difficult budget year, \$20 million to put into the surgical initiative to bring that funding up to \$70 million, that's going up this year, Mr. Speaker. Ten million additional dollars this year to increase diagnostic and imaging support across the province, Mr. Speaker, that's going up in this budget as well, Mr. Speaker. And funding, Mr. Speaker, for important capital projects, Mr. Speaker, like the cooling and heating project at RUH [Royal University Hospital] Hospital, the electrical renewal here in the city of Regina both at the General and the Pasqua Hospital, as well as a 25 per cent increase in general maintenance dollars to our regional health authorities, Mr. Speaker, those are also going up, Mr. Speaker.

We'll work very hard with our partner sectors to ensure that we are continuing to bend the cost curve, as I said before, to ensure

that we do have a sustainable health care system in this province.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, do you know how much those three hospitals need for maintenance? \$675 million. They got 14.1, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister said that the increase was due to inflation, and I was shocked, shocked to hear that this government does know about inflation. We didn't hear the Finance minister talk about that yesterday, and we certainly didn't see it reflected in their budget for education, health, and social services.

The Finance minister said that they were getting increases, but the reality is these increases are not keeping up with inflation or population growth, and they are certainly not keeping up with the demands of our already stressed classrooms and our backlogged hospitals.

We heard from the Health minister yesterday that these increases acknowledge that we have had inflation over the past four years as well as a rise in drug costs. Of course there is inflation and of course costs increase, but this government ignored that in every other aspect of this budget. They have left health regions and school boards to deal with these cost increases.

To the minister: why does this government have different expectations for seniors and kids than it does for itself?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the member opposite has recognized that this government, in a difficult budget year, has found dollars to recognize the capital infrastructure needs of our facilities.

**An Hon. Member:** — 675 million.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well and I thank the member for giving me the number. How do you think we got there, to the member from Riversdale? Mr. Speaker, the fact that in their last budget, for something that we call life, safety, emergency, critical infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite found \$4.4 million for that in their last budget, Mr. Speaker, as the government. For life, safety, and critical infrastructure, \$4 million is all they found, Mr. Speaker. In fact this government has been able to provide \$682 million, a 240 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of capital, we have spent or invested more than \$1.2 billion in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. In the last decade of their government, they could barely crack \$500 million. Yes, we have an infrastructure backlog in this province, and the members opposite know well about it because they were there, Mr. Speaker.

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

## Funding for Employment

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, we also see cutbacks to the Aboriginal court worker program and Aboriginal police consulting groups. These programs serve the most vulnerable in our society and the most overrepresented in the criminal justice system.

Last week we heard the Corrections minister say, "... we want to turn our inmates, the people in our facilities into taxpayers, providing them employment opportunities, employment training."

Well we've seen cuts to justice and corrections programs in this budget, and we have already heard a lot today on the cuts to employment readiness programs. They are simply not a priority of this government — cuts to both things the minister was talking about just last week. How can the minister stand in this place, say that they are for more training, and then sit there while her colleague makes cuts and offers less?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister in charge of Immigration, Jobs, Skills and Training.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to address this head-on in terms of the claims we've heard from the opposition with regard to apprenticeship training.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, apprenticeship training is driven by demand. It's driven from the apprenticeship commission. They make a request to government and we allocate seats on the basis of the requests that they make, which is based on utilization which they hear from industry and from providers. The fact is that the apprenticeship commission asked for a reduction in the number of seats this year because of utilization demand. So that's the fact.

The other fact I'd put on the record, Mr. Speaker, is in terms of the amount of increase over the course of the last number of years, since 2007, there has been a 76 per cent increase in the number of seats for apprenticeship training, Mr. Speaker, which is a reflection of demand from industry. So we've seen 76 per cent more apprentices trained in this province because of the growth in the economy.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, my question was to the two ministers responsible for that file, and it's about problems with programming in custody. And I'm going to ask the question again. Why do the ministers not defend the cuts that are happening to in-custody job training programs?

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

[10:45]

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thanks. Mr. Speaker, what occurs in our correctional facilities is that we do prepare our offenders for employment opportunities. Just recently, Mr. Speaker, we opened Whitespruce in Yorkton when it was converted to an

employment training centre for 39 male adult offenders, and that happened in March of 2015.

We realize that we have to get the inmates ready for employment opportunities should they present themselves, and we're committed to continuing this initiative. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility of every minister to stand up and defend the issues on their file, not defend the cuts. Mr. Speaker, training, rehabilitation, and employment readiness are complex issues in our corrections system and they need to be managed effectively. There are long-term consequences to cutting these programs.

Let me make it simple. Will the minister stand up and fight for her ministry and defend these programs that ultimately help those in need, grow our economy, and make our communities more safe?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister in charge of Corrections and Policing.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Mr. Speaker, we will continue with the Whitespruce training program in Yorkton and we'll hopefully expand it over time, Mr. Speaker. We recognize the importance of continuing on with employment training.

I will note too that there is a food service training program within each of our correctional facilities that prepares offenders to be first-line order cooks, Mr. Speaker. We recognize the importance and we'll continue to ensure that offenders do receive the training necessary for employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Education

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In yesterday's budget, this government once again showed that the education of our children is not a priority. They let crumbs fall off the table for K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] operating costs. Mr. Speaker, increasing operational funding is what school divisions have been calling for over the last few years. But this increase amounts to point one per cent of the budget for education — one-tenth of a per cent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this will not be enough money to hire the teachers required. This will not be enough money to fund new students entering the system. This will not be enough money to get students the supports that they need. And this will not be enough ... We won't even come close to addressing the shortfalls that schools are already struggling with. To the Minister of Education: why won't this government provide our classrooms with the funding that they desperately need?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, once again I've got to

correct the member opposite on what was in the preamble. Mr. Speaker, the figures of point one per cent are inaccurate. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the House the following: overall education budget has increased this year by 7.8 per cent to \$2.2 billion. School operating costs have increased by \$30 million. And, Mr. Speaker, we include as well \$288 million for supports for learning, \$5.4 million for Syrian refugees.

Mr. Speaker, we have a major commitment to our education. This is a responsible budget. We're going to continue to do what's necessary for the students in our province and we're going to continue to fund education. We want to work with the school divisions to find changes to do things as effectively as they possible can. And, Mr. Speaker, I met with the school boards yesterday morning and they are excited and challenged and looking forward to this.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I don't mind if the minister dismisses my comments, but I hope that they won't continue to dismiss the voices of those in the sector, within education in this province: the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation].

Mr. Speaker, the minister and I must have had very different conversations yesterday, because what I was told is that this government still isn't giving schools the support that they need, period. The president of the STF, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, has said, and I quote: "School divisions will be forced to make decisions that could negatively affect teaching and learning."

School divisions across the province are facing serious budget shortfalls. Last year Regina Public faced a shortfall of over \$6 million. For the Catholic School Division it was 2 million. Saskatoon Public, \$3 million. But, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most shocking was the shortfall in the Prairie Spirit School Division with a shortfall of over \$7 million. Hundreds of students in schools across Saskatchewan will go without adequate government support in their classrooms. So will the minister properly fund our schools, or is continuous underfunding part of the transformational change that was promised in yesterday's budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises the specific issue of Prairie Spirit School Division. Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you some numbers about Prairie Spirit School Division. Over \$90 million has gone to school capital in the Prairie Spirit School Division alone. Prairie Spirit received over \$1.3 million in preventative maintenance and renewal this year, over \$3 million in the past three years.

Emergent funding is available for unforeseen and unexpected issues. They've received supports for projects of those natures, and I'll read some of them: Valley Manor School, 205,000; Delisle, 227,000; Aberdeen, 950,000; Langham, 396,000; Hanley, 237,000; Hague, 300,000; Osler, 400,000. Mr. Speaker, Prairie Spirit has received a 33 per cent increase in operating funding compared to a 22 per cent enrolment since 2007-2008.

We'll work with Prairie Spirit. We'll work with each and every other school division to try and ensure that the best value is delivered to our students and that we're able to continue to provide supports for the classrooms.

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

### Provincial Credit Rating

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party brags about a lot of things, and some of them are true, but when the news turns they sometimes forget to talk about that too. For example, Mr. Speaker, we have often heard this government and the Premier boasting about their credit rating, but now we see that in fact there are some concerns with it.

Can the Finance minister advise when the Standard & Poor's credit attached a negative outlook to our credit rating? We know that last year at budget time there was no negative outlook. So to the Finance minister: when did this happen? What is the overall impact that we can expect from this, and how is he planning to manage it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that frankly I'm a little surprised and perhaps even disappointed that that member is still the Finance critic on that side of the House today, Mr. Speaker. I can only imagine that if I or one of my colleagues had breached the privileges of the members of this House so egregiously as that member did yesterday with respect to leaking the budget, Mr. Speaker, they would have been up on their feet with righteous indignation demanding my resignation or somebody else's, Mr. Speaker. I can't believe that leader has not fired that critic for Finance at this point in time, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, the negative outlook occurred about six months ago when the price of oil was the downturn. They maintained a AAA credit rating for our province, one of only two provinces in Canada right now with a AAA credit rating. That happened about six months ago.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — You want to talk about capacity in this House? Mr. Speaker, clearly this minister is not planning for the future. He's not dealing with the negative outlooks that are being presented to him by Standard & Poor's. And, Mr. Speaker, there's more fudged messaging that we're dealing with. During the campaign, their message was steady as we go, but now they're talking about transformational change. Which one is it, Mr. Speaker?

Yesterday in the budget we saw that this transformation is less than meets the eye. They said they'd be asking important questions. Well here they are. Here's the questions: is this something government should be doing? Is this program or service the role of government? Nearly a decade in government and they're asking these questions now, looking to see if how they're running things is working. And, Mr. Speaker, let me

save them some time. These are not transformational questions. What is transformational about ensuring that programs are effective?

So will the minister admit that, had they properly managed things all along, Saskatchewan people wouldn't be facing \$4 billion more in debt, deep cuts, and a drop in credit rating?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Here we've seen proof positive this morning, Mr. Speaker, the parallel universe that those 10 members live in in the economic reality of our province. Every single one of their members, Mr. Speaker, got up this morning and demanded what? Demanded more spending, more spending.

The Finance critic and her response to the budget yesterday said this, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "A minimum of 6 per cent annual increase is needed just to maintain the status quo programs like health care and education," Mr. Speaker, 6 per cent. That translates to 440 more million dollars than what our budget provided for yesterday in health care and education. We're currently running a \$434 million deficit, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that we lost \$1 billion in resource revenues in the last year.

That party over there campaigned on a fully costed platform, Mr. Speaker, that neglected 18 different items that they campaigned on that would have cost \$500 million a year. And now this Finance critic wants to add another \$440 million a year to the expenditures with respect to taxpayers in this province, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what world they're living in.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I caution the members.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 17 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Economy and SaskPower.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 17, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of the Economy that Bill No. 17 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 18 — *The Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan Act, 2016***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 18, *The Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister of Attorney General that Bill No. 18 be introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 19 — *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 19, *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Attorney General that Bill No. 19 be introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — Item no. 4, Mr. Wyant.

**The Speaker:** — No, no. When shall this bill be read a second time?

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 20 — *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur les juges de paix***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 20, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Attorney General

that Bill No. 20 be introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**

**Ruling on a Question of Privilege**

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I have a ruling to report to the House.

Yesterday, June 1st, 2016, the Government House Leader raised a question of privilege in accordance with rule 12. The Government House Leader argued that the member for Saskatoon Nutana released confidential, embargoed information about the provincial budget before it was tabled in the Assembly, and that this consists of a violation of the parliamentary convention and a contempt of the Assembly.

Prior to receiving the notice of privilege, the Opposition House Leader, the Leader of the Opposition, and finally the member from Saskatoon Nutana acknowledged in the Assembly that the breach of the embargoed information had taken place. All three members apologized to the Assembly for violating the conditions of the lock-up. With admissions of the members that the leak had occurred, there's no dispute over the facts of this matter.

As the Government House Leader points out and I think all members will acknowledge, it is a long-standing parliamentary convention that the contents of the budget should be kept secret until the Minister of Finance tables the budget in the Assembly. The use of lock-ups has been part of the budget process in this province and elsewhere for many decades. These lock-ups are entirely at the government's discretion, but when they do take place, it is expected that opposition members are permitted to access the technical briefings.

In the past when access has been denied, the Speaker permitted privilege cases to proceed. It's appropriate then if a serious matter when a member is denied access to the briefs, that a breach of the embargoed conditions by a member should be treated with equal seriousness.

[11:00]

I reviewed the precedents of this Assembly and elsewhere. In 1982 a question of privilege was raised by this Assembly concerning a leak of budget information to the media prior to the presentation of the budget in the Chamber. In that case there was uncertainty about the source of the leak, which is a different circumstance than the present case. Under the

conventions of the day, Speaker Brockelbank ruled no prima facie case of breach of privilege. Speaker Brockelbank's decision was historic standards for such matters which are now outlined on page 894 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Second Edition 2009.

This convention is somewhat out of step with the more recent rulings on the premature release of information on bills. On April 19th of this year, the Speaker of the House of Commons in Ottawa ruled on a contempt case in which the contents of Bill C-14 were provided to the media before the bill was introduced in the House. Speaker Regan stated that the House rights of the first access to legislative information was not respected and the bill would have to have been brought to the House first and not prematurely released to the public domain. In this case the Speaker concluded the incident constituted a prima facie case of privilege. This ruling was based on a similar House of Commons ruling in 2001.

It is apparent that there is conflicting precedents on these types of cases, and parliamentary practice is evolving, as it did when Speaker Milliken, a departure from previous House of Commons rulings in 2001, found a prime facie case of contempt when opposition members were denied embargoed information provided to the media. That case became the basis of similar rulings by Speaker Kowalsky in this Assembly in April 11, 2005.

It is my point of view that the leak of embargoed budget information is at least the equivalent of denying access to members to a lock-up. If one should be thought as contemptuous, then so should the other. It is also my point of view that the leak of budgetary information is as significant or possibly even more significant than a leak of a bill before it is tabled in the Assembly.

I noted that the member for Nutana and others of her caucus apologized for the leak of information. It is true that in the past instances, apology has ended the matter. In this case I don't believe the apology is sufficient enough to end this case. The House of Commons in Ottawa has similar conventions, and in many cases apologies do not end the case. In the other circumstances, the apology is not sufficient. In the case of Bill C-14 earlier this year, Speaker Regan acknowledged the unequivocal apology of the government Whip for the leak, but allowed the case to proceed by finding a prima facie question of privilege.

The Speaker ruled last month, establishing a much higher standard of conduct for members and respect for the parliamentary institution. As in 2005, when Speaker Kowalsky was faced with a similar difficult decision, I believe it would be appropriate for the Assembly to consider the direction that it wishes to take on this matter. Therefore I find a prima facie case of breach of privilege and invite the House Leader to move the motion.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

### PRIVILEGE

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to raise a matter of serious importance. As

you know, yesterday I filed with your office notice that we wished to raise a question of contempt to this House.

Yesterday at 1:10 p.m. the member from Saskatoon Nutana, via the opposition caucus, sent an email that broke the 2016-17 budget embargo. The news release in the email released financial information, government initiatives, and proposed government policy changes before the Minister of Finance rose in his place to read the 2016-17 budget.

We believe that this early and irresponsible release of confidential embargoed information constitutes a prima facie case of contempt of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. House of Commons procedure of practice states, and I quote, "There is a long-standing tradition of keeping the contents of the Budget secret until the Minister of Finance actually presents it in the House."

Mr. Speaker, the opposition, having served in government, is fully aware of this long-standing parliamentary convention. Not only this, but eight members of the opposition and several members of the opposition caucus staff signed the 2016-17 budget embargo guidelines. The budget embargo guidelines which the members opposite signed state, and I quote:

All material is embargoed until after the Finance minister, Kevin Doherty, begins to deliver his budget address in the legislature on Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at approximately 2:15 p.m.

The irresponsible release of embargoed budget information not only violated the privilege of the Minister of Finance and all members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, it also caused undue hardship throughout the province by pre-emptively alerting third party and government organizations to any revenue adjustments or facility closures. For example, the 2016-17 budget proposes closing the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre. The Ministry of Corrections and Policing takes these decisions very seriously and, more importantly, strives to ensure employees are notified appropriately and as soon as possible. Instead of finding out of the facility closure throughout the proper process, staff at this facility could have found out through a reckless NDP email.

This emailed news release, which breaches the privileges of parliament, disregards all of this work and proper government processes and could have a significant negative impact on people's lives and well-being.

Mr. Speaker, although the opposition has apologized for this irresponsible action, I do not believe that they have taken this matter seriously enough. In 2010 Global News broke the budget embargo guidelines when a story on the budget was posted on the Global Toronto website. After being alerted to this breach by Executive Council, the Global Regina news director swiftly apologized, explained how the embargo was broken and identified the gaps in their system, and then took immediate action so that this would not happen again. As far as we know, Mr. Speaker, the opposition, as elected officials, have yet to do anything as comprehensive to rectify this situation as the actions Global News took at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read to you page 82 of the *House of*

*Commons Procedure and Practice* that states, and I quote:

There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges. Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege, tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any Member or Officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its Members, or its Officers.

Mr. Speaker, it is patently obvious that the actions of the opposition caucus on behalf of the member for Saskatoon Nutana not only violates a century of parliamentary convention, it clearly constitutes contempt of the Legislative Assembly as outlined above. The Minister of Corrections and Policing is but one example of how the untimely release of confidential budget information has negatively impeded her in the discharge of her duties and responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, the motion I would move is as follows:

That the early release of embargoed budget information by the member from Saskatoon Nutana and the opposition caucus clearly constitutes contempt of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan by preventing all members from exercising their duties and responsibilities as members of the Legislative Assembly; and further

That this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges for a full investigation and a report with a remedy to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

I so submit, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved the following motion:

That the early release of the embargoed budget information by the member from Saskatoon Nutana and the opposition caucus is contempt of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan by preventing all members from exercising their duty and responsibility of members of the Legislative Assembly; and further

That this matter be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges for a full investigation and a report with a remedy to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess I rise to do a couple of things. You know, certainly as you've acknowledged in your ruling, we're not in dispute about the facts. And certainly we've not apologized once for this, Mr. Speaker, not twice, but three times we've apologized for this. We take our respect for the embargo very seriously, and that had a lot to do with the readiness of the apology.

In terms of the motion that has been brought by the members opposite, in terms of their proposed remedy, I am very interested to see how the majority that exists on that committee is used to conduct the business of that committee. I'm very interested to see how the majority in this House, which is of course the . . . We're going to proceed to a vote on how this is adjudicated.

But that doesn't take away from some very simple things. The member from Nutana, and indeed all members on this side, are serious people, are honourable members, and we take the role of parliamentarian very seriously. And again, that is why the apologies were forthcoming and without reservation.

In terms of actions that have been taken immediately on the part of the opposition caucus, there was an immediate review of process and procedures to make sure that something like this never happens again.

And to speak to how it happened, Mr. Speaker, it was an honest mistake. It had nothing to do with personal gain. It had nothing to do with malicious intent. It was in fact an honest mistake.

And as we proceed into the committee, Mr. Speaker, that you of course Chair, we'll be very interested to see how the government responds to what has in past been matters that have been addressed with an apology, and has been a well-accepted tradition and precedent in terms of the work of this Assembly. That apology again was tendered yesterday, sincerely and without reservation. What more they want in terms of how this goes forward, Mr. Speaker, we'll be very interested to see.

But with that, I would conclude by saying that once again the member from Nutana is an honourable person and takes her responsibilities in this Assembly very seriously on behalf of the people of Nutana and Saskatchewan — as do we all, Mr. Speaker, as do I as the Opposition House Leader, as our leader does, as every member of this caucus does. And certainly the folks that we're privileged to work with take that seriously as well.

So to restate, we apologize for the breach of the embargo, and we look on with interest to see what comes with the committee that is above and beyond the way that these matters have been dealt with previously.

Not to take exception or to question the ruling of the Speaker, but what comes with the committee we'll look to see. But we think that that is, in and of itself, above and beyond the way that these matters have been adjudicated in the past. And again, there's a majority that backs up the way that these matters are adjudicated, both in this House and certainly in that committee, and how that majority is then utilized on the part of the government is a test that remains for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. Recognizing the House Leader . . . Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 11:15 until 11:16.]

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — All those against?

Oh. All those in favour of the motion, please stand.

**[Yeas — 47]**

Wall	Stewart	Morgan
Wyant	Duncan	McMorris
Boyd	Harpauer	Doherty
Reiter	Moe	D'Autremont
Weekes	Beaudry-Mellor	Cox
Docherty	Campeau	Heppner
Cheveldayoff	Harrison	Ottenbreit
Tell	Bonk	Hart
Steele	Doke	Hargrave
Makowsky	Marit	Merriman
Wilson	Ross	Olauson
Young	Parent	Fiaz
Nerlien	Bradshaw	Dennis
Phillips	Steinley	Lambert
Lawrence	Carr	Michelson
Buckingham	Kirsch	

**The Speaker:** — All those against, please stand.

**[Nays — 10]**

Wotherspoon	Chartier	Belanger
Sproule	Forbes	Rancourt
Beck	McCall	Sarauer
Vermette		

**Principal Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of this motion, 47; those opposed, 10.

**The Speaker:** — I declare the motion carried.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 25 through 31.

**The Speaker:** — The Whip has tabled questions 25 to 31. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 32 through 58.

**The Speaker:** — The Whip has tabled questions 32 to 58.

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY  
(BUDGET DEBATE)**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to pick up today with a few more comments about the budget that was tabled yesterday and some of the concerns that people have been raising with us already as we hear from citizens in Saskatchewan across the province.

One of the things I wanted to talk about right off the hop was just a brief quote by a gentleman named Scott Clark, and in this quote he talks about how a budget can be judged against . . . or how we judge a budget. What he says here is that:

The credibility of a budget can be judged against four basic principles. First, is the budget based on a realistic and balanced assessment of economic prospects, challenges and risks? . . .

A second principle is that the budget forecast includes a reasonable amount of prudence to guard against the underlying economic assumptions in the economic forecast being wrong . . .

A third principle is that the budget fiscal framework be sustainable by maintaining a declining or stable debt/GDP ratio.

And finally, and I think this is the most important one, Mr. Speaker:

The last principle is budget transparency. This means providing [I'm continuing the quote, for the Hansard people] full disclosure of analysis and information since, without this, independent experts and other third parties will not be able to assess how realistic the economic and fiscal forecasts are. Without transparency there can be no accountability.

And that's the end of the quote, and that's from Scott Clark.

So I think if we want to talk a little bit about transparency, I think we have to go back and look back a little bit on what this government has done in respect to the way they present budgetary information to — I'm not sure what you're looking at, Mr. Speaker — how they present budgetary information to the people of Saskatchewan. And I'd like to make special reference today to a report that came from our auditor in 2013. It's a very special report, and indeed it's called the *2013 Special Report*, and it's about government budgeting and financial reporting in Saskatchewan.



Now there was quite a few things that came out in that report, and some of it is quite contradictory to what we heard even the Premier say yesterday here in the House. One of the things I want to focus on first of all is the annual results of this government's financial performance when it comes to the way they result their deficits.

And there's a . . . What page are we on here now? This is page . . . I don't know if there's a page number, but it's section 4.2.2 of the report. And what this report says, Mr. Speaker, is that there's a figure here and it shows, while the financial results . . . Here's a quote from the auditor: ". . . while the financial results of the GRF were reported as balanced in the last eight years, the Government actually incurred deficits in three of the last eight years."

Now that, I don't know why this government has trouble . . . And indeed even the Minister of Immigration yesterday was barking across the way saying, oh that's not right. That's not right. But obviously he hasn't taken the time to read the auditor's reports. And I don't think the auditor has any particularly malicious intent here, to mislead the people of Saskatchewan. Indeed it's quite the opposite. So let's see what the auditor said. And if one of my colleagues could find a Kleenex. This cold is . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — I sure can.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you. I'm just going to read some of these results here. Thank you very much. I'll just blow my nose. Allow me to be indignant.

**An Hon. Member:** — Allergy season.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Yes. All right. So this government came into power in 2007. And this is just their GRF [General Revenue Fund] reporting as well, Mr. Speaker. We have to keep in mind that under a summary basis, the debt has been climbing I think since 2007 . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Yes, 2009.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Nine. Yes, thanks to my member here, the previous Finance critic. But this report, this is from the public auditor of the province of Saskatchewan, and she says that in 2010, the GRF of this government was actually a deficit of \$409 million. Now that's almost half a billion dollars. But yesterday we heard members over here disputing those facts. And I'm not sure why they would have so much trouble accepting what an auditor presents. That's the job of the auditor. So maybe they want to go back to this report and take another look at it.

2011, Mr. Speaker, similar results. The actual deficit of the GRF — not the summary budget, but just the GRF, the operations of this government — despite crowing and boasting that there was a surplus, we see there was actually a deficit of \$13 million. So I'm not sure what part of this the members opposite don't understand.

On 2012, Mr. Speaker, this is as far as this report has gone. We note that the auditor, despite what the government boasted as a surplus in their GRF, the auditor of Saskatchewan said no, in

fact there was a deficit of \$105 million. So it's really hard to understand what kind of math the members opposite tend to study or why they have so much difficulty accepting the factual report of an auditor of the province of Saskatchewan when she reported there was actually deficits in 2010, 2011, and 2012. And of course now, we have a deficit in 2016 and deficit in 2017.

And indeed, Mr. Speaker, if you take a look at what other pundits are saying — and certainly I know that there's been a recent report by Stats Canada, and under the Saskatchewan *Trends Monitor* in March of 2016, there was actually a report from the Canadian government finance system which shows, as they do, apples-to-apples comparison across Canada from province to province — in fact, there were more deficits than what was reported by this government which they never reported any, or by the auditor, depending on how you do the apples-to-apples comparison. So I really hope that members opposite will start to take a little more seriously what our auditor tells us about the way they do their bookkeeping.

Now in that report that I referred to, there were a number of recommendations. And sadly, I don't think this government has implemented any of the recommendations, but many of them are in relation to a piece of legislation they were very, very proud of, Mr. Speaker. They were very, very proud when they introduced *The Growth and Financial Security Act*, I think back in 2008. And they said this government's going to balance budgets and, you know, only time we wouldn't balance the budget, we would never do it two years in a row. God forbid, we would do it two years in a row. Well no, guess what, Mr. Speaker? It happened three years in a row — in '10, '11, and '12 under their own legislation — and it's happening again right now.

And what do they do? What do they do? Instead of taking the advice of the Provincial Auditor and looking seriously at the recommendations that were made in that report, what happens is that we get them denying what the auditor says. And we also get them quietly, as a footnote almost in the very back end of the budget or the Estimates, they quietly put a little footnote and say oh gee, I guess we're just going to repeal the Act. We're not going to bother doing what the auditor did. And I think that's egregious, Mr. Speaker. I think it's absolutely egregious.

We have, I'll just read some of the recommendations that the auditor made. For example:

We recommend that if balanced budget legislation is desired [this is recommendation no. 4], the Government of Saskatchewan seek changes to current legislation to use the Summary Budget as the basis for balanced budgeting.

Now they've done that under great pressure and only, I guess, when the summary budget financing would actually help them paint a better picture of the finances of Saskatchewan. But they haven't changed the legislation to do that, Mr. Speaker. Recommendation no. 5:

We recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan seek changes to *The Growth and Financial Security Act* to eliminate the use of "rainy day" funds for balancing budgets in conjunction with its elimination of the budget

for the General Revenue Fund.

Well they haven't made those changes, Mr. Speaker.

Recommendation no. 6, again another change to the legislation. The auditor has recommended changes. She didn't say throw it out when it no longer suits you. And this is the change that she said in no. 6:

We recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan seek changes to *The Growth and Financial Security Act* to publish a debt management plan that includes all of the debt of the Government.

Again this has not been done. No. 7:

We recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan seek changes to *The Growth and Financial Security Act* to eliminate the existence of the Debt Retirement Fund.

Which again we know is nothing but a little line that means absolutely nothing, and it shows up over and over again in their reporting.

And a lot of these deal with transparency and accountability, Mr. Speaker. There was one section where the auditors really recommended that this government do a much better job of reporting. And what she said . . . again there's no page numbers on this report, but it's in section 4.1.4. This is a quote from the report, Mr. Speaker:

Summary Budgets are key financial reports that help legislators and the public hold the Government to account. Multi-year budgets (such as four year financial plans) provide legislators and the public with critical information about the financial outlook of the Government.

And here's what she said:

Putting the requirement for a Summary Budget into legislation would help ensure legislators and the public receive the information they need to hold the Government to account.

She made a recommendation right here where she says, this is recommendation no. 2:

We recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan seek changes to legislation that would require it to provide the Legislative Assembly with a Summary Budget . . .

We haven't seen those changes. We haven't seen those recommendations. We haven't seen anything come from this government, other than burying the idea that they're removing this bill entirely in the footnotes of their Estimates. They're not talking about it to the people of Saskatchewan.

[11:30]

They're not wanting to acknowledge that all the boasting and the bravado was nothing but a shell, Mr. Speaker. Instead they hide it in the back of the budget on almost the very last page of Estimates. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, we're really

concerned about how the tail end of the fund was actually managed.

I just want to give a quote from one of my constituents, and I'll amend it a little bit because his words are stronger than are allowed in this House, Mr. Speaker. But in general, what he said is on March 19th the Sask Party released its platform. In it they promised to rebuild the rainy day fund. That's a promise that this government made in their platform on March 19th.

Before election day, April 4th we all recall, the remaining money in the account had been drained. We were told that by Finance officials. We know this because the budget estimates now show that it was already gone in the 2015-16 budget year, which ends March 31st. So they had completely drained the rainy day fund before March 31st, but on March 19th they're telling the people of Saskatchewan they're promising to rebuild the rainy day fund. And so all we know, that money could have been gone before the writ was even dropped. So that means the Sask Party made a promise it had no intention of keeping.

What the minister should really come clean on, when that last penny was squeezed out of the fund. I think that's something that we in the opposition want to know, and I think it's something my constituent wants to know. I think it's something that the public would be very interested in. When did they squeeze out that last drop of the \$2 billion that they received when they came to power? And in the sunniest times this province has ever seen, they have squandered all of that money and more, and our debt is climbing and climbing and climbing.

What were their intentions on closing the fund? What were their real intentions on closing this fund? And when did they make those decisions? When they were making promises, they were making promises to the people of Saskatchewan in their platform, and they were secretly draining the fund and getting rid of the fund.

Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier has problems with what economists are saying. I don't know what his problem is; he seems to think that economists don't know what they're talking about. But I don't know why he's interjecting here in this point in the discussion, other than he doesn't want to talk about the rainy day fund and what his party did to it. That's part of the problem here, Mr. Speaker.

I think at this point I don't want to take too much of the time today. I know others want to speak, and so I want to talk just a little bit about some other areas that I am the official opposition critic for. First of all is in the field of agriculture. I'm the critic for Agriculture. I just wanted to make a couple of comments about what we've seen in this budget. What we haven't seen, I think, is more important than maybe what we are seeing.

First of all, I think it was December 2014, the Minister of the Economy tabled, or planned to table, a piece of legislation for surface rights. And I know farmers have been asking for that legislation for a long, long time, and they were very looking forward to seeing the contents of that bill.

But inexplicably and suddenly the Minister of the Economy yanked that bill off the order paper, so we have no idea what the plans were. And when asked, well what's going on? Why aren't

we introducing that bill? He says, well there's been a change in, you know, the price of oil so it's not a good time now. Well when is it going to be a good time, Mr. Speaker? You're a farmer. You understand the kind of things that this, this affects farmers. And actually I even introduced a petition today that talks about the impact of having this old, antiquated legislation in place. The compensation limits are minimal. There's no real hammer to it. So when is this government going to take those, those concerns of farmers into account?

Farmers have also been asking for a farmer's advocate office. We see nothing in this budget that's going to establish and set up the necessary advocacy for farmers to help them work through issues like surface access, and also, Mr. Speaker, in terms of difficulties with grain transportation.

We know that farmers have been asking for tools to make best decisions to market their grain and procure inputs. And there's nothing on the part of this government to assist farmers in this world where they now have to deal with input prices that are scattered across the board, and also the grain sale prices. Those prices aren't available to farmers in any sort of published way, so it makes decisions very difficult for farmers. And we've been calling for that. Farmers have been calling for that. What do we see in this budget? We don't see anything in relation to that. There's nothing in this budget that's going to improve rail access to United States markets.

And also curious — and the minister's not here today and we don't know what he's been up to — but in terms of grain transportation, we know the bill that was in Ottawa, the fair rail bill, is expiring on August 1. And I believe that the transportation committee in Ottawa met earlier this week, and they have recommended that the *Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act*, that it be postponed, that the retirement of that bill be postponed. And again I think, Mr. Speaker, you know, other farmers here in the province who would like to see that those protections, at least those minimal protections against the unilateral and monopolistic rights of the railways, that they somehow be suspended for a bit longer until the review that has been, the CTA review and the recommendations have been fully reviewed and hopefully not put on the shelf, Mr. Speaker.

There's some concerns, and this is an article that came out yesterday about the review of the Canadian transportation Act. And I think, you know, we need to know what our minister's been up to and what sort of provisions are going to be made to look after the issues, the serious transportation issues that farmers are facing here in Saskatchewan today.

We don't see anything in, you know . . . The surface rights arbitration Act should also deal with some other issues that farmers have been raising and that is, obviously, concerns about sour gas in the southeast part of the province. We know that the Minister of the Economy has enacted some regulations to deal with associated gasses, but what we're hearing on the ground, Mr. Speaker, is there aren't enough resources within the ministry to adequately monitor sour gas emissions, and that it's proving to be very dangerous to human beings as well as cattle, Mr. Speaker, and that farmers and producers in the southeast corner of the province would like to see much more being done in order to ensure that their cattle and that their children and their families are safe from that deadly and poisonous sour gas.

Other concerns I've had farmers raise is concerns about clubroot, and again a surface access legislation bill could go a long ways to ensure that producers are feeling safe when oil rigs come onto their lands. We don't know where they've been from. We know that clubroot is prevalent in southeastern Alberta. We don't know where those rigs are coming from, and there's no thorough and safe procedures. They have adopted a procedure that has been used in southeastern Alberta but, Mr. Speaker, it's been proven to be inadequate. And I think we need to see some leadership from this government to ensure that farmers are not forced to allow clubroot onto their land. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, that's something that many producers are concerned about and, I think, rightly so.

And I'm not sure if this is an Environment issue or an Ag issue — I represent and I'm critic for both areas, Mr. Speaker — but we've heard time and time again from producers and conservationists, including Ducks Unlimited and other wildlife agencies, that we need some innovation and we need initiatives in terms of wetland conservation. We're not seeing that, Mr. Speaker. We're not seeing any initiatives in that way, and certainly no incentives for producers to take initiative themselves and make sure that wetlands are protected and preserved as best they can be in this day and age.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I know I'm taking more time than I should, so I just want to make a few comments about the Ministry of the Environment, or probably the lack thereof, because in this budget we saw further cuts to the ministry.

Certainly I think there were enhancements to wildfire management, and I think that's a very important and welcome addition to the budget, Mr. Speaker. As we know, wildfire management is becoming more and more of a concern, and certainly with dry summers and what we see happening in the northern forests of Alberta and Saskatchewan, certainly I think those are initiatives and investments that are well made. And we look forward to making sure that the northern people are also included in those discussions and properly reflected in terms of their . . . you know, again what we saw happen in La Ronge last summer where the northern people stepped up and made sure that their community was safe and that the damage from the wildfires was as minimal as they could make it, given the limited resources they had.

There's nothing in this budget to help us protect biodiversity. There's nothing to take us from the bottom of the pack as far as The Conference Board of Canada is concerned. And there was a report that came out I think a couple of months ago from The Conference Board of . . . oh yes, April 21st, 2016. And they gave us a D-minus grade, Mr. Speaker, in terms of our . . . how we perform in the environment. It was released, yes, on April 21st. It compared the environmental performance of Canada, the provinces, and 15 peer countries, so there was 26 marks that were given. And sadly and embarrassingly, Saskatchewan got a D-minus grade and came in 26th out of 26 as the worst performer in terms of environment.

They pointed out some of the highlights. I don't know if they're highlights; they're really lowlights. Saskatchewan emits nearly 70 times the GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions per capita, over three times the national average. That's not something to be proud of, Mr. Speaker. Canada as a whole gets a D grade on the

environment report card and ranks third to last among the peer countries, so Canada isn't doing so well either.

I think one of the things I was looking for in this budget and hoping to see this government pay some attention to is air pollution. We got a D grade there. We did very poorly in air pollution. We got a D grade on sulphur oxides, SOx emissions. We got a D-minus grade on nitrogen oxides, NOx. We also got a D-minus grade on volatile organic compounds, VOC, and particulate matter emissions, PM10 emissions.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's again . . . You know, you can hear this government boast and crow a lot about some things, but you sure don't hear them boasting about our environmental performance. In fact it doesn't even form part of their lexicon, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's really of concern, certainly to people in my riding in Saskatoon Nutana who raise these concerns with me repeatedly and often on Facebook and conversations on Broadway Avenue. And I certainly hear those comments from people across the country, Saskatchewan in particular, about why aren't we doing better in this area. And I think one of the things that . . . This Premier has put us in kind of a tough position because by refusing to talk about the environment, even talk about the environment . . . Back in the Keystone debate, he just refused to talk about it. And he has actually put us in a worse position in a geopolitical sense, Mr. Speaker. And another question we have to ask, despite his entire avoidance of dealing with issues that this planet and nation are facing, he still hasn't gotten our natural resources to tidewater. He hasn't made any progress despite all his complaining. And you have to wonder why, Mr. Speaker.

Now the Sask Party has ignored concerns from stakeholders and communities. They've ignored concerns from indigenous peoples and the duty to consult. They've alienated other governments; we've seen that happen, even his progressive friends in Alberta and Ottawa. And for what, Mr. Speaker? No progress. No progress for our economy and, to top all of that off, we're now seeing significant job losses both in the oil and gas sector, but across the province. We're seeing bankruptcies on the rise, 3,000 jobs lost in the oil sector, and he's crowing about that, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to understand. Even while he's proudly ignoring the protections that we need for the air that we breathe and the water that we drink, he is failing our workers. And even while this Premier is cheering for pipelines, he can't deliver them even in the good times. So, Mr. Speaker, this isn't working and I think this government has to take a serious look at that.

[11:45]

We've said yesterday, look in the mirror and the problems are facing this government right in the face. How can someone who has not built pipelines and lost thousands of resource workers, how can he possibly claim to be a champion of our resources and our economy? Mr. Speaker, we have to look at his record, and that's what we need to stay focused on here.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I know I've gone on at length and so I think at this point I'm going to allow other of my colleagues to speak. But before I do that, I do have a motion that I would like to present. And I would like to move the following, Mr. Speaker:

That all words after "that the Assembly" be deleted from the budget motion and the following be added:

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget months late, failing to be transparent to Saskatchewan people, and for failing to deliver opportunities to create jobs, diversify the economy, and support kids in the classroom.

I so move.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved the following motion:

That all words after "that the Assembly" be deleted and the following be added:

disagrees with the government for tabling a budget months late, failing to be transparent to Saskatchewan people, and for failing to deliver opportunities to create jobs, diversify the economy, and support kids in the classroom.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise in my place today to second the amendment that my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana has made.

And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that my colleague, the current Finance critic, has done a remarkably fantastic job in the short time that she has risen to the occasion to accept the critic portfolio, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you basically that based on her background and legal training and certainly her intelligence, Mr. Speaker, she's going to do a profoundly fantastic job as our Finance critic. And some of the points that she raised yesterday certainly apply to the people of Saskatchewan, exactly what the challenge is with this particular budget, Mr. Speaker.

There are three components I want to basically add my support and my voice to some of the comments made by the current Finance critic, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the number one challenge that we see . . . Well there are a number of challenges we see with the budget. The first one is putting our province into debt. That's one of the common themes we've seen from this particular government over time, Mr. Speaker.

The second compelling trend that we noticed and I noticed, Mr. Speaker, is also putting our Crowns in debt, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that particular action happen on numerous occasions.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, they're putting our future in debt. And that's the most bizarre part of how the Sask Party has managed the finances of the province, is now our own future through their P3 [public-private partnership] schemes is now being put in debt as well.

And then you combine that, Mr. Speaker, with the fact that they have mismanaged millions of dollars, billions of dollars, Mr.

Speaker, and they've wasted a ton of money on things like their pet project, in particular the lean exercise.

And all the while, Mr. Speaker, as we see the debt of Saskatchewan mounting, as we see the Crown debts mounting and people paying more for our services, Mr. Speaker, and we see the amount of money that this province is going to owe for the next 20 or 30 years to foreign companies, Mr. Speaker, it is an alarming amount of money that Saskatchewan people are going to be put on the hook for, Mr. Speaker.

I want to be able to tell the people of Saskatchewan exactly what my perspective is on this particular budget, Mr. Speaker. I alluded to yesterday the fact that the Premier didn't have the courage to bring this budget forward prior to the election, and that's why we're having budget day June 1st.

Had the Premier come forward and shared with the people of Saskatchewan exactly what our state of finances are, Mr. Speaker, the makeup in this Assembly would have been entirely different, Mr. Speaker, and that's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, to point that out.

June 1st, when we have traditional budget day, Mr. Speaker, at the start of April, Mr. Speaker, we didn't have it until a full three, two or three months later. And the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, it won't be passed until the end of June.

But the bottom line is the budget was hid by the Premier and cabinet. In fact I would suggest that even his own backbench and candidates had no idea the details and certainly no idea as to where we're heading when we come to the incredible debt that the Premier and the Government of Saskatchewan is putting on the future of Saskatchewan people overall, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the things that I was really quite disturbed by, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that when you look at some of the decisions made by this particular government, Mr. Speaker . . . And I was sickened yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I was sickened yesterday when I heard the news when the Finance minister stands in his place and he used as the centrepiece of his budget address, Mr. Speaker, the fact that they're shutting down the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to have the Finance minister so callously get up and say that as part of their exercise to curb costs that they're going to shut down the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre, Mr. Speaker, where 17, 18 families depend on that income, Mr. Speaker, where a number of people in the community of Buffalo Narrows also depend on the economy attached with that correctional centre, Mr. Speaker . . . These are mortgage-paying jobs that people are losing. And for the Minister of Finance to get up in the Assembly and use the closure of the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre as the centrepiece of his presentation to this Assembly is very cold and very callous, Mr. Speaker, because these are families that now have to struggle, families that now have to struggle with making mortgage payments, legal payments, and to raise their family. And I can tell you, I spoke to a couple of them already and they are very distraught and they are very angry, Mr. Speaker.

One of the points that I would raise is that when the

Saskatchewan Party had money, Mr. Speaker, they ignored the North. They ignored the North and they ignored a lot of other sectors as well. But the North is where I'm from and I'm going to explain a bit how people felt in the North. When they had record revenue, Mr. Speaker, the North was not important to them. They ignored the North. And the moment they started running into trouble, Mr. Speaker, two or three years ago, the cuts began. And this year, Mr. Speaker, when it came to cuts, all of a sudden they found out where the North was, Mr. Speaker. And they went into an area where jobs are desperately needed, jobs are desperately needed, Mr. Speaker, and that's where they cut more jobs.

And I don't know, Mr. Speaker. When I talk about cold and callous, those are the two words that come to my mind when I see the Minister of Finance get up in this Assembly and say, as part of our cost cutting exercise we're going to go into the community that needs the jobs and the region that desperately needs an injection into the economy. That's where we're going to cut, Mr. Speaker. And like I said, there's 17, 18 families and employees that are affected by this, and I was absolutely sickened to the extent that the Minister of Finance would use that as part of his budget address to the rest of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question, there's no question, Mr. Speaker, that I've always maintained that the North is strong and resilient, but this particular cut is cold, it's calculated, and it's very callous, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I would point out to the people of Buffalo Narrows is this, and the staff and the families that have this loss in their jobs is, we will stick by you. We will stand by you, and this will not end here. There are people out there that are very concerned at the cold, calculating way that the Saskatchewan Party government shut down this facility. They know — the people, the workers know — that this was very cold and very calculating. And now the stress that they're facing to this day, Mr. Speaker, that government should be ashamed of the stress that they've caused working families in the community of Buffalo Narrows, people that have given their lives and their service over many, many years.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the points that I think a lot of them want to wait and make is that they know, they know, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party government has wasted tons of money, billions of dollars they have wasted. And had they not wasted that money, they wouldn't be in the predicament today. But when they needed to make cuts and they needed to find money, Mr. Speaker, they again chose the workers of this province. They went to a region where jobs are needed, Mr. Speaker. They went to a community where people have always been very proud of the fact that they have a very strong work ethic. And that's where they went to make the cuts, Mr. Speaker. And what I was absolutely sickened, disheartened, and astonished at yesterday was the fact that the Minister of Finance used that as the centrepiece for his provincial address when we talk about the finances of this province, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the things I think is really important is that I am going to rally the community and I'm going to rally the region. And my open comment to this morning, Mr. Speaker, is that the people of the North are going to band together. They're going

to band together. We know that these families are struggling, Mr. Speaker. This morning was a huge shock to them. There's many young families that are shocked and saddened and disheartened, discouraged, and totally stressed out as a result of the cold, calculating move made by the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. And I'm going to ask the region — the neighbouring communities, the people — to come up with some ideas and concepts and support and organize themselves, organize themselves to fight back, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question that we have to lean on each other and try and support these families that were quite frankly forgotten, these families that were treated so badly, and these families that needed these jobs, Mr. Speaker. There is no question that they are hurting. There is no question that they feel the stress this morning when they know they've got to make their mortgage payments, when they know they've got to make their vehicle payments, when they know they've got to buy food for their children to put on their tables, Mr. Speaker. That was all ripped away because the Sask Party couldn't manage their finances. And what is really callous about this whole process, Mr. Speaker, is again the Minister of Finance getting up and using that as an example of cost-cutting, in an area that we can ill afford to lose jobs, Mr. Speaker. And I find that sickening and I find that totally disrespectful, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, what's really important as well is to tell the people of Buffalo Narrows and the staff and the people that lost their jobs, and the region as well, that you're going to see a lot more cuts coming down on the Saskatchewan people. It hits us today. It hits us now. It hits us immediately. But there are other areas in the province that are going to be hit just as hard and drastically. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see those cuts come in health care. We're going to see those cuts come in education. We're going to see those cuts come in social services, Mr. Speaker.

Why are all these cuts happening despite the fact that the Saskatchewan Party has had record revenue the last eight or nine years? They have had record revenue, revenues coming to this government that are unprecedented in the history of Saskatchewan. No other government in the history of our province has ever received the type of revenues that the Sask Party enjoyed for the last eight or nine years, Mr. Speaker. No other government in the history of Saskatchewan. And yet this government comes along; they blow all that money, Mr. Speaker. They drain the rainy day fund. They add \$5 billion to the debt. They certainly have added incredible debt to our Crowns, Mr. Speaker. And yet again this is the reason why the Premier wouldn't come forward and share the budget and the news with the people before the last election. In fact, Mr. Speaker, he hid that budget.

Now I want to point out that the biggest thing that I'm encouraging people back home to do is to rally together and to organize. And that's one of the important messages I think the labour movement has as well. And I want to recognize the labour movement and to point out that the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] officials will be there, Mr. Speaker, will be there to work with the workers. And this is an important lesson for us to learn, and this is an important lesson for all the union members to learn.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to have to ensure that our labour movement is strengthened over the next number of years and months. Mr. Speaker, we've got to make sure we appreciate the labour movement even more because they're the ones that are going to protect jobs from callous cuts like this. They're going to stand by the workers and do what they can. Now more than ever, it's important that the labour movement, the union movement strengthen themselves and really, really begin to reach out to their members because we're going to need their strength and support as well.

But the point being, Mr. Speaker, is that all the members of all the union movements across the province have got to band together because the simple point today is that your union-working brothers and sisters in the northern community of Buffalo Narrows are now suffering the worst fate ever for a working person that has dedicated their lives to serving the people of Saskatchewan. They're being dismissed. They're being terminated. That facility is being closed down coldly and callously by the Saskatchewan Party government, and they made that a centrepiece of their financial address here in the Assembly.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that aside, the union movement is really important. We must find ways to strengthen them, to respect them, and to speak as loud as we can about their value to the people of Saskatchewan. You've got to have a strong labour movement. You've got to protect working people. And you've got to have the collective bargaining process that everybody respects, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm going to say this, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to say this. Had it not been for the Sask Party mismanagement of the . . .

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — With leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to introduce guests.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Biggar-Sask Valley has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member may proceed.

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a great pleasure to introduce 48 grade 6 students from Prairie View School in Dalmeny, Saskatchewan. With the 48 grade 6 students are Mrs. Roxanne Bitner, Mrs. Amber Quinlan, and Mr. Aaron Schafhauser, and also a chaperone, Mr. Scott Burant. So please join me in welcoming this class of grade 6 students from Dalmeny, Saskatchewan.

[12:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I would also seek leave to introduce guests.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Premier has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I need to join with the hon. member who has just introduced this group of students from Dalmeny. This is a great group of students, Mr. Speaker, and a great school from a wonderful community.

This is a very special class though because my niece Samantha Kildaw is here and in this class. So I need to give . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Deputy Premier says she's the one with the red face. I hope I'm not embarrassing her but I want to welcome all of them, and especially Samantha, to their Legislative Assembly today as well.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Ms. Sproule.]

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, one other point that I want to raise in the address is that this government knew what was going on six months ago. And typically, Mr. Speaker, the budget comes through on April 1st. Now here it is June 1st, not to be passed until the end of June, almost three months. And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that when the budget was released yesterday, there was no mention of this, of any of the cuts coming forward and the stark financial position that we're now at as a province.

But I want to again go back to the community of Buffalo Narrows and tell them this, that it's important that you know that the rest of the region and labour organizations like SGEU will stand beside you. I want you to also know that certainly from the communities around the community of Buffalo Narrows, we'll stand beside you as well. And we will reach out to the rest of the province to make sure that people know how cold, how callous, and how, quite frankly without any regard for the years of service by these valued employees, that they have now affected 17 to 18 families by simply terminating their positions at this correctional centre, Mr. Speaker.

It's also important to note that we have got to organize, that we have got to organize. And I say to northern people this, that the northern people are gradually beginning to build an alliance amongst themselves. The First Nations, the Métis people, the northerners that call the North their home, Mr. Speaker, they are

beginning to realize more and more that they have to get more active, more organized, and stronger. And they're doing that work, and this is a good example of why the North must strengthen from within because the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, we have governments that have failed miserably to be able to respond to the needs and services in our region. We have governments that have failed miserably on protecting valuable jobs like the jobs at the correctional centre in Buffalo Narrows.

So it's important that we get organized. It's important that we support each other. It's important that we reach out to natural allies like the labour movement to start supporting and protecting and showing compassion, Mr. Speaker, to those people that are losing their jobs, now in danger of losing their home or their vehicles, and totally stressed of being able to provide for their families. This is a good lesson on how we must do more to appreciate the value of our unions, the value of the labour movement, the value of those organizations that protect the working men and women of this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to underline that statement time and time again as we continue looking at this budget and how they have quite frankly hurt a lot of people. And my first response, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the budget address, is that quite frankly I was sickened by the callousness and the coldness that this government has shown to many working people across the province. And I was also sickened, Mr. Speaker, to see that come June 1st, that was the only time they had the courage to present the budget when they knew all the details as far back as January, Mr. Speaker.

In the North, as I also mentioned, we have to learn a hard lesson from this as well, Mr. Speaker. We have to learn a hard lesson from this as well. And I'm going to ask the Premier as well, did he or is he planning on sending his rapid response team to the community of Buffalo Narrows to deal with the trauma that he created as a result of these employees losing their job? Will the Premier send his rapid response team as he's done in other occasions, Mr. Speaker? I don't think so. I don't think so. And that's where the basis of callousness comes from, Mr. Speaker, because there's no regard for the region, no regard for this community, no regard for these families that were impacted as a result of the closure of the Buffalo Narrows hospital.

But it's not going to end here, Mr. Speaker. We are going to fight back. We are going to fight back as a region and as a community and as a band of workers that desperately need these jobs. And I will point out again, Mr. Speaker, the number one challenge in the North . . . And I'm going to say it again. As a result of a poor government, Mr. Speaker, as a result of a poor government, that we must be more determined as a people and our region to work towards an independence as a region and a sense of us working together and strengthening ourselves so the government never does this to us again, either ignoring us or when they need to find places to cut, that's the first place they look, in the place in and amongst people that could least afford to lose these good-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker.

And I would encourage northerners right across the board at this time to show compassion and support to the community of Buffalo Narrows and in particular the workers in that community that lost their jobs. It is going to affect their economy. It's going to affect the service delivery in that area.

It's going to affect everything in that particular region, Mr. Speaker, as a whole. But it's going to most adversely affect those families.

Now what do we do when we start losing good families that are working, Mr. Speaker, that are sending their kids to school, that are purchasing goods? These are all highly valuable assets that any community has when you talk about hard-working families, Mr. Speaker. Well the Saskatchewan Party ripped away that opportunity from 17 or 18 families, and I say shame on them. Shame on them, Mr. Speaker. If I could say it a million times in this Assembly, I would, Mr. Speaker.

But there is hope on the horizon, Mr. Speaker, because a lot of people are starting to rally together. They're starting to rally because they know in the absence of good government, we've got to take charge of our own region. We've got to take charge of our own communities. We must band together as northerners, as First Nations, as Métis people. And one of the things that we have to do is form an unbreakable alliance in a sense of saying, no more is the government going to come along and treat us with such disregard and disrespect. We're going to start asserting ourselves on our shared territory, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of people really upset about this.

And I would urge the government to pay very close attention because the community is going to rally behind these workers. The region is going to rally behind this service, Mr. Speaker, and we haven't heard the last of this issue yet. There's going to be a lot of people that are going to get organized, Mr. Speaker, and I'm quite confident that we're going to bring them here. I hope to bring the workers here. I hope to bring the workers here and have them in the Assembly so this party and this government can see the faces of the people that they affected, Mr. Speaker. So they can meet the men and women that have served this province for years. So they can see the stress that they're under as a result of losing their employment, and the challenge that they face as a family and the challenges that they face on the community and that they place on the community.

And I want to say again to the Premier, to the cabinet, and to the Sask Party, shame on you for doing that. Shame on you because these people really were good workers. They were good employees. They are good families. They're from a good community. Why would you do that to them? Why would you single them out, especially in an area that desperately needed those jobs and that service, Mr. Speaker?

That's why I'm supporting my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana who is doing a remarkable job identifying how they have poorly managed our finances, wasted billions of dollars. And when it's time to come and try and mend their ways, Mr. Speaker, or fix their problems, where do they go? To a region that cannot afford to lose those jobs. That's the Sask Party style. That's the Sask Party way. And I say again to them, shame on them. And that's why I'm standing up today, and I'm going to support the amendment made by my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana.

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

**Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very

much an honour to be the seconder on the Finance minister's motion to pass the 2016-2017 Saskatchewan budget. I'd like to thank my esteemed colleague for his *gravitas* in leading this budget and for the excellent support of the deputy Finance minister, Clare Isman, along with Denise Macza and Arun Srinivas for their thorough presentation and patient responses to our questions.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to see the forest through the trees. I believe that was the case yesterday when the opposition Finance critic presented comments for the 2016-2017 budget. In her comments, three primary critiques were mounted. Those were: that we were cutting health and education; that we were no longer interested in diversifying the economy; and that we were cutting ABE [adult basic education], advanced education training, and apprenticeships. Another outside commentator noted that the budget lacks compassion and attacks the most vulnerable.

I like budgets, Mr. Speaker. I like budgets because I'm an action-orientated person, and whereas election campaigns and even to some extent speeches from the throne are about promises and dreams, budgets are where the rubber meets the road; in our case, both figuratively and actually.

I've been really struck by the focus on a tree rather than the forest as I've watched these debates over the last several years, and so I decided to spend some time reviewing all of our budgets from the election of 2007 onwards. Our budgets tell our story, Mr. Speaker. And though individually planted, they've collectively created a pretty remarkable forest. A few key themes have run through our story of budgets, but the most remarkable one is that, in each case, we've had a very clear plan and that we have consistently, methodically, and steadfastly moved forward.

In our first budget delivered as a newly-elected government, then Finance minister Rod Gantfoer focused on readying our province for growth. That year, it was reported that Saskatchewan was the number one jurisdiction for exports, and we experienced an economic surge and an accompanying population growth that was placing significant strain on our infrastructure. Minister Gantfoer talked about the need to upgrade and renew schools to ensure that educators had proper facilities to teach our future leaders, and that our hospitals and health facilities needed investments, and that our roads and highways were crumbling under the weight of traffic with heavy loads.

It was recognized that if we wanted to be ready for the projected growth, we needed to address the infrastructure deficit we inherited when we took office. And I think it is worthwhile to point out, Mr. Speaker, that as we go through the list of the number — really extraordinary number — of new and renovated capital projects this government has taken on since coming to power, what is startling is not just the sheer number of capital projects that we have engaged with, in record investment numbers in many of the 10 years we've been in power, but also just how neglected this critical infrastructure was by previous governments.

I often wonder how many more Aboriginal people would still be in school or how many victim and perpetrator support



services for domestic violence there would be if our infrastructure had been kept in better shape. The thing about capital investments, Mr. Speaker, is that they are legacy projects. When they are left in disrepair or grossly inadequate to meet the needs of citizens, that is a legacy and a culture. Conversely when they are a priority and they are invested in, that is also a legacy. Both last beyond any government in power.

The ready-for-growth initiative back in 2008 began year-over-year investments in critical infrastructure. This infrastructure has been focused on five key areas: educational infrastructure, housing infrastructure, highways infrastructure, health infrastructure, and innovation infrastructure. All of that, Mr. Speaker, serves people.

Returning to the theme of it being difficult to see the forest through the trees, let's take a look at the story that our budget tells. In 2008-2009, the Hon. Rod Gantefoer talked about being ready for growth. And in her comments, the member from Saskatoon Nutana argued that, in real numbers, we are cutting health and education. She further argued that a minimum of 6 per cent is needed to keep to the costs of living.

Let's look at what we've done in health and education. The ready-for-growth initiative included nearly \$200 million for key repairs and upgrades to our hospitals and health facilities as well as the purchase of new medical and safety equipment. It also fixed leaking roofs left over from the previous government's infrastructure deficit in health centres in Leader and Climax.

[12:15]

Over 160 million was focused on upgrades to schools in rural and urban communities including giving the green light to 11 new school projects. Four hundred million was devoted to fixing the condition of highways and roads including of note, investments to northern First Nations access roads in order, and I quote, "... to lessen the isolation they feel and ensure they are fully able to participate in our growing economy."

As part of keeping promises from the election that fall, the budget also included investments to provide cancer patients to have access to drugs to help prolong their lives. We committed and delivered on doubling the caregiver tax credit for family caregivers who look after elderly, sick, or disabled family members. In that year, the government promised and delivered on its promise to devote one million to support transition houses and sexual assault centres. We addressed the nursing shortage in the province, added training seats, increased support for cancer patients, and conducted the Patient First Review, and patient exit surveys. That was only in one budget year.

In terms of investments and social infrastructure, in '09-10 Rod Gantefoer also began to look at how we serve and include people with disabilities in our growing economy and community. We began to look at wait-lists in the community living division, expanding facilities, and creating more spaces for people with disabilities.

We invested in transit support for people who had disabilities. We also created, of note, 1,000 new child care spaces and over

\$12 million in added funding towards space expansion and increased pay for early learning and child care workers. That year we committed to the children's hospital in Saskatoon and a mental health plan.

The following year capital projects were engaged to improve, repair, and replace facilities, and increase the number of medical professionals were key focuses. The Cancer Agency was well funded again to support patients, and we invested in reducing surgical wait times. Twelve new postgraduate seats in the College of Medicine were added, which doubled the number of new seats since elected. These obviously were and are critical front-line medical professionals in our health care system. We also began to provide support for autism, another enduring theme.

In K to 12, funding announcements were made for six new schools and upgrades to seven existing schools, and an increase of 33 million in operating funds for school divisions.

We also invested in housing as many people in those days were struggling to make ends meet in a market where housing had reached a shortage. So we started Headstart on a Home which allowed more people to own their own home by providing a low-cost, fixed mortgage, which provided home ownership opportunities to about 1,000 families that year.

Social Services received an increase to help for spaces for the intellectually disabled, an enduring theme throughout our government, and of course continued investments in infrastructure like the children's hospitals, the twinning of Highway 11, and so on continued.

We also continued to increase our share of the cost of education, bringing it to 65 per cent from only 40 per cent prior to 2007. Pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to 12 got a 9.1 increase in funding and the approval of 120 school renovation projects in 65 Saskatchewan communities, 2.6 million to develop an additional 40 pre-K programs and another 500 child care spaces.

We set a goal to hire 800 new nurses, and achieved that. The RHAs [regional health authority] received increases to revitalize the kidney transplant program. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency kept getting money to increase access to chemo, mammography, and bone transplants. And additional funding for increased access to MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] and CT [computerized tomography] scans, the reduction of surgical wait times, more spaces in the medical and teaching units at the U of S, general hospitals, and, of importance, the introduction of STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society]. More supports for people with autism.

And in addition to the Headstart on a Home, we partnered with the municipalities on two programs. The first was a property tax abatement on designated new home construction, and the second was incentives to develop new rental housing. And we also increased our support for Habitat for Humanity to build another 30 homes. As well investments at the U of S campus for student housing, as well as group homes for people with intellectual debilities and the elimination of wait-lists for that service. The next year, affordable housing continued. We added the rental home construction incentive, and a corporate income

tax rebate was introduced to qualifying companies to build new rental accommodations. First-time homebuyers credit was added. All of this resulted in the doubling of housing starts in four years.

PST [provincial sales tax] exemption was extended to children's clothing under the age of 17. Medical professionals were added. They were forgiven part of their tuition expenses at universities and so were nurses, by the way. In the first four years of government, benefits to low-income seniors doubled under the seniors' income plan. In this budget, the benefit was pledged to be increased by triple, and the seniors' personal care home benefit was also introduced.

We expanded the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program which enabled the tripling of the number of people eligible. There were another 15 pre-K programs and another 500 child care spaces. Investments in programs targeted fetal alcohol syndrome and autism programming. Another six new school projects, and overall funding for school operating costs rose by 5 per cent. And more investments in health, surgical wait times, Cancer Agency, and so on.

The beginning of key investments in long-term facilities began. That year six facilities were completed and seven additional ones were started. The replacement of the North Battleford Hospital was added and also the new hospital in Moose Jaw.

The next year tripled the seniors' income plan, increased support again for SAID, increased operational funding for all women's shelters in Saskatchewan, including facilities in Regina and Prince Albert which were expanded with those resources, and started work on the shelter in Melfort.

Health care partnerships to coordinate the purchase of six new generic drugs, the reduction of wait times, a home care services pilot program for seniors in Regina. The Sask Cancer Agency was again well funded. We also had the rural doctor locus program, increasing the available pool of rural doctors. The Moose Jaw Hospital and a seven-fold increase in Alzheimer's First Link services.

Pre-K operating funding was up by 2.3 per cent which included a boost of 17 million to address enrolment increases. Another 15 pre-K programs. Continued investments to expand the number of seats for RNs [registered nurse] and physicians and front-line workers. Investments in FAS [fetal alcohol syndrome] and autism, and in affordable housing. The U of R [University of Regina] residence. Thirteen hundred new rental under the rental and construction agreement, 240 new units under the affordable homeownership program, support for 70 secondary suites, 40 homes for Habitat for Humanity, and investments in the Saskatchewan repair program to keep existing affordable housing units viable.

The next year again, continued investment in education capital including the replacement of Connaught and Sacred Heart in Regina. Renovation of Saskatoon's care home. The new provincial laboratory. More funding for medical imaging equipment. The Swift Current long-term care facility. Extension of the affordable housing agreement. Additional supports for the Habitat for Humanity with another 12 homeowners.

Record funding of health of nearly \$5 billion reducing surgical wait times again. Cancer treatments, screening, diagnostic imaging services. More investment in the rural physician recruitment program. A hot-spotting program to identify and provide more appropriate services to frequent users and intensive users of the health system. Care for seniors. Additional monies for the Home First/Quick response program. Increasing the seniors' income benefit plan, seniors' care Urgent Action Fund to address issues in the long-term care facilities, and a house call program.

People with disabilities, again 55 per cent increase in the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program. Mental health and addictions plan. Two point four per cent increase in K to 12 operating funding with another 90 million top-up to address projected enrolment increases. Investments in bullying and cyberbullying action plans and CommunityNet bandwidth and upgrades to schools. Fifteen again new pre-K programs, bringing the provincial total to 316. Another 500 new child care spaces, bringing the total to 14,200 or a 55 per cent increase since 2007.

This brings us to today where we have three-quarters of all of our expenses are in health, education, and social services. We have the largest allocation for school construction and renovation in the province's history, nine new joint-use schools, and the elimination of school division portions of their local share for major capital projects, meaning that the province took over 100 per cent of the capital cost of school projects.

On her second critique, the Finance critic said we're no longer interested in diversifying the economy. Okay. Again looking through all these budgets, the story is a bit different. In '08-09 we were reported as being the number one jurisdiction in Canada for growth and exports. We began investments in agriculture, which have continued on to today, which was curious, since the Finance critic raised agriculture today. Year over year it's been somewhere where we've invested. The government had campaigned on fully funding agricultural risk programs like crop insurance, AgriStability, and AgriInvest programs, and we delivered every single year. Actually not only did they deliver, but the crop insurance program was not only fully funded but was increased that year by \$25 million.

Municipalities got part of a revenue-sharing agreement that got the first of a series of increases in '08-09. Revenue sharing was increased to 7 per cent, of importance, as far back as 2008-09 because yes, we've been in power for 10 years. We recognized and committed to initiatives designed to try to facilitate the full participation in the economy by First Nations and Métis people. The approach then, as it was now, is to work with First Nations and Métis entrepreneurs, particularly to boost northern employment and business development.

In '10, 2009-10 the housing collapse happened in the United States, contributing to a global recession. In some ways, the conditions of that time are similar to the ones today. And we did not stand idly by. In fact, we adopted many of the same approaches we have today, keeping taxes low and continuing to invest in infrastructure. In fact, in the '09-10 budget, we made the largest education property tax cut in Saskatchewan history and increased our own educational funding to two-thirds of the cost.

We also began to chip away at the infrastructure deficit we inherited, and we gave an economic booster shot in the fall to invest in schools, long-term care facilities, better municipal infrastructure, better and safer highways, increases in housing and jobs and, in this budget, invested another 1 billion on top of that in all of those areas. This all totalled an investment of 2.5 billion in capital funding in just two years.

This also included moves to begin a new revenue-sharing deal with the municipalities. We also did something . . . We also added the Saskatchewan research and development tax credit, making it fully refundable to provide financial support incentives to leaders in innovation in our province. And of course we continue to invest in AgriStability, AgriInvest, crop insurance, and PTRC [Petroleum Technology Research Centre].

In the '10-11 budget we started off by talking about the 125th anniversary of the Battle of Batoche, the anniversary of the Riders, and so on. But some of the headlines that year were like this: "Saskatchewan job numbers surge." "Saskatchewan economy expected to lead." A description by the RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] that our province was off to a rip-roaring start. The CIBC noted that we would lead the country's economic growth that year, and economic growth that was then predicted to be the third best in the country at 3 per cent, and that we were the only province noted to have posted significant job growth the previous year.

Small-business owners were among the most optimistic in the country. Our provincial unemployment rate dropped to 4.3 per cent, by far the lowest in Canada. And our population continued to grow.

That budget was all about innovation and agenda and building a knowledge economy by focusing on Saskatchewan export and trade markets, agricultural biotech, value-added development in nuclear and carbon capture. We put resources into the synchrotron on the U of S campus, the PTRC, and telecommunications research.

The Premier made several trips that year to the United States where he personally made the case on Capitol Hill. The energy made the case to China. Missions went to Asia and India. And as a result of these efforts, canola sales to China went up by 80 per cent. Peas were up by \$105 million. Linseed was up by 341 per cent. And we sold 970 million worth of goods to India, setting up Saskatchewan to contribute 45 per cent of all trade to that country from Canada.

[12:30]

Much of this was attributed to our increased support of STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership], our focus on agricultural exports and crop diversity, and similar investments in agricultural research and development. We also reduced red tape and regulations for businesses and began to reduce our own spending by finding efficiencies and measuring our performance. We were still the lowest tax jurisdiction in Canada.

In 2011-2012 we noted that the population of our province continued to rise and that Saskatoon and Regina were the fastest and third-fastest growing cities in the country. Housing starts

were up, wages were up, and we had the lowest unemployment in the country.

In that we noted that our very first act after getting elected in 2007 was to eliminate the PST on used cars. That same year, the basic spousal and personal exemption for dependent children was raised, which took 92,000 people off the tax rolls.

In 2009 the education property tax was cut. In 2011-2012 the basic spousal and tax exemption was raised by another \$1,000 and the children exemption raised by another \$500, resulting in a total of 114,000 people coming off the provincial tax rolls, giving us the highest income threshold in Canada.

We also again reported high on business optimism. We cut small-business income tax rates by more than half, which gave us one of the lowest business tax rates in the country. We reduced approval and licensing times. The potash industry invested nearly double their capital expenditure in this province, creating thousands of new jobs, and these were facilitated by a stable tax and royalty structure.

Again we fully funded the farm income stabilization programs, highway increases, police services increase, and again the fulfillment of a new funding model based on a full percentage of the PST [provincial sales tax] for our municipalities. And on innovation, Canadian Light Source, investments in ag biotech, Sask Research Council, PTRC, and a knowledge-based economy.

Moving from there, our crop production was up by 15 per cent. The economy continued to grow. International exports grew by 25 per cent. Oil and potash production and sales were up. Building permits grew by 25 per cent. The economy grew by 3.5 per cent. We had the lowest unemployment in the country. Our debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio was the second lowest, and we were among Canada's leaders in economic growth.

We also continued to invest in infrastructure in schools, health care facilities, highway, and infrastructure; 6000 kilometres of highways were improved over this time.

We did research and technology grants in agriculture, investments in SRC [Saskatchewan Research Council] who did things like helping Canadian vaccine companies export their products to Brazil. We focused on value-added opportunities for natural resources, water security research strategy, boreal water strategy for the northern lakes. The institute for food security was established, and we invested once again in the Canadian Light Source.

The unemployment rate was only 3.8 per cent, by far the lowest in Canada. And we increased funding to the Saskatchewan Arts Board and to Creative Saskatchewan's investment programs, again keeping building highways and hospitals as well as the southeast bypass.

The opposition critic also talked about cuts to ABE, advanced ed training, and apprenticeship. Again in '08 we froze tuition to advanced ed and had an 8 per cent increase in university operating costs. We also supported the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School. We addressed labour shortages by increasing

training opportunities, including 300 more on-reserve ABE seats for Aboriginal people to be delivered through local colleges and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. Again we increased operating funding for K-12.

We also started the graduate retention program, the most aggressive youth retention program in Canada that year. We invested in the Aboriginal Workforce Development Fund as well as new regional colleges to improve the accessibility to post-secondary education by people in our rural environments. We had 1,100 new apprenticeship training seats. We also increased the operating grant in the next year to our universities, which included an extra 16.3 million to keep tuition increases down. The funding for the graduate retention program increased by another 4.3 per cent.

The following year, 24.6 million to the universities to limit tuition growth; 6 million devoted to expanding physical and nursing training programs; and, of importance, 48.6 million in direct support for Aboriginal education institutions, including ABE and provincial training allowance, all of which increased funding to educational opportunities for Aboriginal people by \$30 million.

Next year, 2 per cent increase to support operating costs at the university; the northern action plan to work with leaders to address issues that hinder social and economic progress in the North; additional resources for First Nations people resulting in almost 600 more Aboriginal, Métis people who were employed; as well as a 24 per cent increase in the number of First Nations and Métis apprentices and a doubling of the First Nation and Métis journeymen's, journeyperson's certifications. Advanced Ed got a 9 per cent increase, resulting in a 40 per cent increase in funding for Advanced Ed since 2007.

We eliminated the wait list for ABE for Aboriginal people. Work readiness, we had work readiness employment development, the northern career quest program, the Saskatchewan industrial trades and employment partnership, the inroads to agriculture career program, and the aircraft maintenance program at the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. Additional funding was put towards the recommendations by the joint task force on improving education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in partnership with FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. The result of all this? Close to half of the people employed in the uranium industry at that time were Aboriginal.

Again, the following year, more increases to post-secondary education, expansions of RN seats, technical institutes and regional colleges, medical undergraduate seats, medical residency, as well as nurse practitioner seats. Not only was the ABE wait list eliminated for Aboriginal people, but 300 seats were added last year and another 700 were added in this particular year. Three hundred apprenticeship seats were also added.

Mr. Speaker, this brings me to today, this long story brings me to today. And it's this: today — in response to the three criticisms by the member opposite — today, STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] members forecast an increase in exports in 2016. Today, we beat our own target to export agri-foods, which was projected to be 15 billion by 2020.

We're here in 2016 and we already hit 15.1 billion.

Today still, we are the most attractive jurisdiction in the world for mining and second globally. Today still, we have a number of achievements in manufacturing, and today still we have invested year over year over year in supporting our agricultural producers.

The point of growth, as the Premier has said often, is to secure a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people. I don't think, having read all of this, that we can be characterized as cold and callous. Instead I would say that a family of four with an income of \$50,000 pays the lowest taxes and utilities in Canada, Mr. Speaker. Again, three-quarters of our budget is in Health, Education, and Social Services. Cold and callous people don't do that.

We have a continuation of 9,000 ABE spaces and a 76 per cent increase in apprenticeship training seat growth, 9.7 million increase for the SAID program, and investments in targeted supports for classrooms which includes support for our Syrian students.

I end by noting that we have a deficit. It is a conscious deficit, not to hurt our most vulnerable people. And like all the plans we've had so far, we will deliver on reducing that deficit because our Finance minister has a plan and he will deliver.

I close, Mr. Speaker, by saying I will be supporting the budget presented by the Minister of Finance with no amendments. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know whether we should just wait a little bit until the rest of the members opposite come in the House and want to hear this or . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, they're probably in the lounge listening. Okay.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to enter into this budget debate today, but before I do I would like to say a few words, a few thank yous that I was unable to respond to during the Throne Speech because the member from Yorkton talked too much.

Firstly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election to be Speaker. I would like to congratulate the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood on his appointment as Deputy Speaker, and the campaign that he ran. Mr. Speaker, I also would like to congratulate all new and returning members on their successful election campaigns. Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the maiden speeches from all the new members.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my campaign team, which consists of some 100 workers, with a special thanks to Carole Carlson, business manager; Vi Cardinal, phone bank coordinator; and Mike Carlson, signs. Mr. Speaker, a special thanks to my best friend — my wife, Valerie, who was my campaign manager who worked tirelessly. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe a true test of a marriage is to have your spouse as your campaign manager. We made it through, Mr. Speaker, and today we celebrate our 37th wedding anniversary. She

definitely is a lucky woman, I tell you.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the constituents of Cut Knife-Turtleford for their support in the election, supporting myself and my team with 80 per cent of the popular vote.

Mr. Speaker, over the past four years I have sat in this Assembly and listened to the opposition, and I had hoped that they were past the *Regina Manifesto*, the tree book, Brotenomics. But their federal counterparts have now introduced the Leap Manifesto, which members opposite have endorsed, Mr. Speaker, a document that would truly devastate the Saskatchewan economy. I think the biggest devastation in this is that the former member from Saltcoats, Bob Bjornrud, isn't here to speak to this because I'm sure he'd have done a job.

Mr. Speaker, I think members opposite would be well served if they stuck to getting the facts straight, and not worrying about manifestos and unfounded campaign promises. Mr. Speaker, good factual debate makes for good decisions in government, in business, and everyday life.

Mr. Speaker, I think all of us in this Assembly are familiar with cowboy poetry, an art in which a person takes storytelling, tall tales and myths, and creates entertaining poetry. Mr. Speaker, we in this House were blessed with poetry from the former member from Lakeview, and we're glad that that's over with. But, Mr. Speaker, we may not have cowboy poetry, but we do have Athabasca poetry in which storytelling, tall tales, and myths are truly applied.

Now that I've got that off my chest, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about the budget. Congratulations, first of all, to this Finance minister's first budget — a job very well done. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank all the ministries for their dedication to this very tough budget, and I'd also like to thank the treasury board members for their hundreds of hours of deliberation in finalizing this budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan 2016-17 budget will keep Saskatchewan strong by controlling operational spending and investing in people and infrastructure. This year's budget contents have no tax increases and no new taxes. Mr. Speaker, by keeping taxes low, controlling spending, and investing in much needed infrastructure projects like highways, schools, and hospitals, we will help Saskatchewan's economy through a difficult year before economic recovery is expected next year.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, a \$968 million drop in resource revenue is having an effect. Our government opted for a manageable deficit in this budget rather than cutting funding to priority areas such as health, education, and social services. Mr. Speaker, to ensure the sustainability of high-quality public services delivered in the most efficient, effective way possible, this budget also marks the beginning of a government-wide process of transformational change.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize agriculture's role as a resilient and stable contributor to Saskatchewan's economy, and continue to offer the programs and services producers need to keep their operations and their entire agriculture industry strong. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture budget for 2016-17 will

increase by 7.5 per cent for a total of \$389.8 million. This includes \$254.6 million to fully fund business risk management programs, a \$14.6 million increase from the previous year. Mr. Speaker, from the very start our government has been committed to building a strong agriculture industry. We have been focused on supporting our farmers and ranchers with strategic investments and effective programming. The budget continues that commitment.

[12:45]

Mr. Speaker, record funding for municipal revenue sharing highlights the \$406.3 million in direct government support to Saskatchewan municipalities in the 2016-17 provincial budget. Mr. Speaker, the overall funding represents an increase of \$56.7 million or 16.2 per cent from the 2015-16 budget, and an increase of 164.4 million or 67.9 per cent from the 2007-08 budget. Mr. Speaker, urban revenue sharing for all cities, towns, villages, and resort villages will amount to \$174.6 million in 2016-17. Revenue sharing for rural municipalities, which includes organized hamlets, will total 76.6 million, and northern municipalities will receive just under \$20.3 million this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, a record \$5.17 billion health budget will be invested in health infrastructure, improving access to care, and reducing wait times for surgery and diagnostic services for Saskatchewan people. The 2016-17 health budget is an increase of 57.4 million or 1.1 per cent over the 2015-16 budget. There has now been a 50 per cent increase in the health budget since 2007. Mr. Speaker, regional health authorities will receive \$3.4 billion for an operating funding increase of 2.3 per cent provided to regional health authorities last year, and 56 per cent increase since 2007.

Included is \$20 million in additional funding to reduce surgical wait times. The demand for surgeries continues to rise in Saskatchewan, with an estimated 3 per cent more surgeries needed in 2016-17 compared to 2015-16. Surgical funding in 2016-17 will be above both the 2015-16 and the 2014-15 levels.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has gone from the longest surgical wait times in Canada in 2007 to the shortest wait times in 2015. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have seen wait times creep back up a bit in recent months. This additional investment in surgery should reverse that trend and ensure we continue to have the shortest wait times in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency is receiving more than 167 million in funding in this budget, up 9.8 million from last year or 6.2 per cent. The substantial increase in funding will help pay for the additional 15 new cancer drugs that were approved last year. Since 2007, funding for Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has increased by nearly 113 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in Saskatchewan history, the highways and infrastructure budget tops \$1 billion. This marks another record investment in provincial roads and infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan drivers can expect to see work on projects in virtually every corner of the province. This year's plan includes major projects in addition to much needed repairs to many of our rural highways that will keep our

growing economy strong. Mr. Speaker, the \$1.15 billion 2016-17 highways and infrastructure budget includes 355 million for capital construction; 30 million in new funding for the first year of the highway 2020 plan, a three-year \$70 million surge in highway repair and maintenance; and \$500 million for the Regina bypass.

Mr. Speaker, more than 1300 kilometres of provincial highways will see repairs or upgrades this year. Highlights include continuing work on major projects like the Regina bypass and the twinning of Highway 7 and 16 near Saskatoon, and Highway 39 between Estevan and Bienfait; starting construction on new overpasses at Warman and Martensville, upgrading more than 100 kilometres of rural highways to improve safety and access including Highway 322 north of Sifton and Highway 354 near Dilke, and 200 kilometres of repaving.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the highways 2020 plan, \$30 million will be invested in repairs to many highways throughout the province including Highways 220 and 322 in the Sifton-Strasbourg area, Highway 924 to Dore Lake, Highway 340 north of Radisson, Highway 376 between Maymont and Asquith, and Highway 45 south of Outlook, and Highway 58 between Chaplin and Shamrock.

Mr. Speaker, our track record when it comes to highways is clear. Since coming into office, we have invested more than \$6.3 million, including the funding in this budget, to improve more than 11 000 kilometres of roads and highways.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus a little bit on highway and infrastructure projects in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. Approximately 6.5 million will be spent in the 2016-17 budget year. This investment will include the following projects: bridge rehabilitation on Highway 17 over the Battle River; micro surfacing on Highway 26 from approximately six miles south of Mervin to Turtleford; bridge replacement on Highway 40 east of Cut Knife; and medium preservation on Highway 21 north of Maidstone. These projects are all part of the \$30 million surge project.

Mr. Speaker, in regards to Highway 26 from the junction of Highway 4 north of The Battlefords to Turtleford, this has seen very high traffic counts due to construction of four new SAGD [steam-assisted gravity drainage re oil extraction] recovery plants in the Edam-Vawn area. Mr. Speaker, even in low oil price situations, Husky Energy and Serafina Energy have still moved forward with these major capital projects. They have employed some 300 to 400 people during construction phases giving a major boost to the local economy.

Mr. Speaker, a recent quote from *The StarPhoenix* news release said about Husky Energy's SAGD investments:

"We are ahead of schedule and under budget with Vawn, an indication of our growing expertise in developing these thermal projects," Husky Energy CEO Asim Ghosh said in a statement.

"These developments are leading our transition into a low sustaining capital business, with among the lowest operating costs in the industry."

The Vawn Project is expected to enter production in the third quarter of 2016 and ramp up its full capacity of 10,000 barrels per day, the company said in a news release.

Husky Energy's 10,000 barrels-per-day Edam East thermal project [came on stream last month] . . . The Calgary-based energy firm's 4,500 barrels-per-day Edam West development is set to enter production in the third quarter.

The company said it expects 40 per cent of the total production to come from low sustaining capital operations, up from 8 per cent in 2010.

Husky's heavy oil production is currently about 135,000 barrels per day, 74,000 barrels of which will come from [these] thermal projects. The three new Saskatchewan projects are expected to add an additional 24,500 barrels per day of production capacity.

Mr. Speaker, Serafina Energy's Edam facility currently is in operation and has a nameplate production capacity of 6,000 barrels per day. This facility uses proven SAGD technology to recover remaining reserves from existing heavy oil pools that have come to the end of their primary production ability. Future Serafina facilities in the area will replace this design, increasing recovery from additional existing pools. The Edam project is conveniently situated between Lloydminster and North Battleford.

Mr. Speaker, many more projects are on the drawing table, so to speak, for Husky Energy, which they're talking of another SAGD plant at Spruce Lake, another one at Meota, and another one at Prince. Serafina is also planning to do another project at Meota. These plants, like I said earlier, will take at least 3 to 400 people to help build them.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit . . . I think we hit a nerve with this from members opposite about transformational change. Starting this year, we are commencing a government-wide process of transformational change. Our goal is to ensure that sustainability of high-quality public services delivered in the most efficient, effective way possible. Transformational change can't be achieved overnight, and it can't be accomplished by government alone.

As part of this transformation, important questions will be asked about every program, initiative, and expenditure. Questions like: is this program or this service the role of government? If so, is it being delivered in the best possible manner at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers? Where similar programs with similar objectives exist, can those multiple programs be combined into one that provides better results at less cost? Could a different governance model provide administrative savings while still remaining responsive to the needs of Saskatchewan people?

We will also take a deep look at government's sources of revenue. The overall objectives of our province's revenue system must always be to keep Saskatchewan strong by keeping our economy strong and to ensure government revenues are sufficient to ensure important programs and services are sustainable now and into the future. That includes a tax system that is competitive, simple, and fair for all Saskatchewan

taxpayers. Those will be the principles of change to our tax system.

Mr. Speaker, our province's credit rating is among the highest in the country. Saskatchewan's percentage of total debt to GDP — 17.6 per cent as of March 31st, 2016 — is the second lowest among provinces. Combined with low interest rates, it is a cost-effective time to financial capital. Crown corporations are borrowing just over 744 million in 2016-17 through finance capital, and executive government will borrow one billion specifically for investment in capital outlined in Saskatchewan Builds capital plan. Combined with a sound repayment plan, we were taking a disciplined approach to borrowing.

As we meet the challenge created by falling resource revenue, we will continue to control spending. Controlling spending means making some difficult but necessary decisions. Mr. Speaker, continuing low oil prices for oil, potash is putting pressures on revenue and on our province's economy generally. This year, resource revenue will be down nearly \$1 billion compared to last year's budget. This budget forecasts total revenue of 14.02 billion, 1.8 per cent lower than last year, and a total expense of 14.46 billion, up just 2 per cent from last year. That combines for a projected deficit in 2016-17 of 434 million. Our GDP is forecasted to deliver by .06 per cent this year with a return to growth of 2.5 per cent forecast for 2017. A lot of paper here.

Mr. Speaker, these are years where unforeseen events — drops in the price of oil or potash, or costly natural disasters — make it prudent to run a manageable deficit rather than implement severe cuts to programs and services or increase the tax burden like members opposite did. I mean, it used to be a fear when I was in business. I could remember that we dreaded every budget because we knew there was either going to be income tax, personal or corporate, or else the PST was going up, but there was definitely going to be a tax increase. This is one of those years. By keeping taxes low, controlling operational spending, and investing in much needed infrastructure projects such as highways, schools, and hospitals, we will keep Saskatchewan through a difficult year before the economic recovery expected next year. And we remain committed to return to a balanced budget in 2017-18.

Mr. Speaker, I'm getting near the end here, but I would like to say that, along with the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] here and the member from Melfort, we all were in the car business. And I can remember, it wasn't that long ago during those, as I mentioned before, the dark days, the 16 years of that government, where we constantly had an ad in the paper for mechanics or salesmen or whatever. And it was almost impossible to hire anybody because nobody wanted to move into the province. They were thinking of leaving.

Mr. Speaker, during our campaign, we had nine town hall meetings, and we put on some 8000 kilometres. And in the seniors' centre in Wilkie, there was a saying on the wall there that I think applies to everybody in this House, and it goes like this:

The value of this day is impossible to measure, for it will never come again. I do not wish to regret its passing. What I do today is up to me and no one else. I can use it to good

advantage or squander it away. The choice is mine. I will try to make it my day of success rather than failure; satisfaction rather than frustration; joy rather than pain; laughter rather than tears, contentment rather than worry, and love rather than hate.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget, and I definitely will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — It now being 1 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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