



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

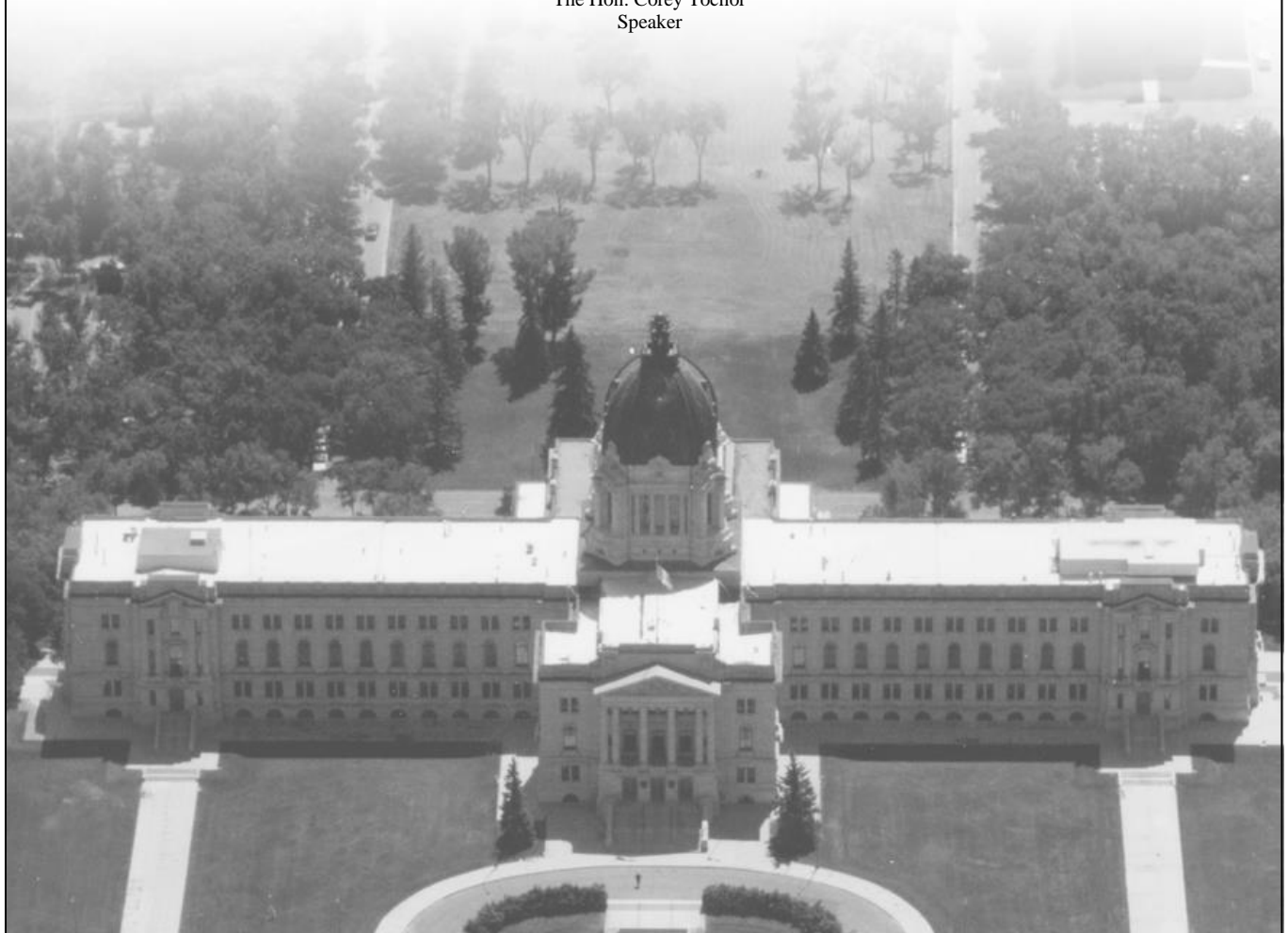
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
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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

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Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave's granted. I recognize the member.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce two men who are seated today on the floor of this Assembly. They are here today. They are the reason why we are free to stand and debate in this Assembly. First I would like to introduce Ken Duffield from the Raymore-Semans area, a World War II veteran and one of the bravest men I've ever met, who for his bravery on D-Day the French recently paid tribute with their highest national honour, the Legion of Honour.

Also while I'm on my feet, I would also like to introduce Warrant Officer Tom Anderson, retired, from Semans — also a decorated veteran of the Bosnia and Cyprus wars.

And also while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce Ken Duffield's nephew and former constituent of mine, JR Richardson.

I would ask all members to show our eternal gratitude to these two veterans for the service that we will never be able to repay. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and thank you for our freedom.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to, to you and through you, join with the member opposite to welcome these veterans to their Assembly, two individuals that have certainly served and sacrificed. Thank you for providing a bit of the context and the distinguished recognition of the service of both Mr. Ken Duffield and Mr. Tom Anderson. Thank you for your service. Thank you for your sacrifice. And I ask all members to offer that same thanks.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I request leave to make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, colleagues, and thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to be able to introduce a couple of distinguished guests that are seated in your gallery. They are representatives from Raging River Exploration. In your gallery are Neil Roszell, the company's president and CEO [chief executive officer]. Also joining us today the executive vice-president, Bruce Robertson, who is enjoying a homecoming of sorts today because he grew up in the Regina south area and attended Campbell Collegiate.

Mr. Speaker, Neil and Bruce are visiting the province to highlight Raging River's capital plan for this year, and it is a capital plan of some significance and importance for our province and for people working in the energy sector in Saskatchewan. I had the pleasure of chatting with them about this and a number of other things over lunch, and there's a certain amount of excitement, notwithstanding oil prices, notwithstanding what's going on with respect to the industry.

Raging River was the second most active driller in the province of Saskatchewan — 225 new wells. And this year the company plans to drill between 215 and 220 new wells, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan. They're going to invest about \$175 million. Importantly, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to members, 85 per cent of their spending is targeted for the Kindersley area, 85 per cent targeted for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Over the next decade they're going to be active in the province of Saskatchewan. Their plans are to invest \$3 billion here, drilling 2,500 new wells. And so, Mr. Speaker, sometimes in politics we forget to thank those who are creating opportunities for Saskatchewan families. I hope that we'll take the opportunity today to thank Raging River and to thank the executive team and all those who work at the company for what they're doing in Saskatchewan and what they plan on doing, and that we would welcome them as well to the Legislative Assembly here today.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I wish to join with the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Arm River Watrous in welcoming a hero, heroes, and specifically Mr. Duffield, a hero, to his Legislative Assembly today. If we can consider this reality: 72 years ago about right now he was storming the beaches. And Ken was a corporal leading 12 other men.

Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to visit with him today and he told me that their objective was to take out a certain German pillbox. That was the objective they had been given them by command, and so they made their way up the beaches, Mr. Speaker, up the beach, and they were able to achieve that objective. And as I found out this morning, they didn't lose a single person. All 12 survived, at least that battle. Three were lost I think the next day due to some tank mine work that they were doing, Mr. Speaker. But all survived on that day.

And Mr. Duffield said there must have been Saint Christopher with him as the reason for the fact that they would have all survived this. I suggested that maybe Saint Christopher was helping that day, but I think they probably also had a very good corporal. And we shared some other stories.

And there's just not enough, there's not enough words in the language to adequately express how grateful we are to this generation, the greatest generation. I'd like to think that our generation would do exactly as theirs did, but boy, it's hard to fathom that sometimes, given what was happening on that day, on the 6th of June.

And so it is a great, great honour for us to be able to have a hero in the Legislative Assembly today who, as the member for Arm River quite adequately and elegantly said, helped give us the freedoms that allow us to do the debate in this Legislative Assembly that we do every day and that we'll do later this day. So I just want to join with all members in welcoming him and our other guests to the Legislative Assembly as well.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to join with the Premier to welcome the representatives of Raging River Exploration that have joined us here today. Their commitment to the province is notable. That's an ambitious and important drilling program that the Premier described, and certainly this is important not just to our energy sector but to our entire province. So I join with the Premier in welcoming these representatives and this company, Raging River Exploration, to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I would like to introduce and recognize this year's Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship recipients.

The Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship is an important part of the Ministry of Agriculture's initiative for youth to thinkAG. Through this initiative we are able to promote the diversity of careers and opportunities in agriculture.

Each year the Government of Saskatchewan identifies four young people who are passionate and dedicated to agriculture. I ask that members look to the Speaker's gallery where this year's scholarship winners are seated. These four individuals see the endless opportunities available to them through the agriculture industry. They represent a new generation of young people across the province seeing a bright future in agriculture. It's inspiring to see the pride and passion these youth already have for the industry, and they will play a large role in continuing our stewardship and sustainability story for future generations.

I ask the scholarship winners to please give a wave as I

introduce their names. Sheldon Daniel of Avonlea has been awarded the grand prize scholarship of \$4,000. Sheldon submitted a video that explained how creative and innovative technological advancements can help the agriculture industry feed a growing population. Sheldon will begin studies at the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan in the fall. Congratulations, Sheldon.

Our three runner-up winners were each awarded \$2,000 for their studies, and they are Autumn Lawson of Rose Valley, Kaitlyn Kitzan of Theodore, and Hailey Harms of Prince Albert. Each of them will also be joining Sheldon at the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan.

Autumn wants to go into agribusiness and someday have her own sheep operation. Her essay explained how the environment is vital to agriculture, and caring for the land and resources is everyone's responsibility. Kaitlyn has a passion for working toward global food security and promoting agriculture awareness. Her video submission described her farm's environmental success story by highlighting their sustainable farming methods. Hailey hopes to open her own clinic for large animals once she becomes a veterinarian. Her video explains that, in order for the agriculture industry to be sustainable, young people need to consider the vast opportunities available to them.

I want to congratulate these winners and thank them for their hard work and dedication to the industry. I wish you all the best as you continue your education and enter Saskatchewan's growing agriculture industry. I look forward to seeing what all of you do in the future. And I ask all members to join me as I congratulate and welcome this year's Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship winners.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition and to you and through you, I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome these four students to their Legislative Assembly and to congratulate you on your success in obtaining those scholarships.

What's really impressed me is your emphasis on the future of agriculture in Saskatchewan, food security, sustainability, environmental challenges. So obviously, you know, you are concerned about the future and you're going to take that with you as you begin your studies here in Saskatchewan. So that's great news.

So again, Sheldon, Autumn, Kaitlyn, and Hailey, congratulations to you all. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join colleagues in this legislature in first welcoming our veterans that are with us today, and thanking them for their heroic efforts in years past that not only allow us

to debate on the floor of this Legislative Assembly but allow me to stand here and join with colleagues in congratulating four young future leaders in our agricultural industry.

To Sheldon, Autumn, Kaitlyn, and Hailey, first of all to congratulate them on their scholarship, to join with the Minister of Agriculture and the opposition critic, but also to congratulate them on their selection of attending the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan, an institution that enhances research not just in Saskatchewan but across Canada and around the world. And I would like to congratulate you on that selection as well as remind you of the opportunities that you will have upon the completion of your studies to participate in the Western Canadian, the Canadian, the North American agricultural economy that, just here in Saskatchewan, I think has aggressively increased in value, not just economically, Mr. Speaker, with \$15 billion in exports last year, but in research and innovation and in technology.

I want to make just a quick special mention of Hailey Harms from just east of Shellbrook, a friend of my daughter's, and her mother, Leeta, that's with her here today, Hailey and Leeta and Leeta's husband, Don. Hailey is the same age as my daughter Taryn, and we've spent years travelling around the province at different dance competitions and following their brothers, my son Carter and Hailey's brother Kyle, to different hockey tournaments over the years. And they've become just the closest friends of ours over the last couple of decades. So congratulations to each of you as you enter your studies and ultimately your careers upon graduation. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota.

Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I have the honour of introducing three members of the Dundurn volunteer fire service.

[13:45]

In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have — if you could each give a wave — Chief Laura Friesen, one of two female fire chiefs in the Province of Saskatchewan; Captain Terry Benson; and first responder Reaschelle Higginbotham. Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing a little bit more information about them in a member's statement shortly. In the meantime, I ask all members to please join me in welcoming these fine people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, and to all the members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce my beautiful daughter, Jillian Bulych, seated in your gallery. Jill is the youngest of my four children, and we're fortunate to have her live only blocks away from us. She has worked in the family car business for the past 12 years, from a part-time receptionist to a business manager. However, she has recently decided to leave the business to pursue other interests.

During the recent campaign, and for months prior to the

campaign, she was one of my most diligent door knockers. And for a girl who really had very little interest in politics before I started my run for office, she's now very keenly interested in it. She's joining us today to watch the proceedings live and to watch her dad at work. I ask all members to join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, and to all the members of this Legislative Assembly, I would like to welcome the Dundurn volunteer fire services personnel here as well. We depend on emergency services when we are at our most vulnerable, and these extremely professionally trained individuals are available whenever needed. And especially being volunteers, that's extremely important as well. So I would like to thank them for their hard work and dedication and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you and to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce you to Jodi Kazeil. Jodi is one of my closest friends and, unlike a certain minister in our caucus, she's actually real. She's seated up in the west gallery. Would you give us a wave, Jodi?

We've been friends for nearly 20 years because we met when we were 10. And we've gotten each other through some early days in the hospital and at home with newborns and many other situations with close family and friends that have been thrown our way. She's always been on my team, and I couldn't be happier to have her on my team in the constituency office as well. Would you all please join me in welcoming Jodi Kazeil to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's my pleasure to rise today and introduce a class seated in our east gallery. Joining us today are teacher Ms. Michelle McKillop and her 40 grade 10 students from Sheldon-Williams Collegiate here in Regina. They're also accompanied today by Ms. Lorrie-Lynn Oleynik.

These students go to Sheldon-Williams, which is a school in Regina, in the southwest part of Regina Lakeview, a school with not only a strong academic tradition but a really exceptional tradition of performing arts and the arts as well as sports, and a very well-known high school here in Regina. I can see at least two students in this class . . . I had the chance to go on an extended trip to Eastern Canada a couple of years ago, and I can report that they were most well behaved, as I'm sure, Ms. McKillop, they all are. So thank you all and welcome you all here today. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this class to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose

Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome A.E. Peacock Collegiate students to the Assembly, in the west gallery, along with Mrs. Kiefer, their teacher. Mr. Speaker, I met with the students and Mrs. Kiefer a little earlier. We had our picture taken, and I was pleased to present them with a Saskatchewan flag. And the unique part of the Saskatchewan flag was that it was actually one that was signed by Tony Drake. Anthony Drake, as you will recall, was in the province a short while later, and he actually autographed, signed for me. And I wanted to extend it to the students who are visiting us today.

Peacock Collegiate is Moose Jaw's comprehensive school with strong academics and a strong sports program, as well as extracurricular activities like drama and track. And I'd ask all members to welcome Mrs. Kiefer and the class to their Legislative Assembly, and enjoy the proceedings. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, June is Scleroderma Awareness Month in the province of Saskatchewan. And joining us in the west gallery, we have with us the president of the Scleroderma Association of Saskatchewan, Louise Goulet. As well, joining her, Richard Douglas, who is now becoming an advocate for people all across this province who, like he, face every day of their life with scleroderma.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with them earlier today and I've had actually an opportunity to meet with Louise on a couple of occasions. They do a great job of ensuring that there's a network in the province for people all across this province, and they raise awareness of scleroderma and the challenges that people with scleroderma face.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, I do want to offer my congratulations to the association as yesterday was Walk, Run or Ride for Scleroderma, which held an event here in Regina. There was, I believe, over a hundred people that took part. But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly than that there was a network of people stretching all across Western Canada associated with people that took part in the walk here in Regina, as far away as the west coast of British Columbia. And so I want to welcome these guests and ask members to join with me in welcoming these two guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to join with the Minister of Health in welcoming Louise and Richard here today. I had an opportunity a few months ago to sit down with Richard and hear some of the challenges that citizens of Saskatchewan who have scleroderma face. I appreciate their advocacy, their willingness to share information to help us better understand this illness, Mr. Speaker, and what needs to be done to better support individuals living with this condition. So thank you and welcome to your legislature here today. And I look forward down the road to hearing how the minister's going

to address some of their concerns. So with that I ask all members to join with me as well in welcoming these guests to their legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition to improve PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, the petitions continue to mount. I have more than 500 signatures here today. I'll only table a few. I'd like to keep this on the government's radar every day, reminding them of the importance of improving coverage for those with PTSD.

The petitioners point out that although PTSD is covered under workers' compensation, making it a presumptive illness would mean that workers would not have to jump through the many, many hoops involved. If you're exposed to a traumatic event on the job and you later have a diagnosis of PTSD, Mr. Speaker, they ask that this be covered. And that makes perfect sense.

I would like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that 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 today is signed by citizens of Moose Jaw, Dalmeny, Vanscoy, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of some citizens regarding surface rights laws here in Saskatchewan. These individuals 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. So I'd like to read this 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 valued as industrial rather than agricultural when oil and gas development takes place, removing pipelines and flow lines from the surface rights Act, and establish a new maximum in compensation to be paid for damages.

And, Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed from individuals who live in the great city of Saskatoon. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Relay for Life Held in Prince Albert

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Each year the Relay for Life is held at Harry Jerome track in Prince Albert to raise money to continue to fight against cancer. I was pleased to attend the opening ceremonies last Friday and watch the very emotional cancer survivors' lap around the track. Mr. Speaker, each team walks, jogs, or runs for 12 hours from evening until morning. This year 35 teams participated, which included 367 participants and 215 survivors. This year's Relay for Life raised more than \$130,000 for cancer research and awareness.

We have all been touched by cancer in some way, and almost every family has lost a member to this disease. The Relay for Life is an opportunity for survivors and families of those who lost their battle to come together to heal and to raise money. This event is always an emotional time for those who have battled cancer and those who remember their lost loved ones. The most poignant tradition is the lighting of the luminaries at dusk in memory of those who are gone and in celebration of those who have survived. The flickering candles are beautiful in the dark and represent the hope that someday a cure will be found.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the organizers of the Prince Albert Relay for Life, acknowledging the survivors who walked the opening lap and to the many participants who gave up their night for this cause.

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

D-Day Veteran Recognized

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in this Assembly today to acknowledge a milestone in our nation's history. It was 72 years ago today that the Allied invasion of Normandy took place. The invasion known as D-Day, code-named Operation Overlord, where some 156,000 Canadian, British, and American forces landed on the beaches of Normandy to begin the liberation of France — at the front of this assault was a group of young men from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is a tremendous honour to have one of those men who was part of D-Day with us here today. I would like to join the member from Arm River and the Premier in welcoming a former corporal of "B" Company of the Royal Regina Rifles regiment — and his fellow veteran, Tom Anderson — Ken Duffield, who is 96 this year but was 24 when he led his men forward in 1944 to take out German positions. Mr. Duffield is committed to sharing his experience to young Canadians in order to ensure that the memories of war are never forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly to

join with me in welcoming Ken Duffield and to thank Ken and all the men and women, past and present, who don our uniforms, our nation's uniform, to protect our freedoms and rights. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

YWCA Regina Women of Distinction Awards Gala

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 28th I had the pleasure to attend the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] of Regina's 2016 Women of Distinction gala. The gala is an annual event hosted by the YWCA to recognize women whose outstanding achievements contribute to the health and future of our province. Many nominees were recognized in their respective fields for making an inspiring contribution, and the award recipients were all truly incredible women.

One award winner and resident of Regina Douglas Park, Dr. Tanya Dahms, won the category of science, technology, and environment. She has been an advocate of the environment through her work in the department of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of Regina. She was also the co-founder of the Saskatchewan Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

She is also a new mom to baby Ayden who was born on March 28th. It was her first night away from her new baby boy and she tugged a lot of heartstrings when she spoke about her new son at the gala.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing all of the YWCA award recipients and in thanking them for everything they do to make Regina and Saskatchewan a better place for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Holy Month of Ramadan Begins

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand in this Assembly today to acknowledge an important time of the year for all Muslims. With the new moon yesterday it marks the start of the holy month of Ramadan. Over the next month Muslims from around the world practise fasting from dawn to the sunset for their spiritual gain. Understanding and experiencing hunger, even though they have enough to eat — it gives you an idea as to how it will feel for you and for your family in the poverty when you do not have anything to eat.

Mr. Speaker, the key teachings during the month are to sacrifice selflessly, donate generously, and pray at midnight. Mr. Speaker, my family, myself, and my faith community have joined more than one and a half billion Muslims that have begun Ramadan and are looking forward to the time spending with all the communities.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, we also look forward to celebrate Eid al-Fitr for the breaking of Ramadan, which is celebration after collecting

blessings from God.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask that all members of the Assembly join me in acknowledging the beginning of Ramadan. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota.

Dundurn Volunteer Emergency Services Team

Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The volunteer Dundurn emergency response team was refounded in 1974. It's come a long way since the days when its equipment consisted of some hard hats, canvas raincoats, a few pairs of rubber boots, and a used 1947 Chevrolet fire truck.

Today the team provides valuable fire services to the RM [rural municipality] of Dundurn, the town of Dundurn, the resort villages of Thode and Shields, and surrounding communities. Its current membership comprises 24 members including three members from the nearby Hutterite colony, one junior member, and three recent new recruits. And some members are here with us today. The department has a fleet that includes one pumper truck, one rapid-response vehicle with a compressed air foam system, one tanker truck, one medical rescue vehicle, and a command vehicle. The team is dispatched for fire and vehicle incidents by Prince Albert 911 provincial dispatch, and for medical emergencies by MD dispatch of Saskatoon.

The fire service also provides medical and safety standbys for community events free of charge, and is proud to have an active fire prevention program. Each member of the department is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and their own personal phones are used for notification.

Due to the expansion of population within the Dundurn service area, the volume of calls for the department has increased dramatically in the past few years. Last year the team received a total of 89 service calls. It is not to be overstated, Mr. Speaker, how laudable it is that these members give of their own time, voluntarily, to serve their community.

I ask all members in joining me to thank the Dundurn Emergency Services Team and the many other volunteer teams across our province for helping to keep Saskatchewan communities safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Saskatchewan Rush Win Champion's Cup

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, it was an epic battle on Saskatchewan turf. The good guys wore green; the bad guys wore orange. You might think that I've been talking about the last election, but no, I'm talking about the Saskatchewan Rush winning the National Lacrosse League championships.

The professional lacrosse team moved from Edmonton to Saskatoon in the 2016 season. Since the announcement of the move, sports fans in Saskatoon and across the province have rallied around the team, selling out SaskTel Centre with 15,182

fans in attendance. Mr. Speaker, the Edmonton Rush won the Champion's Cup in 2015 and the Saskatchewan Rush set out to defend the championship again this year.

Before Saturday's game the Rush travelled to Buffalo to play the Bandits in the first game of the best-of-three series. The Rush won that game 11-9, giving them a chance to win the cup at home on Saturday. The game and the Rush's storybook first season in Saskatoon ended with an exciting game-winning goal scored by Jeff Cornwall with just 12 seconds left in regulation time, giving the Rush an 11 to 10 victory.

Congratulations to owner Bruce Urban, governor Al Ryz, and president Lee Genier, and all the players and staff. I ask all members to join me in welcoming the Rush to Saskatchewan and congratulating them on winning the 2016 championship cup.

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

Completion of Swift Current Health Care Facility

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday we celebrated the completion of The Meadows, a new long-term regional health care facility in Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, this new facility replaces three aging facilities in the area, features 210 long-term care beds, an increase over the previous facility of 198, and provides an additional 15 beds of respite and palliative care.

The Meadows was designed based on input from residents, families, and staff, creating home-like accommodations with a community feel. This innovative new facility will better meet the needs of the residents and their families. Mr. Speaker, we are also proud to say that the completion of this facility makes the first completion of the provincial's first P3 [public-private partnership] project. The P3 model not only cut costs but was essential to ensure the project completed on time and on budget. This project's also created an estimated 500 jobs and 32 Saskatchewan businesses were involved, making 72 per cent of all business involved.

Mr. Speaker, our government is proud to support worthy projects like this. Since 2007 our government has invested 1.2 billion in health infrastructure in our province. We are delivering on our promise to put patients first and remain committed to improving health infrastructure in the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Regina Bypass Project and Funding for Urban Parks

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's been nearly a decade since the members opposite were elected, when they formed government. I say this because it's past time that they start taking responsibility for their mismanagement, their waste, and their scandals — a decade, Mr. Speaker, where oil prices were high and, for the members opposite, living was easy. Money flowed to mismanaged project after mismanaged project.

But they aren't cutting back now as times are tighter on their own mismanagement. In fact they're adding \$500 million more to their \$2 billion so-called bypass and its \$1 billion overrun. Important bypass? Well of course, Mr. Speaker. Has the Sask Party mismanaged it every step of the way though? Absolutely.

There's no silver lining in this failure, Mr. Speaker. As you know, instead of supporting Saskatchewan businesses, the Sask Party handed the massive contract to a company from France. Will the Premier now admit it was a mistake to bypass local companies and to hand this massive contract to a company from France?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, there is just so much wrong and inaccurate about what my hon. friend just said in this House, Mr. Speaker, including his depiction of the last . . . well it's actually been about eight years, but they like to use the term 10 years. Maybe it seems like 10 years for them. I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. But the truth of the last eight years, the truth of the last eight years is there has been a \$2.7 billion reduction in the operating debt. There's been \$6 billion in tax relief for Saskatchewan families, businesses and farmers, and \$8 billion more in infrastructure spent in the province of Saskatchewan.

And with respect to the bypass, Mr. Speaker, the number the NDP [New Democratic Party] always like to use in terms of alleging some sort of increase in cost is when the project itself was much, much smaller in scale, when engineers and the city of Regina and stakeholders said you have to . . . for it to be a bypass, you need to broaden its scope. And so therefore the price went up.

Their other narrative they've been trying — well they've been trying desperately, the Deputy Premier is right — for a long time, even before and during the election campaign, is this nature of who's making up the work force, the people that are providing resources, employees, to the bypass. Broda Construction, a family-owned company from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, along with a number of Saskatchewan companies, are involved.

And, Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member likes, we can take him for a drive and introduce him to all the Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan companies working on that project, Mr. Speaker. It is part of our infrastructure build-out — up \$8 billion from when they were in office, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, here we go again — the Premier not letting the facts stand in the way. Some sort of claim about debt, meanwhile his own budget books shows that it's increased \$6.5 billion since 2011. Claims about all these Saskatchewan companies who are getting pieces of a contract from the bloated contract that's going to the big company from France, Mr. Speaker. His story just doesn't add up.

So I guess the reality is, if you're a conglomerate from France, if you're an American consultant, if you're a consultant from BC [British Columbia] or a company from the UK [United Kingdom], you know, this Premier's been pretty good to you.

But meanwhile Saskatchewan families, job creators, have been left behind.

And, Mr. Speaker, even though their so-called bypass is well over \$1 billion over budget, he's writing another cheque, Mr. Speaker, out of this budget, this year, of \$500 million. You know, that's, actually let's put this in context, that's 1,000 times more than the Sask Party is getting back by eliminating the funding to parks — parks in Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Prince Albert, the Battlefords, and Weyburn. These parks are the heart of communities. They matter to quality of life. They're economic drivers. Tourists flock to them. They bring dollars to these communities, small and large businesses, and create jobs. So my question, Mr. Speaker, is why is the Sask Party cutting our parks instead of his mismanagement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the NDP actually put out one of their reality checks — because they're always a little short on reality, we found, and frankly the voters found that as well — accusing Broda of really not being a Saskatchewan company. This Prince Albert-based company apparently had Alberta investors, and so they didn't count.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the businesses involved in that project, how about PSI Technologies, Mr. Speaker, of Esterhazy and Saskatoon? Do they count to the NDP? What about Dart Services in Estevan? Do they count to the NDP? They're working on the project as well. How about Inland Concrete Moose Jaw and Regina? They're working on the bypass. Do they count to the NDP, those families and those employers? How about A&B Rail out of Regina, Access out of Regina, Acuren out of Regina, Armada Homes out of Regina, Alliance Energy out of Regina? Knight group of companies sold the vehicles that are providing transportation for those working on it. How about Clifton Associates out of Regina? Mr. Speaker, the list is, well the list is long. We'll share it with the hon. member.

The bottom line is we need that project for the province of Saskatchewan. The city of Regina needs that project. It will, as the P3 project in Swift Current came in, it'll be on time and on budget. It will put Saskatchewan people to work and it will be a benefit to Saskatchewan businesses small, medium, and large, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, chat with Saskatchewan companies, chat with the companies across this province who could be doing this work.

The fact is this Premier has mismanaged this from \$400 million to over \$2 billion. He's sending the big cheque and the profits to France. Meanwhile, some of that work is being subbed back to Saskatchewan companies. Companies deserve better, Mr. Speaker. So much money is being left in France, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the question was putting in context the cut to parks. So \$500 million again for this bypass and the \$1 billion overrun. But a cut to parks, Mr. Speaker, all across the province — at the same time as we have over 9,000 fewer jobs this year,

as average wages are down, as bankruptcies are on the rise — You know, a responsible government would be doing all it can to support communities. Cutting parks is the opposite.

And the Minister of Finance is heckling that he should cut the bypass. We're saying cut your waste, manage your project . . . [inaudible] . . . From the government that hid a budget.

You know, I know the Premier might think that folks in Swift Current . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the Premier might think that folks in Swift Current want this cut. I don't think that they do. But I can assure him that these parks are incredibly important to the people of communities all across our province. They host cultural events and festivities and they are a big attraction. They attract tourists, tourists who stay in hotels, who frequent restaurants and local shops.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't complicated. So what about the importance of these parks does this Premier not understand? Why is he eliminating funding while continuing to spend wildly on his mismanaged projects?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I remember sitting on that side of the House when the government of the day said no to the cities of this province every single year when all they were asking for was meaningful revenue sharing. The cities of this province had borne a lot, a lot of the deficit fighting of the previous government. And when that was handled, then they said, all right, we now want to share in the growth and revenue. And the NDP said no. They didn't just say no to an urban park funding; they said no to revenue sharing.

Mr. Speaker, when this party on this side of the House took office, one of the first things we did is we sat down and began negotiating earnestly with municipalities. And we delivered on revenue sharing, historic revenue sharing now up over 120 per cent province-wide, hundreds of millions of dollars including for those cities that have urban parks.

When it comes down to a choice in a budget, Mr. Speaker, choices between infrastructure, choices between cancer drugs, choices between more surgeries for Saskatchewan people, or funding urban parks when municipalities have received huge increases in the revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, we are going to chose to focus on health care and things that are of clear and obvious obligations of the provincial government. And that's what this budget did.

[14:15]

But the list goes on. On the bypass, you know, he just dismissed the fact that we must have listed off about 30 companies from Saskatchewan that are involved in the bypass. There's many, many more. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition will stand in his place and explain to all of these companies and all of these Saskatchewan workers why they don't count for the NDP?

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

Revenue Sharing and Funding for Urban Parks

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, no real answer there, but I can tell you that many people came up to me this weekend and asked that very question. What does the Sask Party not understand about the importance of our park? Pehonan Park is not only good for community spirit but for local economy. Tourism dollars and the spinoff jobs are very important to smaller cities and communities especially when the government cuts in other ways.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at Prince Albert and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan's third- and fourth-largest cities. Both cities are facing other Sask Party cuts. The funding for Wakamow Valley in Moose Jaw and Pehonan Parkway in Prince Albert is gone. Meanwhile people in Prince Albert are left wondering if we will ever get a second bridge or if Victoria Hospital will ever get the much needed upgrades. Moose Jaw is left with no more support to deal with the crumbling infrastructure. When will this government stop ignoring the needs of Moose Jaw and Prince Albert?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, this was a challenging budget, and we had to make some tough choices. And I think the members opposite understand the choices that we had to make. Maybe they do; maybe they don't. I'm not sure. But we had to make choices. That's what government does, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, urban parks are, they continue to be assets to municipalities. We recognize that, and I understand what the member opposite is saying in terms of their value. Mr. Speaker, this year there will be unprecedented funding that . . . it's going to be going in terms of municipal revenue sharing to all the municipalities, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, municipalities would be in a better position, we think, to absorb funding, given record revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker. And I look forward to the next question, Mr. Speaker, so I can actually itemize exactly what these cities have received in revenue sharing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Closure of Correctional Facility

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, unfortunately after years of speaking out about northern issues, it doesn't surprise me anymore that the members opposite ignore our communities' needs. Most of the time it's like they forget that northern Saskatchewan even exists. But, Mr. Speaker, this year in their budget, they remembered. They remembered where northern Saskatchewan is, just long enough to coldly and callously tell 18 workers that the jobs that they have been committed to for years were no longer needed.

Why the Minister of Finance would single out the closure of the

Buffalo Narrows correctional centre as a corner piece of his finance address defies decency and empathy for these families and workers. And, Mr. Speaker, now even more northern people will be left without a job.

Throughout the years of record revenues, they ignored the North. So how, Mr. Speaker, how, now that revenues are down, can they justify finding the North long enough to make cuts in the region that desperately needs to keep jobs?

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has been voiced by my colleagues, is that these decisions, and this decision that we had to make with respect to Buffalo Narrows facility, was not an easy one. Closing this facility was about how to achieve the best results in service delivery and the most efficient use of our existing correctional facilities, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to say, and I do want to express my thank you to the employees, the 15 employees that worked at Buffalo Narrows facility for their work throughout in very trying circumstances, Mr. Speaker. There were no easy decisions, I'll reiterate again. We had to weigh against the 96-bed correctional facility, mental health facility, the funding for that. We had to weigh up against the Prince Albert Correctional Centre with the opening of a new unit. There were no easy decisions to be made here, Mr. Speaker, but we did have to make a decision. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about 18 families who have had their world shaken. One of the employees told *The StarPhoenix*, and I quote, "I can't sleep. I wake up in the middle of the night and I can't go back to bed because I'm thinking, what am I going to do?" Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a devastating cut to workers who have dedicated years of service to this government as employees of the correctional centre.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is telling the workers they can either lose their jobs or they can leave their home community for work. Mr. Speaker, by saying that, what the Sask Party is saying that they don't care about the importance of this community or community overall. They don't care about the northern economy, and they certainly don't care about the North, period. Will this government recognize that their cut was short sighted and reverse their decision to close the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre?

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to the employees, they do have the provisions of their collective bargaining agreement to work from. Our staff in Buffalo Narrows is working with the employees as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

We have capacity throughout the province to house these currently 18 offenders, Mr. Speaker; unfortunately it's the employees that we feel most bad about, Mr. Speaker. But however, we had to make a tough decision with respect to our

finances up against many other very, very good and valuable programs, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue with our decision, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, this weekend I was speaking with community members in the area. They are understandably worried and they are very upset. The Buffalo Narrows correctional facility is more than just an important employer in the community. It's important to the local economy in many ways as well. Families come to visit inmates to support their rehab, and the absence of the centre and their staff will be deeply felt by community groups and elders who benefit from the work of the inmates.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Buffalo Narrows are upset. They see that the Sask Party is not listening to northern people. The northern people, however, are strong and resilient, but this Sask Party cut runs deep. My colleagues and I will stand with these employees and the community of Buffalo Narrows, especially while they're under attack by this government.

So, Mr. Speaker, if the minister won't answer the question and change her mind, I'm going to ask the Premier. What does the Premier have to say to the people of Buffalo Narrows whose lives are affected by this incredibly short-sighted cut?

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, the decision to close Buffalo Narrows was indeed a difficult one. We weighed them up against many other projects, including the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford 96-bed correctional mental health facility, Mr. Speaker, the continued funding for the Prince Albert Correctional Centre, for the opening of the new unit. We had to weigh against funding for municipal police grants throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a tough decision, Mr. Speaker, but it is one that we are entrusted by the people of Saskatchewan to make. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, there is no question that jobs are too rare in the North, and it is tragic the way the Sask Party's ripping good, family-supporting, mortgage-paying jobs out of this community. But the damage they are causing goes even deeper. Mr. Speaker, the inmates come from the area, and since it is minimum security, they continue to work in the area and in fact serve their community. They are close to their families, to their communities, and to their elders. All of this has been proven to help with reducing recidivism. Mr. Speaker, that means it makes it less likely that they'll reoffend once they're out or, as the minister likes to put it, more likely that they'll become productive taxpayers.

So to the Minister of Corrections: can she explain why they would eliminate a unique facility that is working well and in fact serving a community, only to add to the overcrowding in the facilities further south and make the whole system even less

effective?

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Mr. Speaker, we have opened a facility which is very, very close to . . . reopened a facility called Besnard which is very, very close to Buffalo Narrows, Mr. Speaker. This government has added 380 beds since 2007 to our inmate bed space throughout the province of Saskatchewan. We've invested over \$60 million in our correctional facilities since 2007, Mr. Speaker.

Our staff, the ministry will work with the facility to ensure that the inmates or the offenders are placed as close to their home quarters as possible, Mr. Speaker. There is a strategy. It is not done willy-nilly, Mr. Speaker. There is a plan. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, closing the Buffalo Narrows facility doesn't make a lot of sense when you consider just how full our jails are. We know that in the past several years inmates have been housed in chapels and gymnasiums.

Just last week, however, the Minister of Corrections said, "As of today, there are no offenders in gymnasiums." And that might be true, Mr. Speaker, depending on your definition of gymnasium, because in Regina the ministry took the gym and divided it into sleeping quarters for inmates. Not technically a gymnasium anymore I guess, but, Mr. Speaker, certainly not a place where inmates were ever intended to sleep. And apparently this government doesn't have a problem with that because instead of looking for a solution for overcrowding, they're closing a facility and moving those inmates to other already crowded facilities.

Will the Minister of Corrections and Policing admit that our jails suffer from overcrowding and that inmates are in fact sleeping in places where inmates were never intended to sleep?

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have the space available to house all of our offenders in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This government has added over 380 bed spaces, invested over \$60 million in our correctional facilities.

Now interestingly enough, the NDP did not add a single cell. They denied Saskatoon expansion twice. In 2006-07, they denied 40 cells for the Pine Grove correctional facility, Mr. Speaker. So that's the record of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

This ministry and our government is focusing on demand reduction, if we look at Whitespruce in Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, where we're looking at training our offenders so that they actually can access the jobs that are available to them, Mr. Speaker. We are on a pathway, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that people receive the training that is necessary to access jobs, and

our record speaks for itself.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the budget isn't providing enough money to hire more teachers and educational assistants either, and it won't be enough for additional student supports. Mr. Speaker, the teachers in this province are already under-resourced and they're understaffed, and many teachers pay out of their own pockets for much needed classroom supplies because the money simply isn't there.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Education minister says that it's the teachers who need to start looking for more savings. He said that school divisions should "sit down with a blank piece of paper" and then listed off all of the things that they could do without. The minister asked school divisions to look at making serious cuts to management and to look at pushing more work onto school principals.

Mr. Speaker, it's the Sask Party who's been underfunding schools, but it is our children who will be experiencing the impact of these cuts. When will this government properly invest in our education system?

The Speaker: — The Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in 2007 the education budget in our province was \$944 million. In 2016, \$2.2 billion, an increase of some 133 per cent. Mr. Speaker, we've also invested record capital in our province.

We want to work with all of our stakeholder partners to try and ensure that we maximize the resources, that we maximize the commitment that we make to the students in our province. We want to make sure that we give them every opportunity to perform up to their very maximum potential. Mr. Speaker, this budget includes an increase of 7.8 per cent to \$2.2 billion. School division operating has got an increase of \$16 million. We are now at \$288 million for supports for learning, \$5.4 million additional for Syrian refugees. Mr. Speaker, we're working hard, and we're going to continue to do that.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, once again, I asked a question about the conditions in our classrooms today. Mr. Speaker, since the budget I have spoken with many in the educational sector, and this is what I'm told: this budget will mean increased class sizes and reduced supports in the classroom. And in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the teachers are buying that blank piece of paper that the minister spoke about, as well as the pencils, out of their own pockets already. So how much deeper can they dig? This is a government that enjoyed record revenues for nearly a decade but failed to invest in education. And now that times are tight, they're making cuts. Teachers can't be expected to make cuts when the scissors aren't being supplied.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, providing our children with the highest quality of education is vital to the future of this province. Instead teachers are consistently being asked to do more with less. And it's not just in our elementary and high schools. Universities are also feeling the pinch from this government. The University of Saskatchewan is being asked once again to dig into their reserve funds. That money is supposed to be set aside for the future. Another rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker, being drained by the Sask Party. Mr. Speaker, years of cuts and underfunding have finally caught up with them. Why is the minister refusing to accept responsibility for his government's cuts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we want to remain committed as much as we possibly can to front-line supports for our classrooms. We won't take any lessons from the folks opposite that drove people out of here.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say this. We have, during our time in government, we have increased the number of our teachers by 750 more teachers than there were when we formed government. We've added student support teachers by 164 more, psychologists up 44 per cent, speech language pathologists up 39 per cent, occupational therapists up 64 per cent, social workers up by 6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to support our classrooms. Our students deserve a good education. We're going to see that they get a good education, unlike the members opposite that drove them out of the province, Mr. Speaker. We want our province to have the best students, the best teachers, and we will see to it that that happens.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 21 — *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 21, *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act* 2016 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 21, *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act* 2016 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 22 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 22, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 22, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read the second time? Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 23 — *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act/Loi de modernisation du commerce des boissons alcoolisées*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Liquor and Gaming Authority that Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act* be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 24 — *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 24,

The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority that Bill No. 24, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* 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.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 25 — *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 25, *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 25, *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Before orders of the day, I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to withdraw Bill No. 20, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016* from the order paper.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the minister.

BILL WITHDRAWN

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 15(3) I move to withdraw Bill No. 20, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016* from the order paper.

The Speaker: — Unanimous consent has been granted. The minister may proceed to move his motion.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that, pursuant to rule 15(3), I move to withdraw Bill No. 20, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act* from the order paper.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved to withdraw Bill No. 20, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016* from the order paper. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Pursuant to rule no. 15(3), it is in order that Bill No. 20, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016* is withdrawn from the order paper.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Wood River.

Mr. Marit: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off, Mr. Speaker, by first saying I'm in full support of the budget that was presented by our colleague, the Finance minister, here last week. And before I could, Minister, with your indulgence, I would like to introduce my family who is sitting in the west gallery, and have the opportunity to do that.

First of all our daughter Katelyn is here with her two children, our granddaughter Lily who is four, and our newest addition who is two months old. Katie works here in the city of Regina for Ranch Ehrlo and I just . . . We're very proud of her. She just got accepted for her master's degree at the U of R [University of Regina] for social working, so we're very proud of her. And with her is our son Dr. Jordan Marit from Calgary. He's doing his fourth-year residency at Calgary where he's specializing in internal medicine. So I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank the Finance minister firstly for his hard work in bringing forth a very sound budget that controlled spending and invested in the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I also want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank the minister's entire team and for all their hard work and for what they've done to bring this budget forward, Mr. Speaker. The deputy minister and her team, I just want to say thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to thank our colleagues that sit on treasury board who had to make some very difficult decisions in this budget and have spent many hours preparing this budget for the Minister of Finance to finalize and making sure the priorities of this government were maintained, Mr. Speaker — no new tax increases, control spending, investing in the people of Saskatchewan, and investing in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

I want to start off in talking of something that I, in my previous life, was very involved with, and that of course is the revenue sharing. Approximately 272 million, an increase of 6.4 million, is an increase of 144 million more than . . . 113 per cent since 2007, Mr. Speaker. This sustainable funding helps our municipalities meet the needs of the people living in their communities and shows our government's commitment to provide the equivalent of 1 per cent of the PST [provincial sales tax] to Saskatchewan's municipalities.

And, Mr. Speaker, this money is given unconditionally, and that is very important. We recognize that our municipal leaders know where the money is needed and where they need to put it. And, Mr. Speaker, our municipalities are the envy of municipalities across this country in recognizing the revenue sharing that they receive.

This budget shows our government is strongly committed to continuing the support on the revenue sharing. If I could give some examples, 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 76.7 million, and northern communities, Mr. Speaker, will receive just over \$20 million this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. It is very important to recognize, Mr. Speaker, this is unconditional money. This is money that the municipal leaders can decide where their priorities are and where they need that money to go. That is important.

Saskatoon, the province's largest city, will receive more than \$48.5 million and Regina will receive just under 42.2 million in municipal revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker, unconditional money. The budget also provides 83.8 million in provincial support to municipal infrastructure through various programs, 21.4 million from the Ministry of Government Relations provincial support under the new Building Canada Fund, 23.7 million from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure for rural roads through the municipal road strategy and the urban connector program of 7.7 million.

And I just want to speak a little bit about what we call the municipal roads for the economy program, which is administered through SARM [Saskatchewan Association of

Rural Municipalities] and Ministry of Highways, of 16 million. This money goes for what we call our Clearing the Path corridors, bridge maintenance, road construction. Mr. Speaker, what this does, it takes the pressure off our TMS [thin membrane surface] highways and puts it on the municipal system, and our municipal colleagues are compensated for the work they do. Mr. Speaker, and I have to say that the signs we see along the highway that says Clearing the Path Corridor was actually designed by one of the own staff at SARM, Laurel Feltin, who designed that sign.

And \$10 million for the Ministry of Government Relations for the Saskatoon north commuter bridge; 25 million for the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport for the Regina stadium, Mr. Speaker. The budget also provides 50.8 million in other funding to municipalities, Mr. Speaker, for ministries including grants such as services and facilities as libraries, policing, urban parks, and transit assistance. Mr. Speaker, this is a good budget for municipalities.

I want to talk about something near and dear to me, of course, is agriculture. And, Mr. Speaker, I have to talk about the previous Ag ministers that we . . . Minister Bjonnerud and also Minister Stewart, how they went to all the sectors in the ag industry and asked, Mr. Speaker, what do you need to grow your industry? Researchers asked, we need more money for research. Mr. Speaker, they got more money. Manufacturers wanted global access. These men and women wanted the government to help them. Guess what? The government helped them, Mr. Speaker. Farmers and ranchers asked for better support programs. They got it, increased coverages in all ag programs including crop insurance and AgStability, and long-term programs.

There's another program that's near and dear to my heart, Mr. Speaker, that was designed through the Ministry of Agriculture. It was called the farm and ranch water infrastructure program that really helped farmers and ranchers sustain and get long-term sustainable water for their livestock and farming operations.

And look what the farm machinery manufacturing has done in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have world-class companies with the best technology in the world, Mr. Speaker. There's countries coming here, Mr. Speaker, to Saskatchewan to do business with the likes of Bourgault Industries, Flexi-Coil, Seed Hawk, SeedMaster, Morris Industries, Degelman Industries, Brandt Industries, Harmon Industries, Honey Bee Manufacturing, Mr. Speaker. This is a multi-billion dollar business for the province of Saskatchewan, creating thousands of excellent jobs, Mr. Speaker. The world wants our products and they will all be showcased here in the next week or so with the largest farm machinery show in Canada in the Western Farm Progress Show, Mr. Speaker. And now with the addition of the patent box, Mr. Speaker, that only gives these and other companies or individuals opportunities to develop even better technology right here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, it's those kinds of things that our government is doing to keep Saskatchewan strong. It's that kind of leadership, Mr. Speaker, that gives the Zak family, members in my constituency in my statement last week, the opportunity to

value add their farming operation and have another successful company in this great province — once again, Mr. Speaker, investing in the people.

And if I can, I do want to give some numbers about agriculture and what is done in this province, Mr. Speaker. Record 15.3 billion in ag exports in 2015, fifth consecutive year of record exports, Mr. Speaker. We're leading the nation.

Strong cattle prices. In 2014, livestock farm cash receipts were \$2.7 billion, highest on record, 64 per cent above the five-year average. Growth plan goal was to increase livestock farm receipts over 2 billion. We've hit that mark and passed it, Mr. Speaker.

Crop production in 2015, second largest crop ever at 32 million tonnes, 13 per cent above 10-year average. Growth plan goal of 36.6 million tonnes. Record crop production in 2013 of 38.4 million tonnes, Mr. Speaker.

Realized net farm income 2015 was \$4.2 billion, 75 per cent above the five-year average from 2010 to 2014. Trade agreements that will benefit Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker: Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, comprehensive economic trade agreement, and the Canadian Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, Mr. Speaker.

And western livestock price insurance program, this is important. Sixty-four per cent of producers that produce the calf option through livestock price insurance received a payment in 2015, Mr. Speaker. Total payout was 4.4 million for the cow-calf operation.

And if I can, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about companies that are investing in what's happening in this province. In July of 2015, Limagrains Cereals Research Canada announces a new cereal breeding and development partnership to be located right here in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. In July of 2015, Cargill opens canola oil refinery at Clavet, Saskatchewan.

In July 2015, the federal provincial government announced \$10 million for Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence for Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And in July of 2015, the federal government announced 22 million for International Trade Centre at Evraz Place, which will benefit Agribition and the Farm Progress Show, Mr. Speaker.

And in February 2015, the federal government announced 13 million for a new food centre right here in Saskatoon. That's a joint deal between the feds and the provincial government.

In September 2014, Bayer Crop Science announced they are building a wheat breeding facility near Saskatoon. And in 2014, New-Life Mills, a division of Parrish and Heimbecker, opened a new feed mill to produce feed for chickens, turkey, beef, dairy, lamb, and swine.

And in August 2013, Agricore established a high-speed pulse loading and cleaning facility in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. And in August 2013, CLAAS of America opened its parts and logistics centre in Regina and it will service all of Canada from here, Mr. Speaker. And in May of 2013, DuPont Pioneer opened its Western Canada headquarters in Saskatoon, Mr.

Speaker.

The work that we have done has been amazing in what's going on in agriculture. And if I could, Mr. Speaker, I do want to touch on countries that have been receiving our products and benefiting from the farming community here in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's top five agri-food export markets in 2015: United States, \$4 billion; China, \$2.4 billion; India, \$1.5 billion; Japan, \$882 million; Mexico, \$626 million, Mr. Speaker. And what are the main exports that we are exporting, Mr. Speaker? Canola seed at \$2.6 billion; lentils, Mr. Speaker, \$2.5 billion; non-durum wheat, \$2.4 billion; durum wheat, 1.8 billion; canola oil, 1.4 billion; peas, 1.2 billion — Mr. Speaker, I love saying billion — canola meal, 742 million; and live cattle, \$499 million.

And what were ag food exports worth in the last couple of years? Mr. Speaker, we have just been going up and up. In 2010 it was \$8.3 billion, and in 2015 were \$15.3 billion, Mr. Speaker. We've almost doubled in five years. It's amazing the agricultural products that this province is exporting and what the farming community has adapted to globally.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd be very remiss if I didn't talk about education property tax on farm land, Mr. Speaker, and particularly farm land. When my colleague at the time, the minister . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It was lots. The minister from Rosetown-Elrose was asked by the government of the day to find a solution for education tax on property, Mr. Speaker. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? He did it. And, Mr. Speaker, since this government has introduced the new education tax property model in 2008, Mr. Speaker, no new tax increases for education on all classes of property in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I could, I want to give you just a small example of what that means to the agriculture community in Saskatchewan. On my own farm, Mr. Speaker, I calculated the cost savings since the education property tax formula came into being. And I have saved approximately \$250 per year, per quarter, which is approximately \$2,000 per quarter in my pocket, Mr. Speaker. To that I say thank you to this government and to my colleagues, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. That's where the money went, Mr. Speaker, into the pockets of farmers and ranchers in Saskatchewan. That's where the money went.

If I can now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about infrastructure. Over 3.5 billion in capital investment for '16-17, the largest single-year budget for infrastructure in the province's history, Mr. Speaker, this will create thousands of new jobs for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the Crown corp capital is one I'd like to talk about. SaskPower, 1.1 billion to meet Saskatchewan's growing needs and renewal infrastructure. And, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of private contractors in rural Saskatchewan that will be doing work for SaskPower. I have one that's in our constituency. They employ well over 50 people. They live in the community. All of them live in the community. And the big thing, Mr. Speaker, is that company supports minor sports and minor recreation in the community, and they are stellar businesses in communities, Mr. Speaker, and that has to be recognized.

SaskTel, 331 million to increase and upgrade its wireless and

wireline systems, Mr. Speaker. And SaskEnergy, 292 million to renew and expand its natural gas system to meet the growing needs of customer base. Mr. Speaker, all this says one thing: that this province is growing and the economy is growing and we've got to meet the needs.

Mr. Speaker, over four years Saskatchewan Builds's capital plan establishes a commitment of over 5.5 billion in executive government capital. We are committed to keeping our economy moving and our province strong, Mr. Speaker.

On highways and infrastructure, for the first time in Saskatchewan's history the Highways and Infrastructure budget tops \$1 billion. This marks another record investment in provincial roads and infrastructure. The 1.15 billion 2016-17 Highways and Infrastructure budget includes 355 million for capital construction, 30 million new funding for the first year of the highways 2020 plan, a three-year \$70 million surge in highway repair and maintenance, and 500 million for the Regina bypass.

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

As part of the highways 2020 plan, 20 million will be invested in repairs to many highways throughout the province including Highways 220 and 322 in the Silton-Strasbourg area, Highway 924 at Dore Lake, Highway 340 near Radisson, Highway 376 near Maymont and Asquith, and Highway 45 south of Outlook, and Highway 58 between Chaplin and Shamrock in my constituency. And, Mr. Speaker, I've been informed there will be tenders going out this week on No. 36 Highway from Highway 13 south towards the town of Willow Bunch, 15 kilometres, a stretch of highway that is very important to the southeast part of my constituency, Mr. Speaker. And to the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, those communities say thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I'd like to quote something that I . . . when the budget came out, if I can, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to quote President Orb of SARM, Mr. Speaker: "The funding commitments made to highways and infrastructure and the agriculture sector demonstrates that the Government of Saskatchewan understands the importance that highways and agriculture play in supporting the province's economy," Mr. Speaker. And so right he is.

If I can, Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk . . . give some issues on education now. The Government of Saskatchewan has put student success and safety at the top of its priority list by increasing its overall investment in education by 7.8 per cent to a total of \$2.2 billion. This includes 391.4 million for capital investment, Mr. Speaker. The government's investment in infrastructure includes 310 million, an increase of 153.1 million for the 18 joint-use schools being built on nine sites; 33.4 million, an increase of 6.4 million or 24 per cent for preventive

maintenance and renewal; 4.6 million for emergency building repairs; 41.9 million for ongoing capital projects including schools at St. Brieux, Langenburg, Gravelbourg, and Martensville, as well as École Connaught, Sacred Heart, and the new centre replacing Scott Collegiate in Regina; and 1 million for school facility assessments.

The government remains committed to supporting early education and child care across the province, including the creation of 810 new child care spaces that are being developed as part of the 18 new elementary schools currently under construction on nine joint-use sites in Saskatoon, Regina, Warman, and Martensville. In order to meet the needs of a growing and diverse province, the ministry's 2016-17 budget increases funding for classroom supports by 4 million.

The government is providing 288 million to school divisions for supports for learning funding in the 2016-17 school year. This funding includes supports for students with intensive needs, students in vulnerable circumstances, and students who require English as an additional language support. In addition, 5.4 million, Mr. Speaker, of school operating funding is being targeted to support Syrian refugee students. Funding for youth at high-risk facilities is also increasing by \$600,000 over last year to help address salary and enrolment pressures, for a total investment of \$5.8 million, Mr. Speaker.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, I do also want to talk a little bit about no tax increases, Mr. Speaker, no new tax increases in this budget for the people of Saskatchewan. Since 2007, Mr. Speaker, \$6 billion in tax reductions to Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. That's 6 billion with a "b", Mr. Speaker, for families, individuals, homeowners, business, and farms, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we in government are going to look at all aspects of our spending by looking at ways we can do things better and deliver services to the people of this province in a more efficient manner, we will look at transformational change in all aspects of the services we provide, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I look forward to this process.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, I do want to touch a little bit about the past history of the previous government, if I could. And I just want to share this with my colleague from Lumsden-Morse who made reference to these failures in his response to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — And a great speech it was too.

[15:00]

Mr. Marit: — It was. Twenty-six million lost in Big Sky Farms, Mr. Speaker; 90.8 lost in Navigata Communications; 35 million lost in SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]; 15 million lost in Channel Lake; 2 million lost in Guyana; 16 million lost in NST Chicago; 9.4 million lost in Persona Inc.; 24.7 million lost in Retx.com; 6.7 million lost in tappedinto.com; 3 million lost in Clickabid.com; 5.6 million lost in Soft Tracks Enterprises; and it goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how my colleague got through that list. But it adds up to about \$330 million, Mr. Speaker.

And if you look at their budgets, their budget in 2005-2006 for highways, Mr. Speaker, was 308 million. They could have doubled their budget and had a return on investment to the people of this province. They chose not to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand here and say that we also have a plan to return to balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker, unlike many other provinces in this country that have no plan to return to a balanced budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And just before I close, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm sure you can tell that agriculture and the importance of it to the economy of this great province is very important to me and my family, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've been a farmer all my life, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In fact I wasn't even old enough to legally sign the contract when I bought my farm, Mr. Speaker. We had to wait six months until I turned 18 years old to legally sign the contract, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And if I could, I found this poem that I thought I would like to read before closing and I think it really describes a farmer, Mr. Speaker. And it's called "Just a Farmer":

"Just a farmer," you said,

And I laughed 'cause I knew
All the things that farmers
Must be able to do.

They must study the land,
Then watch the sky
And figure just when
Is the right time and why-

To sow and to plant
To buy and to sell
To go to the market
With cattle and well -

You know the books
That farmers must keep
To pay all those taxes
And be able to sleep.

And you know the fixin'
That farmers must do
When machines like mad monsters
Blow a gasket or two

I guess when God needed
Folks to care for His earth
He chose "just farmers"
'Cause he knew their true worth

Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is dedicated to the continued investment of people of this great province, Mr. Speaker, so that they have quality of life, quality health, and quality education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government is doing all it can to make Saskatchewan the best place to live, to work, and to raise a family, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very proud to be part of this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a government dedicated to

keeping Saskatchewan strong, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the motion put forward by the hon. member for Regina Northeast, seconded by my colleague, the member from Regina University, and I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — Members, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce someone who has joined us and is seated in the seats at the back of the Assembly: former Deputy Speaker, Mr. Graham Addley from Saskatoon.

Graham was the Deputy Speaker back in the first term or two when I was first a member of this House, and he is here today as part of the team interviewing young people, prospective candidates for the Legislative Intern Program.

So I'd ask all members to welcome Mr. Addley to his Assembly.

I recognize the Minister of Highways.

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.]

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my first opportunity to rise in this House since the election, so I'd like to take the opportunity to thank folks as we all do when we have a chance to stand on our feet.

As most of you in the House know, my mom moved to BC two years ago. And although she's not here physically with me and the kids, she certainly is here in spirit and I know that she continues to cheer me on from the many miles away that she is. And I certainly want to thank her for all she did to enable me to be here standing in this place.

I want to once again recognize my girls. Sharmaine is currently away on a medical missions trip. She's been gone since January. She gets back next Sunday, so she's been gone for just over five months and we miss her terribly. Although my house is very quiet and very clean, I would much rather have it loud and dirty and have my girl home. She's been doing front-line medical care on the islands of Vanuatu and I couldn't be more proud of her.

She wants to get into nursing. She's currently on a waiting list to get into Sask Poly in Saskatoon for nursing for the fall, so I'm certainly hoping that she has the opportunity to go this fall. She'll be an awesome nurse. She's got a great personality and loves people and people love her. They're just drawn to her.

She's a really neat kid.

And to Jasmine, who because her sister and I are both away from home, she's at home looking after things all by herself, so I want to thank her. She's a talented and creative girl and so she uses a different part of her brain than I do, and I don't always understand where she's coming from, because I am not necessarily creative and talented but slightly more analytical than she is. But she's just . . . she's turning into such a neat young woman and I just want to congratulate her in all that she does. She's turned her basement suite into a workshop. She sews and designs and draws and paints and creates, and I'm so very proud of her.

And I do want to thank John for his love and support and most importantly for his understanding with me being gone so much. It's a lot for our family and friends and loved ones to be gone away from home, and it takes a village to allow us to be here, people looking after things at home for us.

And as always to Whitney Friesen. He has fought eight different campaigns in his 22 years as a constituency assistant. He had three general elections for my dad, a contested nomination for me, and four elections for me. He's very good at what he does. But more than that, he loves what he does. And that makes such a huge difference when you've had a job for as long as he has, that he still enjoys it. And I want to thank him for everything that he's done for me and for my dad before me.

And I want to congratulate all the new MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] on both sides of the House. I was new about nine years ago, so not quite so shiny and new anymore, and I know that so many of my colleagues were so welcoming and helpful when I was first elected, and made sure that we figured out where things were and how things operate. And I hope that the new MLAs are experiencing that from those of us who have been here for a while as well. So congratulations to them and I hope that they feel welcome.

This last election saw a change in boundaries for my constituency. I used to represent seven communities. I lost four of those. They have a very capable MLA in the member for Biggar, so they're in good hands. But to the communities and mayors and leadership of Hepburn and Hague and Dalmeny and Waldheim, I want to say thank you. It's been such an absolute joy to work with them over the last nine years and the regional approach that they take in getting along with their neighbours. I have Warman, Martensville, and Osler, which I'm quite proud to represent. Warman and Martensville are amongst the fastest-growing cities in all of Saskatchewan.

And I want to thank my government and my colleagues for recognizing that growth. We've seen the investment in communities that I represent, whether it's additions to schools or portables onto schools or the joint-use schools that we see in Warman and Martensville. I drive past them every weekend when I go home and just watch the construction going on, and it's going to be so exciting to be there for the ribbon cutting in a year, as those schools will be open for the fall of 2017. And in this budget, Mr. Speaker, as you know, we also have continued money for the interchanges at Warman and Martensville. I have vehicle counts — about 18,000 vehicles a day — and it's going to be great to have those interchanges up.

I've been on treasury board for seven years. It's like "Hotel California" — you get on but you can't ever get out. And so I can assure the members opposite that the budget was not done before the election. We put in a lot of hours after the election to fine-tune things and make sure our election promises were accounted for and to make those very difficult decisions. Mr. Speaker, every budget year is a difficult year. Regardless of revenues, there's still decisions to make, allocations to make. But this year was different. It was quite trying with almost \$1 billion lost in resource revenue. Obviously there were some very difficult decisions to make.

But the one thing that I'm very proud of, Mr. Speaker, is that we have committed to continuing to build our province, literally build our province. Whether it comes to schools or hospitals or highways, we're not shortchanging those projects, Mr. Speaker, and making sure that we've got the things that we need in place as our province continues to grow. And, Mr. Speaker, as I am the Minister of Highways, I know a lot of my colleagues will highlight the things that we put out in the budget.

I want to take this opportunity to correct the record on a few things. We know, Mr. Speaker, time and time and time again, that we have to do our own reality checks from what the NDP have brought into this House to make sure that the people of this province have the correct information, and have to do some of that work on Highways as well.

Mr. Speaker, in this budget we allocated \$1.15 billion for transportation infrastructure, and included in that was the first year of our \$70 million surge to make sure that we can fix even more roads. There's \$30 million in this budget, and I . . . It was the beginning of May and the NDP put out a reality check. And, Mr. Speaker, I use the word reality when it comes to their reality checks pretty loosely because there's not a lot of reality in them. And they said, Mr. Speaker, that the \$70 million campaign promise for Highways, the additional \$70 million wouldn't result in even a hundred kilometres of roads being fixed. Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca stood here — I think it was during his budget speech — and said that the \$30 million in this year's budget wouldn't pave 25 kilometres of highway.

Well, Mr. Speaker, they couldn't be more wrong. The \$30 million in this budget alone will address 460 kilometres of highways and roads across this province, Mr. Speaker, which is a far cry from the 25 kilometres that they say is included in this budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, we know that a few years ago the member for Rosemont, the now interim Leader of the Opposition, completely threw the member from Athabasca under the bus, saying that he failed high school accounting. He said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "he has many strengths, but that aspect isn't the one [that] we rely on." And, Mr. Speaker, I have to agree with the Leader of the Opposition, although they seem to be taking the member from Athabasca's advice when it comes to math and accounting because they're all using the wrong numbers.

Mr. Speaker, and this from a party who ran in the last election wanting to form government again, and they actually ran on a platform of reducing highway spending, both on the capital side

and on the expenses side, Mr. Speaker. And somehow they decided that they could pave way more with less money. And I'm not quite sure how you account for that when we have a tendering process that is an open, fair, and transparent process. We don't dictate to contractors what they're going to come in as a tender. There's inflation; there's labour costs. Mr. Speaker, I don't know how the NDP would propose to control all of that unless they somehow think that you're going to bring it all back into government and put all of our contractors out of work. I'm not quite sure how they're going to be spending less money and somehow be paving more roads, Mr. Speaker.

It's right in their costing of their platform. They were going to reduce . . . Currently we, out of our total infrastructure spend across government, Highways accounts for about 50 per cent of that spend which we need. We've all driven on our highways. We know that that money is necessary. They were going to reduce that to 35 per cent of total government spend, which is a pretty big reduction. I think I did the math on their numbers. It's about \$2.1 billion over the next four years, Mr. Speaker. In this budget alone we have \$855 million in capital spend in Highways, which is almost half of what their total four-year projection is. So again, I'm not quite sure how they propose to be paving more.

Mr. Speaker, there's a few things I'd like to point out. I listened very intently to the Leader of the Opposition's speech when he was responding to the Throne Speech, and there is again, Mr. Speaker, just some things that we absolutely need to correct the record on.

And one of them is . . . The Premier alluded to this in his answers in question period today. The interim Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote, when it comes to the bypass, and I quote, "ballooned from the originally estimated cost of \$400 million to an outrageous \$2 billion." Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that that is absolutely factually incorrect. And the member opposite knows that because I've told him that. We were at a highways debate during the last campaign and he used the same line there, and I told him very directly that those were two completely different projects. He knows that. And even knowing all of that correct information, Mr. Speaker, he still comes here, stands, gets to his feet, and still comes in here with information that is not correct. And he knows it's not correct.

And that is, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to have a debate about the bypass. I'm happy to have a debate about our government's transportation infrastructure plans but, Mr. Speaker, I think that we all need to be bringing the right information to the table in order to have that debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would expect more from the interim Leader of the Opposition. He's the leader. He's supposed to be leading by example. But, Mr. Speaker, as we have seen from other members of his caucus who've come into this House with not always accurate information, apparently his leading, and that's the kind of approach that he wants his members to take which, Mr. Speaker, isn't helpful to the debate in this House at all.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well the member from Athabasca says I should stop whining. He stood in the

House today and he said that we have forgotten the North, that we have purposefully walked away from the North. Well, Mr. Speaker, for the edification of the member from Athabasca who thinks that me wanting to have a factual debate is whining, that's pretty shameful behaviour from him, Mr. Speaker. But when it comes to the North, I'm happy to tell the member from Athabasca that in this budget the capital allocation for northern roads — not airports — for northern roads is 100 per cent increase over our record budget from last year. And I'm sure he'll show up at budget estimates and we can have that discussion, Mr. Speaker, but wanting a factual debate is not whining. Shameful behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to point out in the interim leader's speech to the Throne Speech, and it comes up in their questions in question period as well, they keep talking about mortgage-paying jobs of Saskatchewan workers. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to take the opportunity to talk about mortgage-paying jobs for the people of our province. Because, Mr. Speaker, in their platform, in black and white it says that they want to cut back on the use of expensive external contractors. And then it goes on to say, Saskatchewan Party's increased spending on external contractors by 82 per cent. Not consultants; that's a different category. Contractors.

Well, Mr. Speaker, in the Ministry of Highways, guess who those contractors are? They are Saskatchewan-based, family-run road builders and they want to take their jobs away, Mr. Speaker, mortgage-paying jobs for the people of this province. They want to take away road builders' jobs.

And, Mr. Speaker, perhaps they would understand the industry better if they actually met with the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association. They've been in opposition for over eight years. Let's round it up to a decade because they like using that number. They've been in opposition for almost 10 years. They have yet to meet with the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association. They have no idea how this industry even works, Mr. Speaker. They haven't met these people. They have no idea of the family connections. There are third-generation companies in this province, Mr. Speaker. I've mentioned one in the House before. George Wilson started his business 60-some years ago. He's 92 years old and he still goes to work every day. These are the people whose jobs the NDP want to take away, Mr. Speaker, and again that is absolutely shameful.

And, Mr. Speaker, the new NDP member from Prince Albert likes to tell us, well I'm here. There's representation now. I'm going to defend Prince Albert. Well good for you. Where's the defence of Broda? Mr. Speaker, we did an event before the election at Broda's headquarters because they're moving dirt for the bypass — and are they moving dirt. It is amazing the work that they've done. Broda was established in Prince Albert in 1957. If there's a Saskatchewan company, that's them. It's Broda.

And what was the NDP's response to that, Mr. Speaker? To send out another reality check — again loose on the reality — saying well they don't count because they're not really Saskatchewan enough because they might have some investment money coming in from Alberta. Mr. Speaker, completely denigrating. But they didn't actually say Broda's

name in the press release because they didn't think they wanted to go that far. But that was exactly what their intent was, Mr. Speaker, was to throw Broda under the bus, saying somehow they weren't Saskatchewan enough. Well I would challenge the new NDP member from Prince Albert to stand up for Prince Albert and take her leader to task for his comments in that reality check, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, this budget was challenging. There were some very difficult decisions to be made. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP know the financial reality of this government. We don't really have a spending problem. We have worked really hard . . . again, been on treasury board for seven years. We've worked really hard on controlling the spending that we have oversight on, Mr. Speaker.

We have about a billion-dollar hole in resource revenue in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and knowing that, knowing the numbers, seeing the numbers, the day after the budget was announced in this House by our Finance minister, I went back over question period. Every single member from the NDP stood up and asked for more, more, more for Health, more for Education.

Granted, Mr. Speaker, in our present financial reality, obviously we did the best that we could. But, Mr. Speaker, every single one of them stood up and asked for more. And even today they're asking for more. But not once did they put a dollar figure on that, Mr. Speaker. The member from Riversdale, the critic for Health, she wants more. How much? How much more money? What's the dollar? The Education critic keeps asking for more. Well how much is that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, time and again they come into this House and say that yes, they're the opposition and their job is to oppose. But their job is also to propose. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would challenge them to do exactly that. Propose something. How much more money do you want? The member from Nutana, to her credit — although I don't know why she's the Finance critic, but that aside — Mr. Speaker, to her credit she actually put a number on it: a 6 per cent increase each and every year for health and education. That's hundreds of millions of dollars. How do they propose to pay for that, Mr. Speaker? They haven't said.

They're not proposing anything. They just sit there and oppose everything that we do. I would love to see a proposal on education funding and on health funding from the critics opposite, Mr. Speaker. I think that would be refreshing because, Mr. Speaker, if they are actually requesting hundreds of millions of dollars more every year, there are only three ways in our present situation to pay for that: you go into deficit; you cut a whole bunch of other programming, and they're going to have to tell us what they're going to cut; or you raise taxes. And, Mr. Speaker, knowing the NDP's history — they raised taxes 21 times in 16 years — I think we know exactly where they would go. They would pay for it on the backs of the hard-working men and women of this province, Mr. Speaker, and that is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I just want to say thank you to the Premier for being a great defender and promoter of our province. We have seen investment from outside of our province like never before, and I have to attribute that to his

leadership. And I do want to thank my colleagues and the Minister of Finance, all the hard work that went into this budget, Mr. Speaker, in a very difficult year. I think that we've made some very wise decisions that's going to keep our province strong going forward.

We know this is temporary, Mr. Speaker. We will come back from this, and we do have a plan to get us back to balance. And I'm very proud that we are about the only province in the entire Dominion of Canada that actually has a plan to do just that. And I think that the people of this province understand that.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to be supporting the budget of our government, and I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my privilege to rise in the House today to speak of my full support for the budget put forth by the Minister of Finance on June 1st.

Mr. Speaker, firstly I want to thank the Minister of Finance and his entire team for their hard work in bringing this budget together. Mr. Speaker, given the fact that they had to deal with a \$1 billion shortfall in resource revenue, I'm sure it was a very challenging task. Everything, Mr. Speaker, must have been on the table and to be reviewed. Mr. Speaker, it is a testament to the hard work and dedication to the people of Saskatchewan that the minister and his team managed to bring in this budget, Mr. Speaker, with no tax increases and no new taxes.

Mr. Speaker, this budget has a very good balance, with controlled spending of only a 2 per cent increase in expenses and yet it continues to invest in the people of Saskatchewan with strong social programs and strong investment in infrastructure to maintain the economic momentum and provide jobs and services for the people of Saskatchewan. During the recent election campaign, Mr. Speaker, this government's commitment was to keep Saskatchewan strong, and this budget, Mr. Speaker, and the plan put forward by the Minister of Finance, is just that.

Mr. Speaker, while I am a new member to this House, I am a long-time businessman in Prince Albert and I can tell you change, transformational change, is something I know very well. Mr. Speaker, in private business, change is the only thing that is constant and if you don't change, you fall behind. You have to continually be changing and improving your processes, Mr. Speaker, to ensure your services are being delivered in the best possible manner, at the most reasonable cost to your customer.

Mr. Speaker, in order to make your processes and service delivery changes successful, you have to involve all your stakeholders. Your managers must be involved. Your staff have to be involved. And your customers and suppliers also have to be involved, Mr. Speaker. As you're going through transformation process, Mr. Speaker, you have to make sure that you're asking the right questions. Is it a service or product we should be selling or doing? Are we duplicating our services? Are we delivering it in the proper manner?

Mr. Speaker, I believe government runs a lot like private business, Mr. Speaker, and there is a need for constant transformational change. Mr. Speaker, as a businessman turned politician, I look forward to being involved as one of those stakeholders in undertaking this transformational change process. Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe it will benefit the people of Saskatchewan by making sure programs and services remain sustainable and at the lowest possible cost to the Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, during the election we campaigned on a promise to keep taxes low for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that's what this budget delivered — no new taxes and no tax increases. We know that higher taxes could hurt a fragile economy. Mr. Speaker, in order to keep Saskatchewan's economy strong and moving forward, even though there was a \$1 billion revenue shortfall, this Finance minister delivered a budget with no new taxes, no tax increases, and he should be commended for that.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008 this government has had tax reductions of \$5.9 billion and yes, because so many members have a problem spelling, that is billion with a "b".

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has amongst the lowest personal business tax burdens in the country. Mr. Speaker, that means a family of four with \$100,000 combined income will see savings of over \$2,500 in provincial tax in 2016 compared to what they paid in 2007 under the NDP government. Mr. Speaker, that's money in their pockets. To be able to offer that to a family nine years later is proof of this government's successful planning. That money, that savings in taxes, Mr. Speaker, will help pay the bills for kids, pay for kids' sports, maybe enjoy some leisure time with their families at one of our incredible parks, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, under this government, families in this province have consistently paid the second lowest taxes and utilities in the country. That's a far cry from the taxes that had to be paid under the previous NDP government. Mr. Speaker, easy way to raise revenue when revenues are down like they are today . . . [inaudible] . . . raise taxes. The NDP would know that very well, Mr. Speaker, because they raised taxes 21 times. That's right, 21 times. But by raising taxes, Mr. Speaker, we would hurt this fragile economy. We would, Mr. Speaker, be taking money out of the pockets of the people we serve, and that's just not right.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I must go back to what it's like in private business when we talk about infrastructure. In business you know how important it is to have a building that's well maintained, safe for all staff, and has good presence. Mr. Speaker, as well in business, we know how essential it is to have the best in equipment and the latest in technology in order to deliver the best service to your customers. Mr. Speaker, this government has been and remains committed to filling in the major hole in infrastructure that the previous NDP government left behind. Mr. Speaker, this government has spent a record \$9.6 billion on infrastructure since 2008 and has committed another \$3.5 billion for infrastructure this year. That, Mr. Speaker, is the largest single-year capital investment in this province's history. Mr. Speaker, investing in infrastructure builds Saskatchewan's strength and establishes the framework

to help the province's economy.

Mr. Speaker, we all know this record infrastructure spending will support jobs for Saskatchewan people. Under the former NDP government, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan had the lowest job creation record, but this government, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada and the second strongest job creation record in Canada. Mr. Speaker, there are 68,000 more people working right here in Saskatchewan today than there were just eight years ago. That is a trend, Mr. Speaker, that this budget and this government looks to continue.

This budget, Mr. Speaker, creates better learning environments for our children in our educational system by giving them better schools like the new joint-use schools in Martensville, Warman, Saskatoon, and Regina. And this budget also provides major funding for major renovations on existing schools in Langenburg, Gravelbourg, St. Brieux, and Regina.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, this budget also helps our sick and elderly with better quality health care, with continued investment in our hospitals and long-term care facilities. Mr. Speaker, our government has invested over \$1.2 billion over the past eight years, and this budget commits another 239 million to health care capital this year. Mr. Speaker, instead of closing hospitals at a record pace, this government is continuing with record spending in health care, Mr. Speaker, and has increased total spending to \$5.6 billion.

The NDP, Mr. Speaker, they closed 52 hospitals in this province, including the Holy Family Hospital in my hometown, Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, and yet they complain that we should do more. Maybe they don't remember it was their government, Mr. Speaker, that closed the second hospital in Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, when the NDP closed the Holy Family Hospital in Prince Albert, this put far too much pressure on the only remaining hospital in Prince Albert, the Victoria Hospital. Now as I said, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite complain that we have more to do, yet their government closed that second hospital, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the members should have thought of that again before they closed that second hospital, the Holy Family Hospital in Prince Albert, along with the 51 other hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, this government has invested \$2 million in a review to develop a plan for renewal of the Victoria Hospital.

One should also remember, Mr. Speaker, it was this government that hired 650 more doctors and it was this government that hired 3,000 more nurses of all designations, Mr. Speaker. What did the NDP do when they were in power, Mr. Speaker? They drove doctors and nurses out of the province. This province lost 450 nurses and 173 doctors in just the last five years the NDP were in power, Mr. Speaker.

Under this government, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has gone from the longest surgical wait times in Canada to the shortest surgical wait times in Canada. And in this budget, Mr. Speaker, there is an additional \$20 million increase to the Saskatchewan surgical initiative which is aimed at keeping surgical wait times

to no longer than three months.

Mr. Speaker, also in this budget, there is \$9.8 million in funding for 15 new crucial, yet expensive, cancer-treating drugs and, Mr. Speaker, \$15 million more for the drug plan and extended benefits for the treatment of hepatitis C.

One should also remember, Mr. Speaker, that it's our government that has built, or has under construction, 15 new long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker. And again I must remind the members opposite, while they profess to be the only ones to speak for the most vulnerable but, Mr. Speaker, it was under their government that they closed 1,200 long-term care beds for those most vulnerable that they profess to speak for.

Again in this budget, Mr. Speaker, we have committed to reducing health authority administration expenses by \$7.5 million and reinvesting those savings in that frontline staff for those long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also improves the safety for all of us on Saskatchewan's highways. And we know, even though we have built or repaired over 10 000 kilometres of highway, there is still more work to do. Mr. Speaker, that is why this budget commits 875 million in transportation infrastructure.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, this budget includes the highways 2020 plan which outlines a three-year \$70 million surge to fix even more highways. For safety on our highways, Mr. Speaker, this budget includes significant dollars for twinning and passing lanes on a number of highways throughout the province, as well as the very much needed interchanges for Warman and Martensville.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, in the private sector we know how important it is to continually upgrade our equipment and to have and provide our customers with the latest in technology.

Mr. Speaker, our Crowns continue to provide the best in technology and service to the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is investing \$1.1 billion to renew the transmission and distribution systems that carry power throughout this province. SaskTel, Mr. Speaker, will invest \$331 million to continue to improve the province by upgrading its wireless and wire line networks and continue to roll out the Infinet service. SaskEnergy, Mr. Speaker, will invest \$292 million to renew and expand its natural gas distribution. This, Mr. Speaker, is investing in Saskatchewan's future.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is investing in the province's number one resource, our people. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan and this government cares for those most vulnerable. That is why, Mr. Speaker, in this budget \$1.24 billion has been allocated for social services and assistance. That's a \$34 million increase over last year.

Mr. Speaker, in response to complex and increasing caseloads, additional funding has been increased in this budget by \$9.7 million for Saskatchewan assured income for disabilities for a total budget of \$210 million. Saskatchewan assistance plan, Mr. Speaker, increased 5.6 million, to \$153 million. And, Mr. Speaker, there's an additional 6.4 million to address foster care

and extended family care caseloads. Also, Mr. Speaker, there's an increase of \$3.4 million for those with intellectual disabilities. This, Mr. Speaker, is commitment to assist those most vulnerable in our province.

Mr. Speaker, this budget continues to show this government's commitment to the municipalities of this province. Mr. Speaker, we know this revenue plays an important role in assisting all the cities, towns, villages, and municipalities in the province to help provide services to help meet the needs of the people in their areas. Mr. Speaker, revenue to the municipalities is just under \$272 million. This is up \$144 million, or 113 per cent since 2007 and 2008.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan voted April 4th and showed their confidence they have in this party and this leader. Mr. Speaker, they voted overwhelmingly for this government because they had the confidence in our leader and our party to maintain a strong economy in good economic times and, Mr. Speaker, in tough economic times as well.

Mr. Speaker, with their vote they showed the confidence they have in this government and the ability to keep this province moving forward. Mr. Speaker, we know there's more to do, and we will continue to improve. We will continue to do what is needed for growing this province. We know, Mr. Speaker, that revenues are down right now, not only in Saskatchewan, but in all energy-producing provinces. However, Mr. Speaker, revenues will improve. In a business, Mr. Speaker, when revenues are down it only makes sense to review where and how your revenues are coming in versus how your expenses are going out, Mr. Speaker. And if there is a concern, one needs to address it. This budget, Mr. Speaker, addresses those concerns.

This government, Mr. Speaker, including this member from Prince Albert, are committed to keeping Saskatchewan strong and making Saskatchewan the best that it can be. And I, Mr. Speaker, will continue to make sure the issues of Prince Albert and area are a priority. While we acknowledge there's more to do, Mr. Speaker, I would think our past record clearly shows that we are on the right track.

Mr. Speaker, with this budget and our commitment to bring the budget back to balance in the next fiscal year, this clearly shows that we are going to keep Saskatchewan strong. Mr. Speaker, no one likes higher taxes and no one likes reduced spending on programs. And, Mr. Speaker, no one should like running a deficit. That's why, Mr. Speaker, this minister, this Finance minister, should be applauded for finding that right balance between the three in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I positively support the budget motion and am against the opposition's amendment. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to be able to respond to the budget. And I would like to add at the beginning of my comments that I will be supporting this budget. This budget is fiscally responsible and it takes into consideration the needs of the province of

Saskatchewan and the people who live here. This budget is what the people of Saskatchewan require in this time of tight financial constraint. This is a budget that is continuing with the work that has been started and, as always, there is more work to be done.

Mr. Speaker, if I could summarize what I'm going to talk about today, this budget contains no tax increases. This was achieved by controlled spending. This budget ensures a better quality of life by investing in our people. This budget will keep Saskatchewan strong by investing in infrastructure, and the 2016-17 budget will keep Saskatchewan strong.

I believe with some of the responses you have heard, there is a clear theme that is starting to come out. This budget will keep Saskatchewan strong by keeping taxes low, controlling operational spending, and continuing to make key investments in infrastructure and important governmental services for Saskatchewan people. Over the past nine years, we have significantly invested in all areas of the budget while reducing the tax burden. As a result, this budget builds on a solid foundation.

A couple of weeks ago we had the honour of having former Finance minister Ken Krawetz sit here with us during our session. Mr. Krawetz had the foresight all those years ago to be one of the founding members of the Saskatchewan Party. And I would like to take this time to thank him for that foresight and helping to build a party that I am proud to be able to stand up for and to talk for.

And now we have a new Finance minister, and this minister has had big shoes to fill. I believe he is doing a fantastic job. Given the fact that a fragile global economy and sharp decline in oil and potash prices have led to challenges on our province's economy and finances, and ultimately on our citizens and businesses, he has put a budget together that addresses these stressors and is based on the Throne Speech that was presented to us at the beginning of this session.

I would also like to add a little startling fact. A decline of almost \$1 billion in non-renewable resource revenue has made this budget even more challenging. Having said that, on April 4th our government was re-elected based on a campaign that made few specific promises but instead made one simple yet significant commitment — to keep Saskatchewan strong. And that is exactly what this budget will do.

This government ran on a platform that we would not be increasing taxes for the people of Saskatchewan, and that is what this budget delivers. And I believe that it is what the people of Saskatchewan have asked for, as we all saw with the results of the provincial election on April 4th. They spoke loud and clear when they put 51 seats on this side of the House. And we are so grateful and humbled that the people of Saskatchewan have put their faith in us, as we are to do everything we can to make them proud they made that choice.

This is a year when it is so important that the money our residents earn should stay in their pockets. It is not going to be an easy year for a lot of these families in the province, and taxing them is not the solution; as opposed to when the NDP was in power, they chose to raise all different types of taxes on

the residents of Saskatchewan. In fact, they raised taxes 21 times during their 16 years in power, including raising the PST four times and the gas tax twice. This is compared to our government who has delivered record property tax reductions and record income tax reductions.

And some statistical information that I think you might find very interesting: an individual taxpayer who earns \$18,960 pays zero Saskatchewan tax; a family of four with \$50,000 of annual income has now seen their provincial income tax cut by more than 95 per cent since 2007 from \$2,302 to zero. I would just like to repeat that fact. A family of four with \$50,000 income will pay zero Saskatchewan tax. Since 2007 this government has removed 112,000 Saskatchewan residents from the tax roll completely, and we have reduced education property tax on agriculture land by 80 per cent. Under the NDP, at the risk of repeating myself, they raised taxes on Saskatchewan people 21 times.

[15:45]

Members across the floor want us to tell the truth. They want us to be honest. I can tell you right now that that is exactly what this government does. A member across the floor likes to talk about her mentor, Harry Van Mulligen. I find it quite interesting that during the 2003 election, the NDP said they would not raise PST, which is exactly what they did. And what did former Finance minister Harry Van Mulligen have to say when he was asked? And I quote from January 13th, 2004:

Why don't parties . . . [want] to talk about tax hikes during elections? Well I don't know [he said]. I suspect that anyone who talks about tax hikes is not likely to be very popular during the course of an election campaign.

Unbelievable. With mentors like that, it's no wonder there are 10 seats on the other side of the House.

In fact since 2007, there have been tax reductions to families, individuals, homeowners, businesses, and farmers. The amount of these reductions totals nearly \$6 billion. That's correct. I said \$6 billion — money that has been able to stay in the hands of our Saskatchewan residents. Also of note is the fact that we in Saskatchewan are among the lowest personal and business tax rates in Canada, and this is according to the Conference Board of Canada report.

I would also like to quote what the Canadian Press had to say about our budget. They said, "Winners: Taxpayers. No new taxes on anything, not even . . . sin taxes for liquor or tobacco."

And how about John Hopkins who is the CEO of the Regina and District Chamber of Commerce? And I quote, "We are pretty pleased with the fact that this budget didn't increase taxes, didn't go overboard in terms of cuts, and didn't go overboard on a whole range of things."

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today as the member from the Estevan constituency. And as I am sure you are aware of what is happening in our economy right now, our constituency has been affected greatly. We have had a lot of people who work in the resource industry, and some of those people are losing their jobs. But those people are not the only people that have been

affected. This downturn in our economy has a trickle-down effect on our entire workforce. And I don't really believe that our opposition is completely aware of the severity of what is going on in this province, especially in the southern part of this province. So I want them to listen to the true events I am about to tell them.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I was at my hair appointment. Now you're probably thinking, what does that have to do with this budget? Well I'll tell you. It has a lot to do with this budget and the direction this province is going. Usually when I'm at these appointments, it's a rather enjoyable experience. But I must say this time it was very surreal for me. As I sat in my chair and listened to the people around me have their conversations, it became very apparent that we need to be fiscally responsible in this budget. It confirmed what I was hearing throughout the election on the doorsteps of what my constituents were telling me.

I know of a family where a wife was laid off three months ago. She was working in a retail store in Estevan. And now a couple of weeks ago her husband, who has been fortunate enough to work at the same company for the past 15 years, he has now been laid off also. So as you can see, it does not just affect people who are at the bottom of the totem pole. It affects everybody.

The majority of this was due to the low commodity prices that we have been faced with right across this province. While this government cannot control some of the economic factors that are happening around us, we can certainly help mitigate what is happening. More now than ever I can see the importance of why this government has chosen not to raise taxes on the people of Saskatchewan.

In this budget there have been hard choices that have been made, but these decisions are made for the betterment of our province as a whole. Cuts need to be made so that we don't have to tax our residents when they cannot afford to be taxed. That is why this government will continue to put money into this province and create jobs.

Starting this year over the next three years, our government will fix more highways through a \$70 million surge in highway repair and maintenance. This is part of the new highways 2020 plan to invest \$2.7 billion in highways and transportation capital over the next four years. In addition to making our highways safer for everyone, this is an important investment in highways and it will create economic activity in the short term and will strengthen our ability to move Saskatchewan goods to market in the long term. This is the first time in Saskatchewan history that the highways and infrastructure budget will top \$1 billion. This marks another record investment in provincial roads and infrastructure.

And I'm even more excited to see the money that is being invested in the constituency of Estevan in this area, through almost \$20 million that will be spent over this fiscal year in highways: a bridge replacement on Highway 18 over the Souris River, a bridge on Highway 39 east of Estevan, and the twinning of Highway 39 east of Estevan to near Bienfait. These projects will not only help address safety concerns but will help create much needed jobs in the southeast area of the province.

Our government's track record of sound fiscal management over the past nine years includes prudent spending, paying down debt, and keeping our GDP [gross domestic product] ratio among the lowest in the country, provides capacity to borrow in order to move forward in our capital plan instead of delaying projects which would hurt our economy at a cost to the future.

The last story I would like to share from my surreal day at the hair salon is that of my hairstylist. She has been in her industry for 30 years and has a very solid base of clients. You would think not a worry in the world with this type of history, but this slump in our economy has also affected her over the past year. Her revenues have gone down 40 per cent. Can you imagine going to work one day and all of a sudden you go from earning \$20 an hour to earning \$12 an hour? That would be quite an adjustment. But, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what is happening for some people in this province. The blessing for her is that her husband works at SaskPower. He has worked at Boundary dam power station. Yes, the same station that has the carbon capture sequestration technology happening. So they'll be okay because his job is not going anywhere under this government.

But what would happen if the NDP had their way? The opposition is quick to support documents like the Leap Manifesto that calls for the leaving of all natural resources in the ground. If this document is to be taken seriously, it would pretty much put an end to every project ever that would include pipelines, windmills, and solar panel farms. By supporting something like this, it is like an attack on the economy of Saskatchewan.

So when I think about the constituency of Estevan and the types of jobs that we do have left and the people that are still helping our economy continue, it truly scares me that we have people who support a document like the Leap Manifesto. If we left all the coal in the ground as this document would have us do, we would have to shut down our coal mine. That would affect hundreds of good-paying union jobs. Our opposition is always talking about getting good-paying jobs for the people of Saskatchewan, and by supporting this manifesto it would be devastating the people who work in these mines. In fact the mine would have to go out of business, putting hundreds of people out of work.

And once again the trickle-down effect that I talk about, if our coal mines are shut down, it will affect hundreds of jobs at our local power stations, as these stations are coal generated. So once again they've got rid of more good-paying union jobs. I wish our opposition would make up their mind. Do they support our Saskatchewan residents and their futures or do they just want to roll up the streets and call it a day? Earlier I mentioned that my hairstylist and her husband were going to be just fine because he had a good job at a local power station. Under an NDP government, this may not be the case.

In a perfect world we could leave coal in the ground. Instead we would rely on renewables like wind, solar, and hydro. We would use this to power our cities, our factories, our homes, and our businesses. But alas, we don't live in a perfect world, so this government has made a choice to clean up the coal the best we can until something better comes along, something more reliable and cleaner. We have a lot more work to do, but this carbon capture sequestration project is a great start.

The interim Leader of the Opposition made a comment with regards to this province's carbon capture sequestration project and he called it, and I quote, a "job-killing carbon capture tax." I beg to differ. This project will ensure that we have viable and sustainable power source which will create jobs for years to come. This is technology that is being watched and inquired about around the world. This is technology that is working and technology that should be embraced by our opposition. It is technology that will continue to ensure we have jobs for our residents now and into the future, keeping Saskatchewan strong.

In the meantime, in our budget we are working with First Nations Power Authority. This partnership will see First Nations developing 40 megawatts of clean energy generated from solar power and flare gas. This plan will ensure the First Nations in our province are active participants in economic benefits associated with the construction of clean energy as well as assisting Saskatchewan in moving forward in its target of having 50 per cent of electrical power needs generated by renewable sources by 2030. So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there is more work to be done but this government is working on it and it will continue to do so.

We have a Premier that fights for this province, that believes in the people of this province. That is why his government has had the foresight to complete a project like the Boundary dam carbon capture sequestration and is working with our First Nations on clean energy projects which will not only help with the carbon footprint of this province but will also help ensure that there are jobs for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, in the Estevan constituency where I live, we have agriculture. In fact my son is a farmer so the topic is dear and near to my heart. There is an organization in Saskatchewan called SARM which stands for Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. Their vision statement is as follows: "By being the rural voice, SARM will effectively lead autonomous municipalities in creating a vibrant, diverse economy resulting in a strong, sustainable Saskatchewan."

This government is also a voice for rural Saskatchewan, and what a better way to let you know that this budget is investing in agriculture and being embraced by organizations that stand up for rural Saskatchewan than a quote on this budget from SARM. And they said:

Agriculture continues to remain an integral component of Saskatchewan's economy during these times of fiscal restraint, as exemplified by the \$15.3 billion in agriculture exports in 2015. The importance of this sector has been recognized by the Government of Saskatchewan as it has increased the Agriculture budget by 7.5 per cent to a total of \$389.8 million.

And agriculture research which receives 25.8 million in funding.

These commitments by the Government of Saskatchewan will assist the agriculture sector in continuing to support Saskatchewan's economy and ensure that producers continue feeding the world.

And why stop there? The Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders

Association said, "Programs remain largely unchanged. Thank you, Premier, for recognizing the importance of Saskatchewan agriculture." And the last quote on agriculture, from the Saskatchewan Stockgrowers Association, "Saskatchewan agriculture fared well in today's budget and was recognized as a key driver for the provincial economy. This budget is investing in our people."

This government is putting a record \$5.17 billion into the health budget. These monies will be invested into infrastructure, improving access to care, and reducing wait times for surgery and diagnostic services for Saskatchewan people. This is a stark contrast to when the NDP was in power. We had the longest wait times in Canada. And we have come a long way, but we want to ensure that we continue to keep the wait times down, so we are investing in that project. The \$5.17 billion is a 50 per cent increase since 2007. That is an astonishing number.

And let's not forget about the revenue sharing that will continue. This is a program that will put in place . . . This is a program that was put in place by this government to have one point of PST given back to our municipalities. SUMA, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, said, "Urban governments in Saskatchewan appreciate the provincial government support for our cities, towns, villages, and northern communities in today's budget." And the president of SUMA, Mayor of Weyburn Debra Button said, "This is an increase again, a record number again for municipalities. So we are very grateful for the commitment the province has made and that they've kept it."

As we continue to invest in the people of Saskatchewan, important investments continue to be made and commitments continue to be met. Investing in people ensures a continued high quality of life in our province.

[16:00]

This has been decision time. Do we want what's best for the people of this province? Do we want to keep moving Saskatchewan forward or do we want to go back to the way things were under an NDP government? I think it's clear. We want to keep moving forward.

Health, education, and social services and assistance account for nearly three-quarters of all budgeted expenses. On top of the 5.17 billion in health spending, we are putting 3.7 billion into educational spending, which is up point seven per cent over last year. And social services and assistance spending will reach 1.24 billion in this budget, which is up 2.4 per cent over last year — investing in our people.

The future is bright. The people of this province and my constituency of Estevan are a resilient bunch. We hold optimism for the future of this great province that we all call home. Saskatchewan's economy is expected to rebound in 2017, with the GDP growth predicted to be 2.5 per cent following an expected point six per cent decline in 2016. Our government is committed to improve the province's financial picture and return the budget to balance in the 2017-18 year by combining the forecasted economic growth with the government-wide process to achieve transformational change, the goal of which is to ensure the sustainability of high-quality

programs and public services delivered in the most effective and efficient way possible. This transformational change initiative will look at both sides of the ledger, revenues and expenses. It will ask important questions and work with partners and stakeholders to answer them. By getting underneath the questions, government expects to make decisions which will achieve the stated goal while at the same time ensuring the actions lead to sustainable outcome.

Mr. Speaker, if I could summarize what I've talked about today, this budget contains no tax increases. This was achieved by controlled spending. This budget ensures a better quality of life by investing in our people. This budget will keep Saskatchewan strong by investing in infrastructure. And this 2016-17 budget will keep Saskatchewan strong.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say how humbled I am to be in this House today and to have the opportunity to speak to the budget that has been presented. I am in favour of keeping Saskatchewan strong and moving it forward. So I believe that that is exactly what this budget has done. Once again, I would like to say I support the budget presented to us by this government. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure for me to stand here today and be part of the debate in support of this government's 2016-17 budget. It is important that I start out — given that this is my first time on my feet since the Throne Speech — thanking the constituents of Regina Wascana Plains by putting their trust in me this April for the third time.

Mr. Speaker, I need to thank my election team: Jackie Burchi, Pat Wickenhauser, Derek Maher, Nancy Martin, Gary Massier, Rod Sieffert, Shirley Patterson, and Adam Nelson. I wouldn't be here in this House today if it wasn't for their hard work and dedication. My constituency assistant, Jackie, has been absolutely terrific and her continuous hard work makes my job just a little bit easier. Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family for their ongoing support: my husband, Gary; my sons, Regan and Cameron; and of course my superwoman mother.

Mr. Speaker, this government has committed to keeping Saskatchewan strong, to keeping the province's finances strong, and to keep Saskatchewan's position strong within Canada. This budget certainly delivers on these commitments. We will deliver on these commitments through keeping taxes low, controlling spending, and by continuing to make important infrastructure investments, and investing in essential government services.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that a sharp decline in resource prices coupled with a fragile global economy has created challenges for the economy and the province's finances. This is the same for every individual and business in this province. Mr. Speaker, as a result, we as government had to make some very, very tough decisions. The Ministry of Corrections and Policing was not immune to tough choices. The closing of Buffalo Narrows was not an easy decision. Closing this facility was about how to achieve the best results in service delivery, and

the most efficient use of our existing correctional facilities. Mr. Speaker, the opening of the new living unit at Prince Albert Provincial Correctional Centre allows the opportunity to transfer inmates from Buffalo Narrows.

Corrections and Policing is dedicated to focusing on three pillars of our criminal justice system: prevention, intervention, and suppression. But we also want to ensure that the community safety is done in an economically and sustainable manner, which is why the Ministry of Corrections and Policing has been at the forefront of innovation and evidence-based solutions. For example, the forensic psychology Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] program will again receive \$248,000 for two psychology Ph.D. residents each in Regina and Saskatoon to train and work with inmates to reduce recidivism and public risk. The assessments that these residents do are instrumental in having an understanding of the type of offenders that are entering into our system.

This government made a campaign promise in 2007 to add 120 police officers. We exceeded that funding by . . . to 125 through the municipal policing grants for targeted policing initiatives, and an additional 47 RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] positions that focus on ministry priorities.

I'm very proud that this year we will invest over \$14 million in municipal policing grants for targeted policing initiatives. Since 2008 we have invested over \$100 million in municipal policing grants for the following units: serious crime unit, Internet child exploitation, serious and habitual offenders comprehensive action plan, which focuses on targeting and holding repeat offenders under the age of 25. This is to ensure they are held accountable for their crimes, Mr. Speaker. Combined forces special enforcement unit that focuses on dismantling organized crime. Northern drug and gang enforcement unit was created under this government to combat illegal drug use and the related criminal activities in northern Saskatchewan.

There are more, Mr. Speaker, but I want to take the time to highlight two additional municipal policing grants because they both invest in people by protecting those with mental health issues, and they also assist government in controlling its cost.

In 2012, our government made an election promise to target high-risk violent offenders through a program or initiative called serious violent offender response. 1.227 million was invested for six new probation officers, two support staff, four additional police officers — one municipal and three RCMP — and one clinical psychologist to work with the police.

Mr. Speaker, serious violent offender response is a program to increase monitoring for violent offenders in order to reduce the risk of reoffending. The word monitoring doesn't truly describe what this program actually does. It is an intensive program with our most serious and violent offenders. After years in Saskatoon and North Battleford, we are confident that the program is successful in reducing the violent recidivism in offenders. SVOR, or serious violent offender response, has provided the opportunity for the ministry and the police forces to train their staff and officers, and to keep that knowledge within the province. It is estimated that for every \$100 invested in SVOR, \$300 is saved in justice costs. But more importantly \$100 invested in SVOR saves \$1,300 in expenses to victims.

I want to highlight one more important targeted policing initiative. The police and crisis team, or PACT for short, is helping to change and improve the way mental illness is approached by police in our province. There are two police crisis teams that are comprised each of one in Saskatoon, a Saskatoon police officer and one mental health worker. They co-respond to stabilize persons experiencing a mental health crisis in the community. PACT has reduced the amount of arrests by referring people in crisis to more appropriate mental health and crisis programs.

In addition, PACT has prevented over 900 instances where the police would have responded to calls that were not criminal offences, which has saved time and money. Corrections and Policing provides \$220,000 of funding each year for the two units in Saskatoon. And Saskatoon Police Service estimates PACT saves the taxpayers of Saskatchewan over \$1 million. Saskatoon Police Service estimates that over \$50,000 has been saved in avoiding police court appearances. They estimate savings of almost \$200,000 in avoiding emergency departments, and an estimated \$830,000 in avoided hospital costs, resulting from assisting over 190 individuals with suicide risk. PACT has saved money and allowed for more efficient use of resources by reducing visits to emergency departments. PACT also reduces the demand on our correctional facilities which has become a key focus in the ministry.

Another important tool in reducing demand on our correctional centres is the building partnerships to reduce crime. The building partnerships to reduce crime and the Hubs and CORs [centre of responsibility] are working to stop crime before it happens. The building partnerships to reduce crime is a cross-government approach that includes nine ministries, eight police services including the RCMP. The Hub is a made-in-Saskatchewan solution that aims to stop crime before it starts by getting community agencies, health and education providers, as well as police to sit down together. The goal is to address the unique needs of individuals and families facing acutely elevated risk and to connect individuals with services within 24 to 48 hours. There are 12 Hubs in 13 communities in this province and there is potential for more in the future.

There are two centres of responsibility, also known as CORs, in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. The CORs increase collaboration and resource support between the Hubs. They also provide research and analysis on trends, gaps, and reoccurring issues in order to better mobilize resources to the longer term systemic issues.

Saskatchewan has created a system that is being emulated in other parts of the country, and elsewhere in the world. There are made-in-Saskatchewan Hubs in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, and there is also interest in the United States.

Building partnerships to reduce crime is not the only innovation that reduces demand on our correctional facilities. In March of 2015, we converted Orcadia Youth facility in Yorkton into Whitespruce, a 39-bed male training facility. The Whitespruce facility is an example of a focus on rehabilitation and education for the province's inmates. Offenders can receive programming in an effort to reduce reoffending after they are released from custody. We want to turn offenders into taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and the best way is to focus on skills training.

I think that every member here can agree that there is no better way to ensure the success of this province than to protect our youth. Saskatoon Police Service, University of Saskatchewan, and the Ministry of Justice, and Corrections, and Policing are collaborating in the development of a predictive analytics lab that has the potential to improve community safety and prevent or mitigate victimization.

The lab's first project will be missing children. The lab will investigate how the information we currently have on missing children can be used to assist with current cases and in reducing the amount of time children or youth are missing. The chiefs of police in Saskatchewan have agreed to share their information with the lab, so all police services and therefore the children can benefit from the initiative. There is immense potential and future projects included in the predictive analytics lab that can be applied to gang activity, violence, and adult missing persons. An important factor here was that this predictive analytics lab was created with no additional cost to government. The costs associated with the development of the lab were based on redirection of existing funds and outside investment.

[16:15]

I have spoken prior about Correction and Policing's innovation that both controls spending and invests in people, but now I want to talk about our investments in infrastructure that protect the community and the most vulnerable. The new Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford, with 188 beds and a 96-room secure unit for male and female offenders living with mental health issues, will be a key component in our mental health strategy.

The facility will be focused on clients with mental health issues and will operate with a patient-centred philosophy. This is a shift to a modern, therapeutic environment, moving away from custodial care to a rehabilitative approach. When the North Battleford hospital's complete, our government will have added 479 secure-custody beds for adults. When the members opposite were in power, they added a total of zero beds, and in fact denied expansions of Pine Grove and Saskatoon.

The members opposite continue to question this government's investments. Well, Mr. Speaker, in order to help alleviate some of their confusion, I have a short list of Correction and Policing's investment in infrastructure. In 2009, 5.5 million was invested on a 90-bed dormitory at the Saskatoon Provincial Correctional Centre. \$9.4 million worth of security enhancements were completed in this government's first term. There were 40 cameras with no recording ability in Saskatoon correctional centre. Now there are over 180 with recording ability.

13.4 million was invested in a 30-cell living unit with 60 new beds at Pine Grove Correctional Centre. It opened in October of 2013. Over \$7 million to convert a gym into a 32-bed dormitory in Regina Correctional Centre. \$1.8 million was invested in White Birch female holding facility, a converted vacant unit at Regina's Paul Dojack Youth Centre. This government invested 24 million for an additional 72 cells or 144 beds in Prince Albert Provincial Correctional Centre that will open later this year.

In 2015 Orcadia youth centre was converted into Whitespruce, a

39-bed adult male skills and training facility. Mr. Speaker, due to this government's correctional facility expansions, we have created over 200 well-paying jobs in Prince Albert and area.

When the members opposite were in power they ignored community safety. They were too busy raising taxes, closing schools, and closing hospitals. This government is going to be investing 3.5 billion in capital with 1.7 billion for the capital builds plan that will be dedicated for highways, schools, and hospitals to ensure that the province is well positioned for future growth and population expansion.

The Crown corporations will be investing 1.8 billion in electrical, energy, and communication infrastructure to ensure that Saskatchewan can continually meet the needs of its citizens and businesses.

This side of the House has made record investments in highways and infrastructure. We have repaired over 10 000 kilometres of Saskatchewan roads. We know that there is more work to be done, for sure, which is why this government is investing over \$1 billion in highways. In 2016-17 the people of Saskatchewan will see \$30 million in new funding in the first year of the highways 2020 plan, which will see \$70 million over three years invested. In addition, \$355 million is being invested in capital construction, 500 million for the Regina bypass.

I'll speak about the Regina bypass, Mr. Speaker, because in my constituency they are directly affected, the areas of White City, Emerald Park, and of course southeast Regina — the largest infrastructure project in this province's history. The traffic volumes on existing roads in the Regina area range from about 11,500 to 25,000 vehicles per day. The bypass will improve safety and efficiency in the Regina region by providing a high-speed route around the city. It will ease traffic congestion and improve safety and especially commuter traffic to and from the communities to the east, as I mentioned — White City, Balgonie, and Pilot Butte.

The bypass will support trade and make the Regina region, especially the global transportation area, a more attractive place to invest. Economic corridors and gateways facilitate growth in exports and trade and the movement of goods and services locally, regionally, and internationally.

The project itself will also create jobs. During the construction phase, the project is expected to generate about 8,200 positions. The \$1.8 billion total project cost for the Regina bypass includes 1.2 billion for construction costs, operation and maintenance for 34 years, and paving of Highway No. 1 next year. The P3 model will ensure that the bypass is done quicker, and this government will save \$380 million. The Regina bypass will include twinning 5 kilometres of Highway 6, 12 overpasses, 40 kilometres of four-lane highway, 55 kilometres of service road. Overpasses at Balgonie and White City will be open in two years. The entire project, including the Pilot Butte overpass, will be completed by 2019, far sooner than under the traditional build.

We have seen record investment in highways by this government. We are seeing record-setting capital investment in our health care system with over \$239 million being invested in

2016 and '17. I'm excited about the 168 million for the Saskatchewan Hospital, North Battleford, the integrated correctional facility. In addition there's a 40 per cent increase in Saskatchewan's surgical initiative from last year with a total of \$70 million being invested, over \$390 million in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools and other capital projects, 127 million for municipal infrastructure, and almost 26 million for advanced education and training.

This government made the commitment that Saskatchewan will make life better for those with disabilities. This budget addresses that, Mr. Speaker, with just over \$210 million for the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program and an increase of \$1.9 million over last year to 5.9 million to address the cognitive disability strategy caseload as well as other programs for the most vulnerable.

We, on this side of the House, are always excited about the future of this province, Mr. Speaker. The transformational change initiative will allow us to dig deeper and ask important questions about the future of government so we can continue to ensure that Saskatchewan remains strong.

When the members opposite were in power, the only questions they asked were, what school or hospital should we close next? And the solution is every tight budget was to raise taxes 21 times, as was mentioned by my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, by not raising taxes, by controlling our spending, by investing in people and infrastructure, this budget will keep Saskatchewan strong. Mr. Speaker, I want to declare my support for this budget and will be voting against the amendment. Thank you.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support, without amendment, the budget moved by the Minister of Finance and seconded by the member of Regina University.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are by nature prudent, caring of each other, and community focused. Our government can and will reflect those values. The Minister of Finance, being from the small town of Rose Valley in my constituency, is well aware of the values that are the foundation of what it means to be from Saskatchewan. We appreciate the value of hard work, common sense, and an attitude of responsible and accountable approaches to the challenges and opportunities we have.

Mr. Speaker, on June 1, I was most interested in the Saskatchewan people that were in the galleries. I wanted to look at the budget from their perspective. As you know, many people will ask the question, what's in it for me? So let's take a few minutes to see the budget from their perspective.

Across from the minister was a young lady of about 10 and her grandpa. I visited with them after the budget speech, firstly to congratulate her on her interest, and to chat about their perspectives. He, it turns out, is the mayor of a small town. I'd never met them before so it was interesting that I later learned that their town grew by 9.6 per cent from the last census

compared to a population decline of 5.6 per cent from 2001-2006. They have health care services, a new school this fall, and a full slate of community services and activities. The community is excited about its future. As an aside, I asked the young lady if she might someday be the Finance minister. She smiled coyly and hinted that the premier's chair might be more to her liking. Mr. Speaker, I think our government delivered for this community.

In the west gallery was a 2016 high school graduate and his dad from Kelvington. So what was in the budget for them? Well let's start with the final payment on the Kelvington integrated health care facility scheduled to open soon. The Kelvington area, including Yellow Quill First Nation, will be well served by this facility that was creatively designed by the users, the staff, the stakeholders, and the people of the area. Mr. Speaker, this is a facility that, at last report, will come in ahead of schedule and on budget.

In addition, Perry will be a college student next fall and will be eligible for building credits towards the graduate retention program. Mr. Speaker, our commitment to advanced education of some 53 million in scholarship and student aid funding is impressive. More impressive, however, is the 7.3 billion we've committed to post-secondary education in the past nine years.

Mr. Speaker, I had a number of guests involved in agriculture including two scholarship winners introduced earlier today. Let's look at what the budget meant for them. Let's begin with a seven and a half per cent increase in the Minister of Agriculture's budget. Not only are we fully funding the risk management programs, but we are supporting strategic, long-term investments in agriculture, innovation, science and technology that will keep Saskatchewan on the leading edge of agriculture, not only here at home but in fact, Mr. Speaker, around the world.

In addition, this year we will move forward to complete the sale of agricultural Crown land to farmers. This opportunity will wrap up by December 31 of this year and, Mr. Speaker, farmers will be well served to take advantage of this program and put farm land back in the hands of farmers where it belongs.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the significant investments made by the Minister of Parks at Greenwater Lake Provincial Park — new full-service campsites, new lift stations, and from SaskPower, an investment in new infrastructure. The people of Saskatchewan will be very impressed with these new developments that support a great community, a fabulous golf course, and a great fishing and recreation area.

Mr. Speaker, I would also be remiss if I didn't mention that I went out into the gallery afterwards or into the rotunda afterwards and spoke briefly with the Finance minister's mother. And she said, I'm very proud of my little boy. I said, we all are, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Emphasis on little.

Mr. Nerlien: — Emphasis on little, yes.

Mr. Speaker, when all is said and done, the people of

Saskatchewan want us to be good stewards of the economy, but more importantly they want to know that we care about their safety and security of their families and friends. They want to know that we understand the stress on the health care system and they want to know that we can provide the social safety net for those in need and for long-term security of our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, you well know that we spend an inordinate amount of time and money on these concerns. Health, Highways, and Education represent 75 per cent of the budget. Reducing wait times with an \$8 million in targeted investment in diagnostic services, and an increase of 10 million mainly to cover new cancer-fighting drugs, 15 million for hep C coverage, and a \$20 million boost in the Saskatchewan surgical initiative will all help us stay on the leading edge of the demand curve. But, Mr. Speaker, we must do more and we will.

Mr. Speaker, I know the NDP Finance critic will not grasp much of this, but it's pretty fundamental. We know it wouldn't apply under the NDP Leap Manifesto because we would all be standing beside the cart path in our gunny sacks paying for food with pennies as in pre-Industrial Revolution days. My how times have changed beyond their comprehension.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca goes on and on about how this government is failing the people of the North. And I would say to him, look carefully in the mirror each day and ask, as a party, what has the NDP ever done for the people of the North?

Mr. Speaker, northern revenue sharing 2007 and '08 was 10 million; ours this year, 20.2 million. Their last budget, Highways and Transportation capital, 196 million; ours, 875 million. Theirs, Health, 76.5 million; ours, 239.9 million. Theirs, Advanced Education and training, 11.9 million; ours, 25.8 million. Theirs, Education, 23.1 million; ours, 391 million. Mr. Speaker, we should be asking them, where did the money go when they were in office?

Mr. Speaker, you will be very surprised to hear this given the rhetoric from members opposite, but guess what I found in the 2007-08 budget presented by the NDP government of the day — hopefully the last for a long, long time. Well, Mr. Speaker, in the numbers, their revenue, 7.87 billion; expenses, 8.35 billion. Say what, Mr. Speaker? You'll never guess where the money came from — the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. That's right, \$510 million to drain the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Where did they spend the money? Well a small but telling example: how about 1,459 new government jobs while the population dropped by 10,000.

Mr. Speaker, I have in my hands the 2007-2008 key facts and figures documents released with the budget of the day. Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca rails on and on about this government's lack of attention to the North. Mr. Speaker, in our highlights we note \$211.9 million in programs for First Nations. In the last NDP budget, the highlights document which I have in my hand — nothing, nada, not a penny, zero. Mr. Speaker, I fear the member opposite doth protest too much given his party's performance on this file.

Sadly there is more, Mr. Speaker. Under the NDP government the total debt-to-GDP ratio was 23.8 per cent — that at a time when they were closing hospitals and schools at an unimaginable rate. People couldn't wait to leave as the ministers of the day reminded the people of Saskatchewan at every opportunity that we had to wait for the cheque to come from Ottawa to make payments. Have-not status was their legacy.

Now despite unprecedented spending, where are we today? A debt-to-GDP rating of only 17.6 per cent. When you read the Saskatchewan Party's 2016 budget, it is all about how well the people of the province are doing. Timely health care; investments in education and retention of some tens of thousands of students in the Saskatchewan economy; huge investments in mining, processing, agriculture; and a complete change in attitude in the province. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are now proud of where they live, not where they came from, as in the past. Saskatchewan people no longer ask their new neighbour if they remembered to turn out the lights when they left Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to focus my attention to effective transformational change which is proposed in the budget. To do so, I will pull from personal experience as a consultant in change management but I also will draw from work done by Frank Ostroff in a 2006 Harvard study, as well as some work published by Booz & Company in 2004 around effective change management.

Mr. Speaker, effective and meaningful change in an organization, and in particular in something as complex as government, will be a challenge for the leadership of government, for leadership in every ministry, for leadership in every stakeholder, and for every employee. In fact dealing with change will fundamentally affect our relationship with the people we are most concerned with, the citizens of Saskatchewan. We must put forward a compelling reason to change. We must be effective communicators of the process of change, and we must be astute listeners fully appreciating the implications of change on every affected person, agency, ministry, and affected partners which might include other governments in Canada and around the world. This is a process that cannot be taken lightly. Mr. Speaker, obviously I don't have time to discuss this matter in the depth required here but allow me to plant some seeds for thought.

Mr. Speaker, any significant transformation creates "people issues." Many of those affected by change don't pick a side. They instead feel estranged from their government's strategy and mission. They don't see how their individual efforts directly affect the ministry, agency, department, or corporate performance and so they start to focus on producing outputs which are easy to quantify rather than achieving outcomes to which private sector measures, like return on invested capital, do not apply. As employees lose sight of the overall mission, they may eventually come to care only about those things they can directly control like protecting their own turf.

Mr. Speaker, external and internal stakeholders will also be part of the process engaged in planning, participating in the development, and developing concepts and ideas, and building next steps, plus the identification of outcomes that are

measurable.

Because change is inherently unsettling for people at all levels of an organization, when it is on the horizon all eyes will turn to the leadership team for strength, support, and direction. The leaders themselves must embrace the new approaches first, both to challenge and to motivate the rest of the organization. They must speak with one voice and model the desired behaviours.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier and our government are committed to working with the people of Saskatchewan to affect change to ensure a long-term, sustainable delivery of services that matter most to our citizens.

As transformation programs progress from defining strategy and setting targets to design and implementation, they affect different levels of the organization. Change efforts must include plans for identifying leaders throughout the organization in pushing responsibility for design and implementation down. Leaders will, by their very nature, rise to the challenge.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking all of our members of the Legislative Assembly, our ministries, our Crowns, and all agency leaders to be fully engaged and to create a road map for success.

In the mid-1980s, M.B.A. graduates seemed to regard manufacturing as a black box. You put some things in and out pops a product at the other end. Many government reformers view the transformation process in similar fashion and hence fail to pay careful attention to the steps necessary to get from here, the current status, to there for improved performance.

A change effort road map generally has three major phases: identify performance objectives, set priorities, and roll out the program. In any change effort, you need to start at the top and then quickly move to ensure participation and support of a broad cross-section of employees. It is the prerogative of the agency leader and his or her senior managers to define the mission.

It also helps to pursue tangible results that can be achieved quickly, even if they are not the ones that will have the biggest impact. Mr. Speaker, we will seek out small steps for modest change and we will look at the fundamental nature of what we do and how we do it to ensure the people of Saskatchewan are well served by their government.

Individuals are inherently rational and will question to what extent change is needed, whether their government is headed in the right direction, and whether they want to commit personally to make change happen. Mr. Speaker, we have begun to make the case for change by outing the fundamental challenges we have in this budget. Mr. Speaker, every minister and every MLA is asked to engage in this process to be part of the process in a meaningful way.

Mr. Speaker, we are asking the people of Saskatchewan, the leaders in every affected part of government, to be an important part of effective change that will help them feel a part of a great place to work, a great place to live, and in fact a home to be proud of for generations going forward.

Successful change programs pick up speed and intensity as they cascade down, making it critically important for the leaders to understand and account for culture and behaviours at each level of the organization. Organizations often make the mistake of assessing culture either too late or not at all.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental culture of Saskatchewan is one of hard work, focus on being supportive neighbours, and building communities together. We will be well attuned to those principles.

By now it should be clear that there is more to organizational redesign than moving boxes around on a chart. For organizations to perform at a superior level, the full range of factors: leadership, structure, processes, infrastructure including technology, people and performance management, must be integrated and aligned. Yet the tendency within government is to seize on whichever organizational element the particular person or group driving the change effort knows best at the expense of other elements.

We've now established what it takes to lead a change management program, formulate a vision, be aware of present realities, develop a broad base of support, set a clear path, respect the complexity of what you're attempting, and hold people accountable for both results and a commitment to the change effort.

There are however two qualities of public sector leaders that make such work difficult. First, it is in the nature of bureaucracy to respect barriers. Change leaders don't necessarily knock them over. Instead they find ways to see over them and around them. Mr. Speaker, we will find that often you have more flexibility than people believe. Many rules, as well as civil service limitations on what they can and can't do, are good and they need to be followed, but there is a difference between what you can and can't do and what has been done and not done in the past.

The other problem many leaders face is the perception that because they are political appointees, their commitment to improving performance against mission may be questionable. Such leaders must convince stakeholders of their sincerity. Employees mostly start out believing in the agency's mission which, whatever its particular focus, involves serving citizens and taxpayers. Over time, they see change programs come and go without making a dent. Meanwhile the public interest is neglected. If an agency head can convince the rank and file that this time is different, that he has committed, is willing to invest the personal time and energy that is required, and will commit the necessary people and resources, then its original dedication will be reawakened.

Mr. Speaker, I've tried to touch on some of the important elements of change as they might affect all of us and the citizens of Saskatchewan. We are committed to working with the people of Saskatchewan to deliver efficient services over the long term, and we look forward to this process, continued evolution.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget proposed by the Minister of Finance and seconded by the member from Regina University, and I will not support the amendments

proposed by the opposition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it is with humble appreciation that I stand up and give my reply to the budget speech. Before I get to that, I'm going to take some time that has been afforded to some other members to thank some people that have helped them out over the last little while.

And of course I need to thank my wonderful wife. My wife, Marjorie, who is more of a political geek than I am, and she might even be at home watching this right now. So without my wife I would not be able to do the job that I do to represent the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow. My wife's support is absolutely amazing that allows me to do my job here in Regina and again back at home in Moose Jaw and Moose Jaw Wakamow.

[16:45]

The next thing I want to do is I want to reach out and thank my kids. My youngest son Ryan actually helped me out on my campaign quite a bit and through no disrespect to anybody else on the campaign. He actually lives in Minister Stewart's riding, but he came into Moose Jaw just about everyday after work when he wasn't mentoring kids at the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association]. He would come and help and knock doors.

The other two boys, they were there in spirit. I know my middle son Dylan, he was out right near the end of the election with my two grandchildren. And they might even be watching so I'm going to say hi to Jordi and Jaxton. And this is why with our grandkids and our kids that we do what we do. It's about family. We're a big family over on this side of the House. So I want to say hi to my family.

And my son Geoffrey, who graduated last year with a political science degree and is now working on a master's degree, is starting a business here in the province. And once he gets all the equipment up and running, he'll be starting an equipment, actually an ice cream making business, and he's going to be travelling around to all of the festivals as a young entrepreneur helping grow the province. So I want to say hi to Geoffrey as well. On top of that my two daughter-in-laws, both Kayleigh and Macey, who allow their husbands to come out and support me. Without family and without our family supports, we are not able to do the job to the best of our ability, so I want to just thank my family.

And without reservation I also want to thank my mom and dad who happened to be away this time. They were actually not able to help me celebrate. No, actually they voted for probably my colleague from Estevan being they're still there, but we did help them through the voting process since they were going to be away. And without mom and dad, like everybody else here, without our parents we wouldn't . . . first of all we wouldn't be here. We wouldn't be here . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Minister of Health points out, we wouldn't be here. But without my parents' support and unwavering support, I wouldn't be able to do this either.

You know, my dad's . . . What is dad? Dad's about 67 years old now, 68 years old. Still young but still managing a company in the oil field, still working through the tough times down there. They've been able to do it and do some work sharing and stuff like that, so very much I hear about what's going on down in the oil field in our province and how it affects us.

I also want to help reach out to a couple of people who were integral to my campaign, and that would be Mr. David Cooper who was my campaign manager. David did a fabulous job of keeping me on track, making sure that I had all kinds of support getting out there and knocking on doors, listening to what the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow had to say. And I think that's a difference between us and the other guys is we actually listen to what the people have to say. We don't tell them what they want to hear. We listen to what they have to say. Mr. Cooper kept me on the straight and narrow during the campaign and kept me busy.

Mr. Paul Marcil was my business manager. That's the second time in two elections that he's been my business manager. I don't know if I'll be able to talk him into doing it one more time, but we'll see. We're a ways away from that. We've got until November 2020 before we have to worry about that.

One last . . . With a long list of people I'm not going to mention is another Ryan, Ryan Dionne. Ryan's been my constituency manager, constituency president for the last three or four years. And I actually started working at SaskTel with him, oh geez that'd be back in 2004, so he's known me for a long time, and we go back a long ways. We have a lot of stories about working at SaskTel under both governments, and I may get to that.

And the last one I want to thank is Trina Nicolson. Trina Nicolson is my CA [constituency assistant] and as we all know, including the opposition, our CAs are the ones that hold down the fort at home. They're the ones that take the phone calls, take the messages, and then keep us on track so when we're not here in the House, we're taking care of business back in myself Moose Jaw Wakamow. And she keeps me updated daily with what we have to do back home to listen to what the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow had to say.

There is such a list of people that I wanted to say thank you to that I'm going to stop there because the list was long. I had people show up helping us get re-elected that, you know, I truly some of . . . The first time I met them was when they walked through the door for the campaign and said can we help you get re-elected. That's when I knew that we were doing a good job as government.

So let's move on to the budget. So the biggest highlight of this budget is no new taxes. Now I'm going to relate this back to my SaskTel days. I remember not waiting with anticipation for budget day. It was almost waiting with okay, what are they going to hit us with next? Which taxes are they going to raise next time? Back in those days, the NDP raised taxes 21 times in 17 years.

You know, since 2007 we've given back to the people of Saskatchewan six . . . well no we haven't given back because we never took it in the first place. Tax cuts of \$6 billion, \$6 billion. And you know the commercials on TV was, where's the

money gone? Well the money stayed with the people of Saskatchewan, stayed in their own pockets — tax reductions to families, individuals, homeowners, businesses, and farmers.

And you know, I'm not as senior as some of the members we have on the government side of the House, but they talk about the tax revolts the farmers had back in the '90s when our RMs refused to remit their taxes and our farmers refused to remit their taxes. And combines, instead of being in the fields, would roll up on the legislature. And there'd be tractors and they'd, you know . . . And you hear these stories. And now when we walk out after a budget, what do we see? We see a beautiful spring out there. We see nice, great trees. We don't have the tax revolts of the good old days that the NDP like to talk about.

It was also achieved by controlling spending. Now it's just a modest spending increase of 2 per cent. Now when you take a look at a 14 billion-plus dollar budget, that's 2 per cent still adds up, and we've got to spread it out a little bit.

And I'm going to talk a little bit about the health care because that takes the majority of the budget. And there's a reason for that because we don't necessarily have as quickly an aging province as we did before because our kids are staying at home. They're not getting their suitcases for, you know, after they're done university and high school and moving to Alberta or moving to BC or moving to Toronto. They're staying here, not unlike my family has done. You know, I've got kids buying houses in Pense, kids buying houses in Regina, and one that, you know, still lives in my basement, but that's what happens when they go to university. But he's going to be an entrepreneur, so I give him that much.

An Hon. Member: — He is already. He's got rent free.

Mr. Lawrence: — Yes, negotiated rent free, yes. So let's talk about the health care budget. We added 15 new drugs to the formulary for cancer. Now I'm pretty sure that even on that side of the House, members have had family that cancer's touched. There probably isn't a member in this House that cancer hasn't touched their family. You know there's a reason why they call it the big C, right? It affects everybody, and you know, although there isn't a cure that helps with the cancer, those families will appreciate that, adding those 15 new drugs.

I also want to speak specifically to the \$20 million we've added to the surgical initiative push. As a person who has maybe used the medical system once or twice to be sewn back up and maybe pinned back together back in the day when I had a physically hard job and worked maybe not the way it should have been and maybe broke a toe or other body part and had to use that, we don't have to wait anymore. We don't have to wait near as long. We've gone from, under the NDP, the longest wait list where it was described as languishing on wait lists, to the shortest wait lists in Canada.

Now yes, over the last couple of months, and the NDP did a heck of a job pointing out to us how those wait lists were creeping up. And we listened to the people of Saskatchewan and, you know, we put \$20 million towards that surgical initiative so we could bring those wait times back to where they need to be in our province. Nobody wants to sit and wait.

We've also added . . . Well I'm going to talk a little bit about the new hospital in Moose Jaw. We have a brand new hospital in Moose Jaw, just in case the members didn't know. They talked about it for 17 years, but two cabinet ministers that were from Moose Jaw and . . . You know, it was what the NDP did. They talked a lot and they talked a lot and they talked a lot. Well the MLA from Moose Jaw North got elected in '07 and he talked a lot, but he talked a lot to the Minister of Health. And the Minister of Health has spoke many times in Moose Jaw where the MLA from Moose Jaw North pretty much wore a path between his office and the Minister of Health's office. So he talked but he got it done. He got it done. That hospital was announced before the election in 2011 and, you know, four years later, it's built on time, on budget.

I don't know if the members opposite know, but there's an area outside of Regina or Saskatoon — Moose Jaw is in one of those areas — and they actually have the first MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] outside of Regina or Saskatoon.

I have to put my glasses back on so I can see the clock.

So we also have in that brand new hospital, we have a brand new CT [computerized tomography] scan. And I remember when the radiologist was doing the talk for the fundraising part of the Five Hills Health, and they talk about the MRI. And the way he described it and how it worked and how fast it was and less radiation, I thought he was actually talking about an MRI, not a CT scan. So we also have a brand new CT scanner out there.

And I'm going to talk about door knocking a little bit. During the campaign I was standing there and I'm talking to a nurse from the hospital, and we're talking about the changes in the hospital and some of the work that had been done up until that point, and up behind me somebody comes up on the step. And she looked and I turned around and she said, who's that? And I said, well that's an NDP supporter. And she goes, how do you know that? And I saw the door hanger they had in their hand, and what it had on there. It was a little door hanger that said, they just don't listen.

When the people of Moose Jaw spoke to us about, you know, the brand new hospital doesn't have a hyperbaric chamber, well the Moose Jaw North MLA and myself, well we beat a path between both ministers' doors to the point where they were almost sick and tired of us talking to that, working with the firefighters in Moose Jaw, and getting that hospital with a brand new hyperbaric chamber. So that's one of the things I want to say where we listened to the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow.

And seeing that I'm almost out of time, I'm going to be voting for the budget and not supporting the members opposite on their amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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