



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

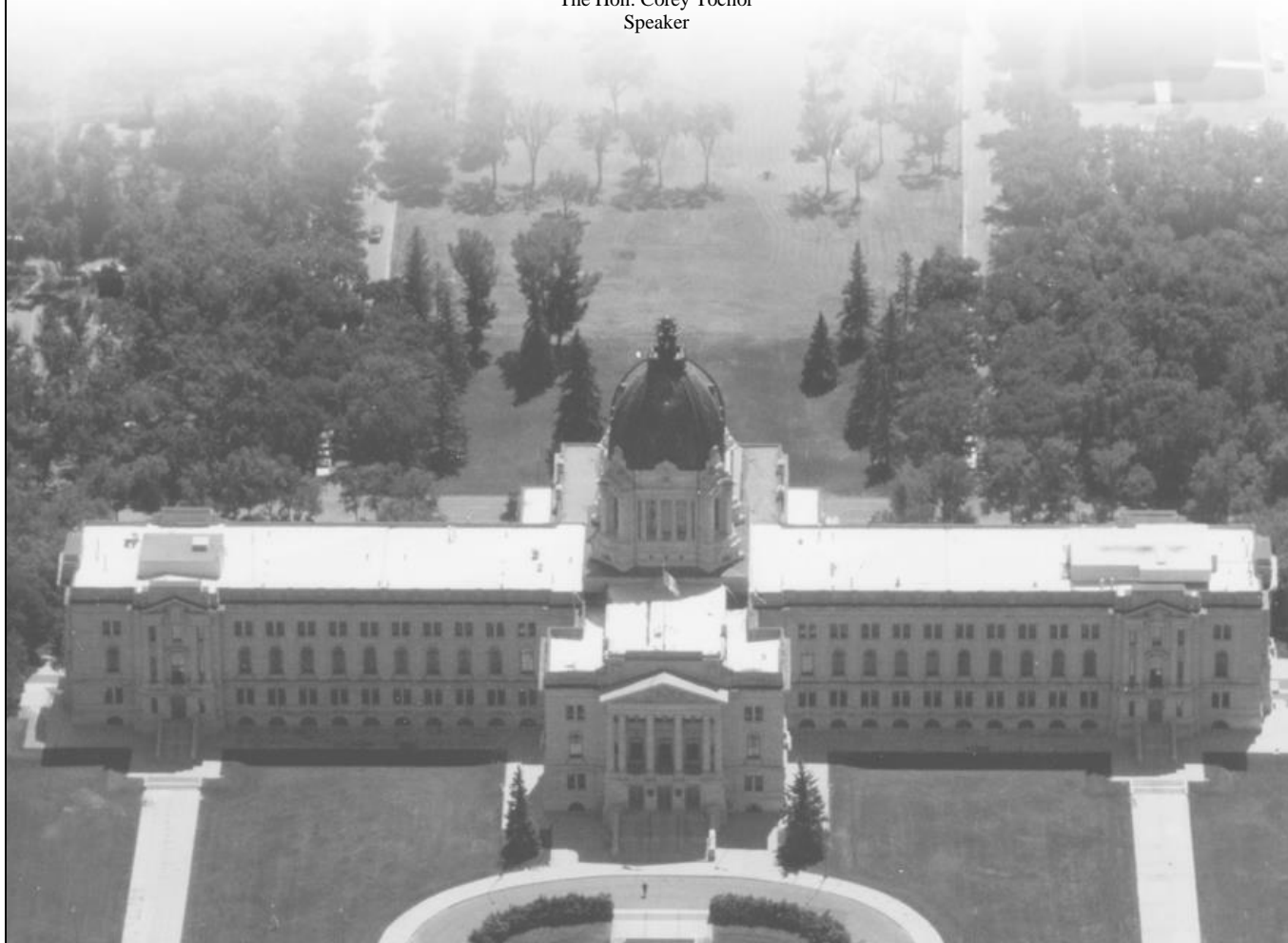
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

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

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

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

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Hon. Bill — Kindersley (SP)

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

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

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

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

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

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

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

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

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

**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Heppner**, Hon. Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)

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

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

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

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

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

**Marit**, David — Wood River (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

**Steele**, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Maurice Riou

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, and through you to the rest of the members in this Assembly, it's a pleasure to stand in the House today to introduce the administrative support team for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], or Crown Investments Corp. They're seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I believe there's about seven of them: Norma Berryman, Christie Donauer, Alanna Gee, Cheryl Kowalchuk, Melissa Morris, Charlene Peterson, and David Warford.

Mr. Speaker, these people work for the CIC, of course Crown corporations, which is the shareholder more or less. The people of the province are the shareholders of the Crown corporations. They do great work, Mr. Speaker, in helping manage that file. I'd like all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce the parliamentary program for the public service, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of employees from the public service here — I believe 28 — that are from various ministries: the Advanced Education, Agriculture, Central Services, Education, and Environment, Health, Highways and Infrastructure, and a number of others, Mr. Speaker.

This is a program that comes through the Assembly on a regular basis. They have the opportunity to meet with, I believe, opposition members as well as government members as well as yourself, Mr. Speaker. I know I'll be having an opportunity to sit down with them and talk a little bit about the proceedings in this House, and try and explain what they perhaps just saw as far as question period. I'd like all members to not only welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, but also thank them for the great work that they do for the people of this province each and every day. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join the minister in welcoming these important individuals to their legislature. Certainly the administrative team from the Crown Investments Corporation, I'd like to welcome you on behalf of the official opposition and certainly the critic for CIC, the member from Lakeview. But as well to bring a word of greeting and thanks to the important public servants that are here with the parliamentary program for the public service. It's always indicative of the commitment that public servants bring to their job that they want to come participate in a program like this to gain that finer understanding of the parliamentary democracy side of the work that is done by the public service.

And certainly I think it strengthens us and the work that we do. It certainly, I think, lends to a better perspective for the public servants that do such critical work, day in, day out, for the people of Saskatchewan and for the different ministries and agencies of government. So again I join with the minister in welcoming these important individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais vous présenter, et à l'assemblée, Madame Marcelle Petit du Québec. Elle est ici en Saskatchewan enfin de fêter la graduation de sa grande-fille, Gabrielle Ring. Gabrielle a reçu un diplôme d'éducation de l'Université de Regina. En septembre, Gabrielle sera un professeur à l'École St. Mary à Regina. Madame Petit est avec sa fille, Madame Carole Ring, qui est la femme de notre légiste et conseiller parlementaire. Bienvenue à Saskatchewan, Madame Petit.

[Translation: Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and to the Assembly Ms. Marcelle Petit from Quebec. She is here in Saskatchewan to celebrate the graduation of her granddaughter, Gabrielle Ring. Gabrielle received an education degree at the University of Regina. In September, Gabrielle will be a teacher at École St. Mary in Regina. Ms. Petit is with her daughter, Ms. Carole Ring, who is the wife of our Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel. Welcome to Saskatchewan, Ms. Petit.]

I would like to ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Madame Petit to our Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Oui, Monsieur le Speaker. Je voudrais aussi dit bonjour et bienvenue à Madame Petit à notre assemblée, et dit félicitations pour la graduation de votre grande-fille, je pense. Alors bienvenue, et nous sommes très fiers de votre son-in-law, notre conseiller pour l'assemblée. Alors bienvenue à Saskatchewan et bienvenue à notre assemblée.

[Translation: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to say hello and welcome to Ms. Petit to our Assembly, and say congratulations for the graduation of your granddaughter, I think. So welcome, and we are very proud of your son-in-law, our counsel for the Assembly. So welcome to Saskatchewan and welcome to our Assembly.]

**The Speaker:** — Well some people get two introductions, and I'll make it three. And this one will be in English. You must know someone very special to us in the Assembly here. Hon. members, I would like to join the member from Cannington in welcoming Madame Marcelle Petit to the Assembly today.

Madame Petit is in Regina to celebrate her granddaughter's, Gabrielle Ring's, graduation from the University of Regina with an education degree. Gabrielle will be teaching grade 1 at St. Mary school in September. Madame Petit is here with her daughter Mrs. Carole Ring who is the spouse of our Parliamentary Counsel and Law Clerk. Welcome to the Assembly and Saskatchewan.

I recognize the member from Moosomin.

**Mr. Bonk:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to welcome my friend Rob O'Connor to the legislature today. Rob and I have known each other for about 30 years, I'd imagine now. And Rob is the show manager for Ag in Motion, which is Western Canada's outdoor farm show. It's an interesting new project that they have just outside of Saskatoon. Prior to that he was the manager of Canada's Farm Progress Show here in Regina.

Rob and his wife Dawn and their two daughters live at Vibank, and they have a successful Hereford breeding operation there. Rob is also a committed volunteer and works in 4-H and many youth ag programs. And he's also a leader in agriculture in our province. I'd like all members to join me in welcoming Rob to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to take this opportunity to welcome Rob to the Assembly. Certainly the work that he's doing with Ag in Motion is a very significant event here in Saskatchewan. I think it's one that's being looked to by producers, certainly across the province, if not across Western Canada, and I know it's a ton of work. So I really want to express our appreciation for the work you do and would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the official opposition to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly students from the Humboldt Collegiate Institute in Humboldt, Mr. Speaker.

We have 37 grade 12 students sitting in the west gallery and I'm looking forward to meeting with them later. And, Mr. Speaker, accompanying them is their teacher, Mr. David Millette, and Ms. Jacqueline Bergerman. Mr. Millette has been bringing a class to this Assembly each year for as many years as I can remember, so he'll have to tell me how many years that has been. But it is indeed a pleasure to have him here, and we all welcome this great class.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today in the Assembly to introduce three guests, two of them very special guests, in the Speaker's gallery.

First of all I'd like to welcome our caucus staff, Jannet Shanks. And accompanying Ms. Shanks is two great and dear friends from Buffalo Narrows, Mervin and Darlene Petit. And I can point out, Mr. Speaker, that Mervin is a famous fisherman and hunter from the Northwest, and he even rivals our leader's hunting and fishing skills. And while he's good, I asked him not to exaggerate because our leader is quite an accomplished fisherman and hunter himself. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all the members of the Assembly to welcome Mervin and Darlene Petit

to their Legislative Building today.

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery are 19 grade 12 students from F.W. Johnson Collegiate I'd like to introduce to the House. Mr. Scott McKillop is their teacher and the assistant today is Ms. Shanna Roy. I look forward to having a chat after routine proceedings. Please help me welcome them.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again to present a petition to improve PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. The gist of the petition or the request of the petitioners, Mr. Speaker, is that if you're injured on the job and suffer PTSD, Mr. Speaker, that you should be able to get prompt treatment and get back to leading a normal life, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following 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 from Maidstone and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on behalf of a number of individuals from Saskatoon. What they are saying is that in 2012 the federal government announced an end to the community pasture program that had operated under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration since the 1930s to restore marginal lands subject to erosion and manage them for livestock grazing. The land we know is being transferred to the Saskatchewan government which has now offered the pastures for sale. These pasture lands serve a vital role to species at risk, mitigating climate change for cattle ranchers and their communities, preserving cultural and heritage values, and for recreational and cultural purposes. I'd like to read the prayer. They say:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Government of Saskatchewan to halt the sale of public land with ecological value, including Crown lands that, until removed by recent order in council, had been protected under *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*; conduct a complete inventory of our remaining native grasslands; create legislation that recognizes the value of our remaining grassland; protect native prairie, including

monitoring and enforcing conservation easements preventing breaking of these lands.

I so submit.

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

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

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

And we know that in addition to providing language and cultural classes, these schools offer a welcoming environment and crucial support for newcomers who are searching for a way to feel at home in their new surroundings.

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

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

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

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Canine Hero Saves Life

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to rise to recognize the heroic actions of Rex, the eight-year-old Alaskan malamute German shepherd cross from Aberdeen, Saskatchewan who has recently been honoured with induction into the Purina Animal Hall of Fame as one of 2016's Canada animal heroes. Rex selflessly put his life on the line to ensure the safety of his owner's mother, Noreen Hawman, who was visiting her family in Aberdeen this past Christmas Eve when her son Mitch's house started on fire while Noreen slept on the couch, medicated and recovering from a bout of pneumonia.

Rex, seeing the flames, recognized that Noreen was in

imminent danger and tried to wake her by barking and nudging her with his snout. When his attempts failed, Rex leapt into action and grabbed her pyjama bottoms with his teeth and dragged her off the couch and across the room towards the exit. When Noreen woke and was able to grasp the horrific situation surrounding her, she quickly grabbed what little she could salvage and escaped to safety with Rex by her side.

Dogs provide their owners with comfort and companionship, unconditional and unwavering. Their loyalty to their family is evident through their protective nature. And Rex embodies his protective nature explicitly. Mr. Speaker, I call on all members to recognize and celebrate heroic actions of this brave canine. Good dog, Rex. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

#### Melfort Junior Citizen of the Year

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, while most grade 12 students are hanging out with friends and busy preparing for a summer of rest and relaxation, there is a young woman from Melfort who has shown an exemplary level of community leadership. Mckenna Dyck was chosen as Melfort's first Junior Citizen Of the Year.

The Junior Citizen of the Year is a new award that is meant to honour a young person from Melfort that shows leadership, community involvement, and volunteerism. Mr. Speaker, the criteria for this award describe Mckenna perfectly. This incredible young woman has a long list of community organizations where she volunteers, from playing shuffleboard with local seniors to volunteering with a kindergarten class and giving her time to food bank initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, along with community involvement she is very involved in her local church, saying that her faith is a big part of her life. There is no question that Mckenna has made a huge difference in Melfort and will continue to do great things as she graduates and decides what to do next.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join me in congratulating Mckenna on her being chosen as Melfort's Junior Citizen of the Year and wish her the very best going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### The Power of Culture

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, culture can heal, strengthen, and nourish, and in this time of reconciliation, that power of culture is now more important than ever. This morning I was proud to attend the pipe ceremony that opened the 2016 Scott Collegiate Graduation Powwow in a good way. Held at the First Nations University of Canada Regina campus, the powwow honours high school graduates throughout Treaty 4 territory and beyond, and it was off to a great start.

I want to acknowledge the excellent work done by Principal Shannon Fayant and the staff and students of Scott Collegiate,

and I offer my sincerest congratulations to each of the graduates for reaching this important milestone and hope for more great things to come.

And while on the subject of the power of culture, hundreds of people, including police, firefighters, First Nations leaders, students, and just plain folks from the neighbourhood took part in the smudge walk that wound its way through North Central last Thursday. On one level the smudge walk is a ritual cleansing of the neighbourhood, but it's also a powerful symbol of the strength of the community's commitment to face our issues and challenges as a community. The smudge walk is indicative of the many caring and compassionate individuals and organizations already making a big difference in the neighbourhood every day.

I particularly want to acknowledge the roles of Chief Myke Agecoutay of Muscowpetung First Nation and Chief Cadmus Delorme of Cowessess First Nation for helping to show us all the good way forward, and a very special hay-hay to John Hopkins of the Regina Chamber of Commerce and all the people and organizations that made the Smudge Walk 2016 such a great success. Thank you.

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

#### **New Diagnostic Equipment at the Ponteix Health Centre**

**Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today, residents of Ponteix and the surrounding area will celebrate an important improvement in health care services. The Ponteix Health Centre is now home to a modern, state of the art digital X-ray machine and new lab equipment. This was made possible through community leadership efforts and the campaign led by the Dr. Noble Irwin Healthcare Foundation. I want to express a heartfelt thank you to all the donors for their generous contributions. Thank you also to those who contributed their time and ideas.

Mr. Speaker, the Ponteix Health Centre serves a broad geographical area and is one of the region's more active medical imaging departments. This new machine will perform basic X-ray imaging with improved image quality and instantaneous viewing in a more environmentally friendly manner with no film, cassettes, or chemicals required to render images, Mr. Speaker. This new equipment may reduce the need for travel and provides more timely results.

Mr. Speaker, these improvements will greatly benefit residents in this area. As we celebrate with them, I want to reinforce our government's commitment to ensuring timely, high-quality health services are available for everyone in the province, no matter where we live, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all members to please join me in congratulating the residents of Ponteix on the addition of this new equipment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Miners Work to Achieve Mission: Zero**

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to rise in the House today to acknowledge the award recipients of the Saskatchewan Mining Association's 48th annual Emergency Response and Mine Rescue Awards. The awards ceremony was held this past weekend on June 4th, and I would like to personally recognize the recipients of this year's awards.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you, along with the rest of the House, join me in congratulating the following groups and individuals for their outstanding efforts in working to achieve Mission: Zero. PotashCorp Lanigan, in my constituency, was the overall underground winner. The team members include Adam Essar, Justin Foley, Kevin Leggott, Jory Vanthuylne, Clint Morrow, Lee Berhermann, Mark Nivon, Jeff Morelli, Kyle Renwick, and Ford Leggott. The overall surface winner was PotashCorp Patience Lake.

I would also like to highlight Cameco McArthur River mine, Mosaic Esterhazy K1, and Claude Resources Seabee mine for winning safety trophies in various categories.

The Emergency Response Person of the Year was awarded to Mr. Ken Worobec for his lengthy dedication to the mine rescue community.

It is role models like these that help Saskatchewan to achieve Mission: Zero. Mr. Speaker, again I would like to congratulate these distinguished teams and individuals on their achievement of creating a safer Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

#### **Golf Tournament for Childhood Cancer Research**

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend I had the opportunity to attend, along with my colleague from Saskatoon Westview, an amazing golf tournament. The Team Naomi Get Well Now Golf Tournament was a resounding success, raising over \$28,000 for childhood cancer research.

One hundred and thirteen golfers played — and not very well — to help a special little girl, eight-year-old Naomi Lendvay, in her battle with cancer. The tournament took place at Greenbryre Golf & Country Club in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent of the money raised at this tournament will end up in the hands of researchers. Currently childhood cancer research only receives 4 cents out of every \$1 spent on cancer research.

The words, get well now, came from Naomi's mouth many times after she was first diagnosed. She received many get well soon gifts and she would always look at them and say, I want to get well now, not soon.

Mr. Speaker, cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death in children age 5 to 14. Research is the answer. Fundraising is the lock. Awareness is the key.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in recognizing the courage and strength of Ms. Naomi Lendvay and to join with me in supporting her, her parents, and extended family during their difficult journey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize Prince Albert Carlton.

### Prince Albert Company Works on Regina Bypass

**Mr. Hargrave:** — Mr. Speaker, on Monday the opposition members tried to imply that there are no Saskatchewan companies playing an important role in the Regina bypass project. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a bit callous to disregard the 47 Saskatchewan companies and organizations working on the bypass. I'd like to highlight one of those companies which I'm very proud to say resides in my city, Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, that company is Broda Group of Companies. Broda Group has a 50-year history in the heavy construction industry in this province. In that time they have created hundreds of jobs across the province and have given back generously to their community. Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Northcote may want to ignore the great work that they are doing on the bypass but I am very proud to stand up for this hard-working Prince Albert company.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that today the Minister of Highways and the Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds announced that the Pilot Butte overpass will be completed one year ahead of schedule, opening fall of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the companies working to make sure that the bypass is done right and on time. I'd also like to say a special thank you to Broda Group for their hard work on this project. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Regina Bypass Project

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this government's mismanagement of the Regina bypass project has been scandal plagued and full of blunders, from ballooning costs to the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal, lawsuits, and infrastructure waste. It started at \$400 million, shot up to \$800 million, and is now pegged at \$2 billion, a massive overrun. The RMs [rural municipality] and the city are left in the dark, worried about what their chunk of the bill will be.

In just one example of the egregious waste, in 2013 the Pinkie Road interchange was officially opened to help accommodate truck traffic to and from the GTH. Less than two and a half years later, they say that the \$4.3 million overpass needs to be ripped up and rebuilt. Talk about waste, Mr. Speaker. That \$43 million wasted could have held off hiking prescription drug costs for seniors and kids for the next three years. It could have saved labour market development programs, the Aboriginal police group, the court worker program, urban parks, and the Buffalo Narrows correction centre for the next five years, and we could have kept the employment supplement for families that were grandfathered — all that with money left over. Will the Deputy Premier admit that once again it's Saskatchewan people left to pay the price for Sask Party mismanagement?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister in charge of Highways.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The very first question of question period, and we're already correcting the record. The member opposite knows that that \$400 million price tag was for a completely different project. The scope has changed drastically. It hasn't ballooned, Mr. Speaker. The cost for construction for the current bypass route was \$1.2 billion, and that's exactly what we're paying.

And I would appreciate, and I said this in my speech the other day — and it's not whining, to the member from Athabasca — I would be happy to have a discussion about the bypass as long as the information that the members opposite bring in here is factual, Mr. Speaker, and it's not. And as to Pinkie Road, that overpass was actually designed to be changed when the bypass came through. The existing overpass will remain intact and access ramps will be upgraded, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that minister's answer doesn't hold water, nor has the Premier's. That government said they'd studied this project to death when it was \$400 million; now a massive overrun to a company from France. And you know, they've dropped billions on this project.

And certainly some Saskatchewan companies, and good Saskatchewan companies, are involved. That's a good thing. We've never said, we've never said otherwise. In fact though, we said that proud, strong Saskatchewan companies can handle this work. They should be enjoying much greater benefit. Instead the Sask Party is sending the big cheque, the \$2 billion, to a foreign company from France. They're getting the big money, and they're in charge.

We're obviously in favour of a bypass for our capital city, one that would actually bypass the city. And we'll stand up for Saskatchewan companies and workers every day of the week. The Sask Party, on the other hand, is blowing money on scandals and mismanagement instead of prioritizing the Saskatchewan economy and Saskatchewan workers.

Will the Deputy Premier admit that had his government put as much effort into managing this project properly as they put into baseless attacks on us or hiding information, that we wouldn't now be adding to their record of mismanaged boondoggles and job losses for Saskatchewan people?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, day in and day out — whether it's in the last number of days of this session, Mr. Speaker, whether it was months before the previous election — there isn't an issue that that member doesn't want to call a scandal or misappropriation of funds, Mr. Speaker. Nothing could be further from the truth. The members opposite continue to overreach, continue to use hyperbole over and over again. Mr. Speaker, quite frankly the general public of this province has no ... They see no credibility in that opposition whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, the people on the east side of the province, the people using these intersections, know that safety is priority number one. That's why these interchanges are going ahead,

Mr. Speaker. It's a far cry from when the opposition was in government, Mr. Speaker. This province didn't see an overpass because it didn't see growth for 16 long years.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I guess the reason we can talk about scandal after scandal after scandal is because there's limitless options to choose from with this government, Mr. Speaker. You know, pick your scandal and pick the waste this government signed Saskatchewan on, and have wasted their dollars and have cost Saskatchewan people in the process.

You know, at the end of the day, the other side can laugh and they can joke and they can brag, but 9,000 Saskatchewan workers lost their job in this last year. Instead of more empty words or attacks, I've a very simple and straightforward question to the Deputy Premier. How much in dollars of that \$2 billion is going to Saskatchewan companies and workers? How much is being shipped out?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is when it comes to jobs, we have seen huge job increases in this province over the course of the last eight years: 67,000 jobs created, full-time jobs created over that period of time. We know that our population is at an all-time high, Mr. Speaker, which is in stark contrast to when the members opposite were in government, when we saw population decrease, a significant one over those eight years, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

We continue to make very, very significant investments into job training, something that we never saw under the members opposite. In fact it's about 67 per cent higher, depending on the program, Mr. Speaker, that we're spending on job training this year over when we formed government in 2007. So, Mr. Speaker, we continue to make some very, very real and significant investments. We continue to see the economy remain strong and moving forward.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — That arrogant back-patting is a disrespect to the thousands of families and workers who have lost jobs all across Saskatchewan. In the same way that the bypass doesn't actually bypass all of the city, we've never suggested that all of the money is bypassing Saskatchewan companies and workers. But it doesn't change the fact that a foreign company from France is at the top of this mismanaged, scandal-plagued, overrun project. The big cheque, they're at the top of the food chain, and many of the jobs aren't going to Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, with all the scandal and all the waste in this boondoggle, I would hope the Deputy Premier would be happy to answer the very simple and straightforward question that I had to him a minute ago. So I'll ask it once again. How much of that \$2 billion is going to Saskatchewan companies and

workers, and how much is being shipped out?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, once again the preamble to the question is absolutely wrong. Like they do each and every question period, Mr. Speaker, they stand up and they play loose with the facts. Mr. Speaker, that has absolutely no bearing. This interchange is extremely important to southeast Saskatchewan, to southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we can run down the list of companies that are working on this project that are from Regina, some from Edenwold, some from Moose Jaw, some from Estevan, Mr. Speaker, whether it's Dart Services out of Estevan, whether it's A&B Rail out of Regina, Mr. Speaker, whether it's . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, company after company after company are doing the work here in Saskatchewan on this project. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that if it was up to the opposition, this project never would have gone ahead, Mr. Speaker, putting hundreds and thousands . . . hundreds of thousands of dollars taken out of the economy, Mr. Speaker, that are going directly into the economy here in Saskatchewan.

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

#### Government Usage of Consultants

**Mr. McCall:** — You'll note, Mr. Speaker, he didn't answer the question in terms of how much has stayed in Saskatchewan. But on to another topic, Mr. Speaker, but it's related. A quotation: ". . . so many have gone outsourcing crazy." Another quote, Mr. Speaker: "Last I heard the Conservative British government scrapped outside consultants and saved millions. Where they can, public administration should do the same. Take the leap. Take the risk."

Now who said that, Mr. Speaker? Was it some NDP [New Democratic Party] flack? Was it some grim leaper? Was it the Provincial Auditor? No, Mr. Speaker. It was the member for Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota here in the Assembly just yesterday. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We agree.

Under the Sask Party we've seen a 328 per cent increase in consultants across all ministries — 400 per cent in the Ministry of Highways alone, and in Central Services it's 268 per cent — whereas the auditor pointed out yesterday all of those consultants are still not doing a good job of protecting the private information of Saskatchewan people. So why doesn't the minister take the advice of her own member and fight to scrap the government's pricey consultants and get the job done?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government is getting the job done for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at times there will be consultants used, absolutely.



And the reason why there are more consultants used, Mr. Speaker, through this term of government over the last eight years of government because there has been growth, and there have been projects like the Regina bypass which we never saw under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Some of these specialized projects absolutely need the use of outside consultants, Mr. Speaker, whether it's in highways, whether it's in building of schools. Those outside consultants are absolutely crucial. That's not to say, Mr. Speaker, that capacity isn't also building within government. Absolutely it is. But when it looks at best practices, and best practices for a number of these major projects, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to use outside consultants because they're extremely valuable to the success and the growth of this province.

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

### Support for Education

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it's heckling and behaviour like we've seen today that make some people compare this place to a schoolyard. Sadly, if the Sask Party cuts continue, there could soon be as many students in classrooms as there are members in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we learned yesterday that the Saskatoon Public School Division is facing a shortfall of \$160 per student. There will be cuts. There will be fewer teachers. There will be fewer educational assistants. The only thing that there will be more of are children in classrooms. Mr. Speaker, in the cities, class sizes are already too big, and across the province schools are already under-resourced. But still this government wants school divisions to look for more cuts in their already strained budgets.

Mr. Speaker, it's the Sask Party who spent wildly during a resource boom. So why is it our kids and their teachers who have to pay the price?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, one of the obligations that we have in this House is to correct misinformation when it comes from the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, I want to give the member opposite yet another opportunity to correct things that she's done.

On May 31st, the member for Regina Lakeview raised concerns about possible disturbed asbestos in Rosthern Elementary School. We take these concerns very seriously. Occupational health and safety conducted an asbestos inspection of that facility based on her comments. Mr. Speaker, I can advise and inform the House there is no disturbed asbestos in Rosthern Elementary School.

Mr. Speaker, it is not right and it is not fair for that member, or anybody on that side of the House, to try and incite fear or try and make our parents and our students unhappy with the education that they are getting when it is, Mr. Speaker, absolutely wrong and unnecessary.

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

Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I did not state that the asbestos was disturbed, but I did draw attention to the crumbling condition of school buildings throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education had a little difficulty of his own, struggling to explain what he says is a 33 per cent increase. It's not new money, just another shell game. When challenged by reporters about how property taxes factored into this so-called increase, the minister had a difficult time explaining and ended up by saying he'd get the numbers.

Well, Mr. Speaker, parents and everyone who is responsible for running our kids' schools would rather that the minister show them the money. Mr. Speaker, this minister talks about his supposed increases, but the bottom line isn't going up. More cuts are coming and schools are falling apart. I stand by that statement.

Mr. Speaker, from where is the minister getting his numbers? Does this actually represent an increase in funding for school divisions or is the minister just shuffling envelopes and shifting budget lines? Mr. Speaker, why wasn't the minister more clear about this from the start?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite brought up asbestos. I want to talk about asbestos a little bit before . . . Let's talk about another school, Mr. Speaker: École Connaught. Regina Public received an engineer's report stating that it was "on the verge of collapse." The member opposite would know that, because she was on the school division at the time, that École Connaught contained asbestos. Where, Mr. Speaker? In the halls, in the boiler room, in the fan room, in the gym, in the principal's office, in the vestibule, in the nurse's office, in the staff room, and in some classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP education critic was a trustee at that point in time. She voted to keep that school open when it was structurally unsafe. Mr. Speaker, if you drive by École Connaught right now, you see a new school under construction because this side of the House cares about the safety and security of our students and, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that.

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

### Cost of Prescription Drugs

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is the Sask Party's mismanagement is costing Saskatchewan people. Our kids are paying the price. Our parents and our grandparents are paying the price. One example: their decision to again raise the cost of prescription drugs. One hundred and twenty thousand seniors in Saskatchewan will be affected. The executive director of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism told the *Leader-Post* that since many seniors have multiple prescriptions, that increase would be significant, and she said after the last time the Sask Party raised the rates, seniors called for consultations.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we just had a province-wide consultation — the election — but they never mentioned that hike. On March 17th the minister spoke at a seniors forum and said nothing about this imminent increase. Now he says the increase is “. . . just to help us keep up with inflation and the rise in drug costs.” Does the minister want us to believe that he just learned about inflation in the last two months? Why wasn't he straight with seniors from the beginning? Will he start being straight with seniors now?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people I think are fortunate to have one of the most comprehensive drug plans in the entire country. Mr. Speaker, when you look at the formulary and when you look at the drugs that we do cover on an annual basis, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the fact that we have added in this budget 15 new cancer drugs for full funding, when you look at the fact that Saskatchewan is one of a few provinces in this country that pay 100 per cent of the ancillary drugs that go along with cancer treatments such as the anti-nausea medications, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we do know is that our drug costs have risen over the last eight years, Mr. Speaker. Under the members opposite, the drug plan costs were about \$246 million a year. In this last year they're now \$312 million, Mr. Speaker. So as we had done in the past, we looked to make adjustments to the copay program. Mr. Speaker, we have not had a change in that since 2012 and, Mr. Speaker, the decision was made in light of the fact that our drug budget is increasing anywhere from 10 to \$15 million a year, Mr. Speaker, that we would also . . . In order to ensure that we have a sustainable plan going forward into the future and make those adjustments to that plan as well.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, seniors don't want partisan excuses and partisan games. They want honest-to-goodness facts and more support, not higher bills. Mr. Speaker, the president of the Saskatchewan Medical Association has noted that doctors will now have to consider the financial implications before prescribing additional medications for their patients. That's a big consequence for a change that was dropped on seniors without warning.

Along with the Opposition House Leader, that minister was at a seniors' forum during the campaign. He discussed seniors' issues, but throughout that whole forum he said nothing about the Sask Party plan to raise prescription drug costs for seniors — not a word, Mr. Speaker, not a word.

Again if, as the minister says, the reason for the increase in inflation is the reason for the increase in rates, why didn't he tell seniors that? Or is it because the real reason for the increase is just because it's a convenient cash grab?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do remember that debate that I had with the member

from Elphinstone and other members of political parties at the seniors' event here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. In fact it was at that event where the member from Elphinstone, in front of the group of people said the NDP platform will have a seniors' minister: we, if we are government, if we're elected government, we will have a dedicated minister for seniors.

But you know what, Mr. Speaker? While we were at the debate, the NDP platform was released in full. Mr. Speaker, you know what was missing from that platform? A seniors' minister, Mr. Speaker. So he didn't even have the information for his own platform, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the seniors' drug plan in this province, Mr. Speaker, we do still have, Mr. Speaker, a very comprehensive drug plan for people in this province. Whether they're on the seniors' program, the children's program. Mr. Speaker, as well for seniors that may need additional support with their drug costs, we do have the special support program, the supplementary health benefits, Mr. Speaker, as well as guaranteed income supplement. There are still some supports for seniors.

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

#### **Aquatic Invasive Species and Ministry of Environment Strategies**

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard from the auditor about several inadequacies in the Environment minister's strategy to deal with invasive aquatic species. I have to admit, even I was surprised to hear that because, Mr. Speaker, it seems like any time we hear from the Environment minister, it's about quagga mussels or zebra mussels. Of course protecting our lakes and rivers is important. But it's pretty much the only thing that this minister does, and he is still failing at it.

And, Mr. Speaker, what about their promised tech fund? Five Environment ministers later, Mr. Speaker, and still nothing. Nothing. Radio silence. How novel would it be if this Environment minister tackled some other issues? We don't hear him talk about conservation or water strategies or even climate change. But then again, given how the minister has done on his pet project, I don't have much confidence this government or this minister could come anywhere close to making the progress that is needed.

[14:15]

Still, to the minister: when can the people of Saskatchewan expect to see some serious action taken to protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we grow our food on?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for the question. And we certainly do take our Provincial Auditor's recommendations very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and we thank her for the good work that she does.

And some of these things that we're doing with regards to combatting and preventing aquatic invasive species from

entering our province, we've initiated \$100,000 in new funding for that project. We are working together. As you know, on Monday we announced an interprovincial agreement between ourselves, Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon to share information, to share expertise, and to share ways in which we're going to combat keeping these out of our area.

We're also working with Canadian border services industries, and I think we're the first province to do that, Mr. Speaker. We've trained some Canadian border service staff and they are now relaying information to us. Should they suspect a boat to come into our province with aquatic invasive species on them, we send our decontamination units down there to take care of that. That's the kind of work that we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Closure of Correctional Facility

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With us today is a worker who's served this province and his community for three decades at the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre. He joins all those who work in, around, and with the centre in wondering what he should tell the seniors back home, the single mothers back home, and many others who rely on the many services provided by the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre. The inmates in the minimum-security facility helped haul wood and water in the winter. They picked up garbage throughout the community, helped elders with yard cleanup, and shovelled snow in the winter through many community organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the Buffalo Narrows correctional facility is not just an employer. It's not just a correctional facility. It is an important part of this community and help people in and inside of its walls recover from hardship and regain control of their lives. Mr. Speaker, how can the Saskatchewan Party so coldly and callously shut down this very important facility that has been providing necessary services and assisting many groups and seniors who need this help? How could they do this?

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All the decisions we had to make surrounding our budget were not easy decisions. I mean, my colleagues can certainly attest to that. This particular building or correctional facility was certainly a tough decision to be made. I want to thank all of our staff for the great work that they have done. Closing the facility was about how to achieve the best results in service delivery and the most efficient use of our existing correctional facilities.

Mr. Speaker, what this correctional facility comes up against is the 96-bed mental health and correctional facility in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. That funding is in this budget, also the municipal police grants. Municipal police grants, Mr. Speaker, look after units in policing through the integrated child abuse unit. The funding for new cancer drugs, Mr. Speaker, comes up against those serious, serious issues so that we have indeed a role to play. Mr. Speaker, it wasn't an easy decision. Thank you.

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

Northcote.

#### Children in Provincial Care

**Ms. Rancourt:** — They really do seem to have a problem with clarity over there. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Social Services why she told the media the number of kids in care had decreased when it had not. She accused me of taking her quote out of context. Mr. Speaker, for context, here's the whole quote: "We are one of the few provinces, if not the only province, that has brought down the number of . . . [kids in] care. We have brought that number down." Well when the reporter noted that the number of kids in care was in fact up, the minister admitted, "It's up a little bit, yes."

Mr. Speaker, this isn't complicated. Up a little bit? No matter how you cut it, it's not down. And she tried to do the same thing again yesterday. Why doesn't the minister just admit that she didn't have her facts right?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad the member opposite decided to read the entire thing into record this time instead of just a select little piece that suited her purpose. Because, yes, in 2012 the numbers were coming down, unlike when the NDP were in power where they went up at a very alarming rate.

We put in a number of supports to support families before they go into crisis, Mr. Speaker. We also have introduced a parenting program to help with families that may go into crisis. To try to bring that number down, we have connected more children with family members so they don't have to go into foster care, Mr. Speaker.

We have increased the child protection budget by over 200 per cent, Mr. Speaker, because it is a priority for this government. That is why the numbers have been plateaued somewhat, and they're not going up at the same rate as they were under the NDP. That's why we don't have 21 children in a foster home, which was happening under the NDP, which is why we have far fewer overcrowded foster homes than what was happening under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Is there more work to do in this file? Absolutely, but it's extremely important, Mr. Speaker. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The critic of Finance is busy beaking away, even though her other members say that she doesn't appreciate heckling, Mr. Speaker. Is it up? Yes, I admitted to the reporter it is up, Mr. Speaker, from the numbers that we had in 2012.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 26 — *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Health

that Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act* 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. Duncan:** — Next sitting of the House.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 27 — *The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2016*  
*Loi modificative de 2016 sur les services de l'état civil***

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 27, *The Vital Statistics Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Attorney General that Bill No. 27, *The Vital Statistics 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. Wyant:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave to put forward a motion regarding changes in membership for the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## MOTIONS

### Committee Membership

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the membership for the Standing Committee on Human Services shall be expanded to eight members with the addition of the member for Saskatoon Riversdale for the duration of the inquiry concerning the rate of organ donation in Saskatchewan, as ordered by the Assembly on May 19th, 2016.

I so move.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the membership for the Standing Committee on Human Services shall be expanded to eight members, with the addition of the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, for the duration of the inquiry concerning the rate of organ donation in Saskatchewan, as ordered by the Assembly on May 19th, 2016.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — All those against? Carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 65 through 72.

**The Speaker:** — Questions no. 64 to 72 is tabled. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 73.

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 73 is ordered. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 74.

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 74 is ordered. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to question 75.

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 75 is ordered.

## 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 Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments regarding the budget. And I wasn't able to speak during the . . . with comments from the Speech from the Throne, so I would like to take the opportunity to thank some people that had worked for me during the election.

I want to start off by saying I will be supporting the motion. I won't be supporting the amendment to the motion. I looked at the amendment and I thought, why would I ever support something like that? So I'm certainly not going to.

**An Hon. Member:** — Don't do it.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — No. I've given it some careful consideration and it's just something I'm not there for.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the voters of Saskatoon Southeast for re-electing me. The boundaries to my constituency have significantly changed since the previous election. I've lost a lot of the . . . I had, by population, Mr. Speaker, the largest constituency in the province. It now consists of Lakeview, Lakeridge, Rosewood, and a small portion of Briarwood. The constituency is interesting because it's in a rapid growth mode. We have under construction in the constituency a new school in the Rosewood area and in the early stages of construction, Saskatoon's second Costco store. So we're appreciative of that. The neighbours, when we knocked on doors, were certainly very interested to know that first, they were getting a new school, and almost importantly for them that they were getting a new Costco store.

I was also amazed by the number of new Canadians that reside in this constituency. In some areas of the constituency there was home after home after home of people that had only been in our country for two or three years. I think we should be proud to be open and welcoming, as Canadians, but these people certainly pose a challenge for our educators and our education system. These people often arrive without having English skills and often have issues making the transition to cold weather, transportation, and other things. So I want to thank our education system and the different supports that we have in our province and in our government to make our province a truly open and welcoming place.

Shortly before the election I had slipped and had a badly sprained ankle. I moved significantly slower during the election but was still able to get to all of the doors in the constituency. I want to thank all of the other candidates that ran, not just in our constituency but elsewhere. For them to participate in the democratic process is certainly something that we should all be thankful for, regardless of the outcome. So I want to thank

people that chose to participate. I want to thank all of the people and congratulate them that were successful and that we see in the legislature.

There are some specific thank yous that I would like to make: my constituency assistant, Gord Rutten, who has been there for many years, former mayor of the city of Martensville, who brought along his sister Wanda who also did a lot of work; my chief-of-staff who was also the campaign manager, Drew Dwernychuk, who brought along his mother, so we got a family pack of two for one. They were great to work with. Megan Burns from this building; Rita Flaman Jarett, Pat Humenny, Ujin Humenny, Elaine Peterson, Marj Rak, Neil Wylie, Neil Doell, Dave Thompson, Harley Greening, Joni McKay, Peter LeClair, Earl Priddle, Clive Head, Tim Bergsma, Brenda Knisely, and Gary Zabos all worked hard putting up signs, raising money, and answering phones, finding volunteers, and doing the things that are necessary to ensure that a campaign goes as it's supposed to.

[14:30]

Since the election, we've held three neighbourhood barbecues. This last weekend we had barbecues in three of the neighbourhoods in the constituency and dispensed and handed out 2,300 hot dogs. We had a lot of the same volunteers. We also had Ken and Merle Sawatsky who came and brought their vintage fire truck and gave kids a ride on it, and a young person named Chris Katana who helped us move tables, set up, and worked incredibly hard. And we were certainly appreciative of him and everybody else that came along.

And here, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the people that work in my office — Drew Dwernychuk, Sherry Rosenberg, Jean Watts, Lacy Orange, and Matthew Glover, and Brayden Fox — all really excellent, hard-working people. Matthew Glover is a new person. He's married to a teacher. He had a new name tag. He went around the building with his new name tag that said Matthew Glover. We didn't have the heart to tell him for some weeks that his name was misspelled on it. He discovered it yesterday, and has now got a new name tag. So working in the Ministry of Education, good to check on those kind of things. But great, great people and we thank them for what they do.

I also want to thank my wife, Sandy, who has worked in a number of elections, been great to work with. I would like to relate to you just a small incident that happened during the election. We'd been out door knocking. We were on our way back to the campaign committee rooms and I said, you know, it's still reasonably early. Why we don't we stop and vote in the advance polls? She didn't say a lot. We pulled up in front of the advance poll and I said, are we going in? And she said, I'm still undecided. I hope that she voted for me. We did go in and she . . . It is a secret ballot. In any event she is always somebody that has to tolerate my humour, and she's usually the butt of it, so I thank her for that. She's been a great spouse for a lot of years.

Also the people in my caucus. I can hear them mention behind how much they appreciated and value the humour that I dispense regularly. And based on that, I plan to continue doing that.

Mr. Speaker, the government's direction of budget for 2016-17 is built on the principle of keeping Saskatchewan strong. That is exactly what this budget is doing. We will continue to invest in students and infrastructure even in these difficult financial times. This year's education budget was increased 7.8 per cent from 2 billion to 2.2 billion. Funding for school divisions has increased to \$1.9 billion. We applaud the great work of our school divisions to do exactly the best thing for our students.

The initiatives that they've shown in looking for efficiencies are something that we appreciate and want to work with them to do. We respect their autonomy and the responsibility they have to make decisions on how to allocate their funding so that they can support provincial priorities as well as local needs. School capital in this year's budget is \$391.4 million, which includes over \$310 million for joint-use schools in Warman, Martensville, Saskatoon, and Regina. These projects are slated to be completed on time and on budget, and will open in the fall of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the members opposite, this is a budget that they should support. These are schools that their constituents will appreciate and use and, Mr. Speaker, to each of them, if they don't support these, we'll certainly be reminding the electors of that at the next election because I think it's important that people know who stood up for the citizens, who supported, stood up for the children. So we want to remind people if the members opposite choose not to support this budget.

The joint-use schools that are under way are the largest publicly owned and operated school construction project in Saskatchewan's history. We've also invested \$41.9 million for ongoing capital projects in St. Brieux, Langenburg, Martensville, and Regina. One of these Regina schools is the École Connaught Community School. A brand new school will no doubt be far safer than its predecessor and will include some of its old characteristics such as Tyndall stone and a brick interior. I drove by the school this morning. It is coming along well. We're glad to see it's under construction. To the people in that community, in spite of the fact that some of the members opposite didn't support that, we want them to know that we will do what's right for them regardless of what the members opposite say.

Since 2008 we've built or completed major renovations on 65 different schools throughout Saskatchewan, from Oxbow to La Ronge, Hudson Bay, Maple Creek. We are building schools in this province. We are working with our school division partners to make sure that we are inspecting, detecting, and correcting building failures before they occur. Our preventative maintenance and renewal budget this year is 33.5 per cent, a 25 per cent increase over last year.

While we're proud of our record when it comes to building and maintaining our schools, we readily acknowledge that there is more work to do. We are committed to supporting students and teachers in the classroom so we have increased funding for supports for learning by 1.5 per cent to \$288 million. We're also committed to ensuring equitable education outcomes for all First Nations, Métis, and non-Aboriginal students across the province. \$5.1 million will go to programs such as invitational shared services initiative, Help Me Tell My Story, Help Me

Talk About Math, and Following Their Voices. Part of this money will be able to ensure that on-reserve students have access to the same software that is available throughout the province.

We are allocating \$5.4 million of operating grant funding to some of our newest residents in the province, the Syrian refugees. On top of that we have asked the federal government for further funding in order to help these new students.

On the labour side we will continue to work to keep Saskatchewan workplaces safe, productive, and fair. In this year's budget we have hired an additional occupational health and safety officer to support our targeted interventional strategy. It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries by 50 per cent by 2020 and, Mr. Speaker, that's only a starting point. We need to go even further.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank the staff and people that work in the Ministry of Health. My mother was recently in the hospital. She's 95 years old. She had a fall. She was taken by ambulance to Saskatoon City Hospital, transferred later on to St. Paul's Hospital, and received absolutely wonderful care in all the places that she was at. Specialists came in, rehab people, assessment people, so that she was in and out of the hospital in five days and is at home recovering well. She received absolutely superb care. So to the women and men that work in our health care system in Saskatoon, on a personal note, I want to thank all of them that worked hard, and from my mom I thank them as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close by saying that this is a budget that I think all of the members should support. The members opposite, I would urge them to sit down, look through the things in there, decide carefully before they decide not to support this budget, because there are a lot of things in this budget that they will want to be on record as being supportive of. Some of the members opposite that aren't here any more didn't support some of the things in the budget, didn't support new schools when they were in their constituency, and it did not bode well for them when the electors became aware of the fact that they didn't support a new joint-use school.

So to each and every one of the members opposite I would urge them: sit down and have a careful look at this budget because it will have consequences for them if they don't support it. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to lend my voice to . . . Since I didn't have an opportunity to speak to the Throne Speech, now in my speech for the budget I'd just like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election and I would certainly like to thank our former Speaker for the work that he did over the past term.

At this time I would also like to just take a moment, if I may, Mr. Speaker, and thank the constituents of The Battlefords constituency for the confidence that they've shown in me, and I'm committing to them to continue to work hard as I have in the past.

I would also like to thank my campaign team: my campaign manager and co-manager Gregg and Stacey did an awesome job; Shelley of course; Terri-Lynn and Dennis have been involved in both of my campaigns. And especially I would like to say thanks to my wife, Linda, her sister Susan, and again Terri-Lynn. They started working on this campaign probably in January and February, working on our data entries, and did many, many hours of work in getting that ready long before the campaign started.

And of course to Linda, I would say thanks for everything that she does in keeping me on track — not just during the campaign time — while I'm gone, looking after things back home.

To all of the other great friends and volunteers that I had who worked so hard, your efforts are greatly appreciated. And the day-to-day work in our constituency office, as many of my colleagues, I know, have referenced the great work that our constituency assistants do back in our offices. So I would just like to say thanks to Lil Robinson, my full-time CA [constituency assistant], and as well Gail Heintz, my part-time CA for all the great work that they do while I'm here in Regina.

Before I begin referencing the budget, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to give my personal thanks to our fantastic Finance minister. I think he's done a great job, and also to him and to the efforts of his treasury board team in preparing this keep Saskatchewan strong budget. I can only imagine the hours that he and indeed all of that treasury board put in, and his Finance officials as well, to prepare this budget and what I think is indeed a great budget.

It spells out clearly how the government has a plan to deal with our nearly \$1 billion loss in our resource revenue and still keep this province strong by investing in the badly needed infrastructure and keep this province strong by investing in badly needed infrastructure in the Crowns and in the highways, in schools, in hospitals, the education department. And that plan, Mr. Speaker, also it means investing in people, not reaching into their pockets with tax hikes, as was the common practice when the members opposite became under financial pressures.

We will continue to assist those most vulnerable in our society and our seniors with things like the seniors' income plan, which we have tripled since forming government in 2007 after the NDP increased it not one dime in the 16 years that they were in government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to be the second fastest growing province in the nation. Our employment rate is one of the best in Canada and our debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio is still one of the lowest in the whole nation. And throughout this forecast period of this budget, we're still below what it was under the former NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would just like to now talk a little bit about some of the activity in my own constituency of The Battlefords. You know, I'm very proud to be able to represent that constituency. I represent not only the city of North Battleford but also the town of Battleford. As well this year after the realignment I also have a portion of the rural

municipality of North Battleford, which was previously handled by my colleague from Rosthern-Shellbrook . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And we're happy to have it. Thank you very much.

Of course of greatest interest right now, I think, what we've talked about in many cases is our new Saskatchewan Hospital being built in North Battleford. You know, over the past several years I've had the privilege of attending a lot of functions on behalf of our government: a lot of programs, a lot of sod-turnings, those kind of things.

I think back to one of the first things was the water treatment plant expansion for the town of Battleford. The urban connector highway that went through Battleford and greatly enhanced safety going through that town. We build two new Battleford residential services homes in North Battleford, duplexes for our less fortunate people to handle. We were pleased to be able to attend that. I also attended the sod-turning for our first Habitat for Humanity duplex in North Battleford that now houses two very appreciative families, I'm sure. And I think, most recently the sod-turning at our Battlefords Trade and Education Centre with over \$4.5 million of funding from our Social Services ministry. That building is now nearing completion, and it's replacing the 100-year-old building that they've been suffering through for the last several years.

But as I said, at the sod-turning for our Saskatchewan Hospital last fall — and this is not to diminish the importance of all these other projects and announcements that we made — but the Sask Hospital in North Battleford was definitely the Godzilla of all announcements. It is going to be a hospital that we'll be proud of for many, many years, and I was proud to be part of that.

Further to that, we've seen several increases in our funding for non-government agencies in the Battlefords. You know, I look at things like our Prairie North Health Region, they've seen a 71 per cent increase since '07-08 in their budgeting. It's now sitting at \$220.256 million, a very substantial increase.

I look at the revenue sharing that both the town of Battleford and the city of North Battleford have been able to receive, a tremendous increase from what it was prior to our government being formed. Under the NDP government actually it decreased for the last year. North Battleford revenue sharing since '07-08 is up a whopping 162 per cent, from \$1.158 million to what it is today. In '16-17 the budget will be \$3.032 million. The town of Battleford is almost the same, Mr. Speaker: increase of 129 per cent from four hundred and seven point seven thousand dollars to today's rate of nine hundred and thirty-four point seven thousand dollars. Tremendous.

[14:45]

I was also able to attend the announcement for our new CUplex, in which our government provided \$7 million dollars in financing for our beautiful CUplex that we're so proud of in The Battlefords, Mr. Speaker. And then we put an additional \$814,000 dollars into our aquatic centre which forms part of that CUplex.

And not only the government, Mr. Speaker, is showing confidence in The Battlefords. I think it's great to see that the

private sector also is taking advantage of some of the activity going on in our area. We see a new strip mall being built, something that hasn't been built there for many, many years. Certainly I don't think there's been one since prior to 2007, so it's great to see these kind of things being built. We've seen a huge expansion to our Wal-Mart store, something that is one of our larger stores in our whole community.

We've seen \$10 million provided for over 200 rental and homeowner units provided through Social Services, something that is badly needed. Since 2007, Mr. Speaker, we've seen 127 new child care spaces built.

And something that's very unique to our community, Mr. Speaker, is our opera theatre that's above our town hall in the town of Battleford. And this very unique opera theatre was built, I guess as opera theatres should be built, with actual walls that are tapered in. They're not perpendicular for the sound that . . . and it is a really beautiful room. And our government has provided \$250,000 towards that renovation, and we can't wait to see that opera theatre be renovated and opened up again.

I'd just like to now, Mr. Speaker, talk a little bit about some things that are going on in my ministry. And I think we're doing some good work there. We've got some great officials that are doing some good work and, contrary to what the critic may think, I don't think we're totally inefficient over in that department.

This year the WSA [Water Security Agency] budget, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at about a \$48.5 million dollars in expenses. Our revenue is going to be in that department of \$246.7 million dollars.

As you may remember, in the fall of 2015 we passed some new drainage regs because these regulations had not been changed in over 35 years. They were in badly needed of updating and some changes that we needed to make. And we did make several changes in the regulations, but I think perhaps one of the most significant is the requirement that all works, whether they're built prior to 1981 or after 1981, will have to be approved. And if they can't be approved, if downstream land control can't be obtained, these works will be closed.

Mr. Speaker, we estimate that here in the province of Saskatchewan there's probably in the range of 150,000 drainage works in existence today, and perhaps only in the neighbourhood of about 5,000 of those are actually approved. So, Mr. Speaker, you can see that we've got a daunting task ahead of us, and that's why we've projected that this is probably going to take us in the range of 10 years to do. And we've decided that we're going to do it in a phased-in approach because this is the only way that we can probably get the job done.

And we're calling on some of our stakeholders, you know, some of the watershed authorities and some people that are in these areas that we think can provide some input. So we're beginning with some of the watersheds in our pilot projects that have experienced some flooding in recent years, and by working with the watershed groups and other stakeholders, we can make some valued decisions that will help inform how we develop our regulations going into the future. In this way, we

think we're going to be able to control some of the drainage problems that have been prevalent in this province in the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the massive drop in our resource revenue that we've talked about quite a bit in the House recently here, we are continuing with our commitments on numerous capital investment in infrastructure projects in the province. And this year, those infrastructure projects are going to total approximately \$20.83 million. And we're doing this, Mr. Speaker, from funds in our cash reserves. And the reason we've decided to do that . . . And these are cash reserves that have built up over the years from our water rates. By doing this, Mr. Speaker, we've saved the Saskatchewan taxpayers approximately \$640,000 a year in annual interest charges.

Some of the major projects that I would just like to highlight that we're doing, going to be doing over the next 12 months. You know, the most significant of these probably is the continued upgrades and renovations to the M1 canal, which provides water to a lot of our potash mines, to Saskatoon southeast. This year's tranche of money this year will be about twelve and a half million dollars, and that's going to bring our total expenditure for the renovations of that M1 canal up to \$34.5 million.

Another project that's being undertaken this year, Mr. Speaker, is going to be \$1.5 million for work on the Zelma dam east of Saskatoon. And we're going to continue with work on Rafferty and Alameda dams as well as other smaller projects across this province. Mr. Speaker, we have many dams in this province that we are responsible for maintaining, and that's why our budget is pretty significant for that.

Mr. Speaker, we just heard some comments about work being done on environment in this province. I think that we're doing some good work on environment in this province. And we absolutely remain committed to doing our part in reducing the greenhouse gas emissions in Saskatchewan, and I think we're seeing some good results. We're seeing a reduction in our greenhouse gas intensity by 12 per cent over the last few years, while at the same time, Mr. Speaker, our GDP has grown by 24 per cent. So we're definitely seeing a delinking of those two items. Our total emissions per capita has also decreased in recent times from times under the NDP. It grew by 70 per cent while they were in power at the same time with a stagnating economy, Mr. Speaker.

We have also just seen the largest investment per capita of any jurisdiction in technology and innovation to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Of course here, Mr. Speaker, I'm referring to the Boundary dam 3; the first commercial scale power plant to capture CO<sub>2</sub> emissions anywhere in the world. To date, Mr. Speaker, we've captured 839 000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> gas, and we're on track to capture 800 000 tonnes in this calendar year.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity a couple weeks ago to tour this Boundary dam 3 plant with our federal Environment minister, Catherine McKenna, and it was very rewarding to see how she came to understand the magnitude of this project. I think until you actually go there and are able to speak with the SaskPower officials who run this plant . . . And by the way they



did an excellent presentation, very professionally done, had total factual material available, answered questions, and I know the federal minister took a lot of notes. And she, as I said, has a great understanding of the magnitude of this project. She now has a great appreciation of how important this type of technology can be, not only in Saskatchewan, not only in Canada, but globally, Mr. Speaker.

With approximately 1,000 coal-fired power plants on the drawing board right now and a 600 megawatt power plant being built every 9 or 10 days in China, the technology that we've developed at Boundary dam 3 is something that could be the most phenomenal project to reduce greenhouse gases globally, and she certainly appreciates that now. And as she left that plant and we returned home, she basically couldn't wait to tell this story internationally, and I understand she's doing that. On a very . . . future trip to Asia, she's going to be talking about what we've done with our Boundary dam project.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we also tend to forget a lot of times the importance of some of our other industries in this province with regards to what they do for carbon sinks. And I'm referring now of course to agriculture. Sometimes we take a hit for our resource economy. We take a hit for what's done in agriculture. But one of the things that a lot of people forget about is that in recent years nearly 12 million tonnes of greenhouse gas has been sequestered in the sink in our agricultural industry. And, Mr. Speaker, this can go a long way towards doing our part to showing that Saskatchewan is in fact reducing greenhouse gas. You add to the agriculture sink, also our forestry sink, and you can see that Saskatchewan is definitely doing its part toward reducing greenhouse gas.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, of course we saw a very unprecedented wildfire season here in this province. And I would just like to take a moment to thank and commend all of our very professional and well-trained firefighters in the wildlife management branch. But equally important, Mr. Speaker, was the contribution of First Nations and northern community leaders and the volunteers who were invaluable in their assistance that they provided with fighting our fires in the North and with evacuating nearly 13,000 people from the North. The Red Cross and the Social Services have made a huge task as efficient as it possibly could have been and helped these people to get back into their homes again. We certainly thank them for their efforts.

This year, Mr. Speaker, after what we've heard from our northern consultations, we've made several changes. And we've also increased our budget this year by \$18 million in the wildfire branch to \$73.887 million. And, Mr. Speaker, as well we provide additional funds, should that be required, to handle an unprecedented fire season again this year.

Mr. Speaker, towards this end we have already undertaken several initiatives prior to the beginning of this fire season: things like purchasing more equipment, fire hoses, sprinklers, pumps, backpacks, those kinds of things. We have also done upgrades to our weather forecasting system. We've done a lot of clearing around communities in the area to help increase the fireguards.

But, Mr. Speaker, our most noteworthy investment in this

budget is our commitment for the purchase and conversion of the CL-215 water bomber, with a capital investment project of about \$14.6 million this year. And we've also committed to spend \$3.2 million on hangar and apron improvements in our La Ronge fire base. These are all improvements that will certainly contribute to our ability to continue to provide excellent fire protection in the North.

Mr. Speaker, we've also committed to investing in the North with a \$455,000 increase in our woodland caribou range assessment and range planning department. As well, we are investing 124,000 as start-up money for the new Saskatchewan Outfitters Association commission.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, we are investing \$100,000 in our fight to prevent aquatic invasive species from entering our province. Mr. Speaker, you may know that preventing these species, in particular quagga and zebra mussels, from ever entering this province has been of particular interest to me for some time now. I would just like to share a little history on these mussels and what a devastating problem they could be if they ever enter our province. And we do have many pristine lakes, waterways, and streams in this province that need protecting. These species are now getting close to our borders. They've been found in Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba, which of course is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world. And they're now also been found in Cedar Lake which is only 265 km east of Nipawin, so they are getting close.

Mr. Speaker, I won't go into too many more details on how these species came to our province but I will just say this, that we have increased our funding again. In '14-15 we had invested about 252,000. In '15-16 we increased it 264,000 and now we've added another 100,000 to that.

But, Mr. Speaker, no matter what we do I still believe that our best defence is education. And we're going to continue with that, whether it's billboards, advertising, radio and television — whatever we need to do to convince people to clean, drain, and dry. Let's face it, we live in a huge province. We cannot possibly stop every person from coming across any roadway so we need to continue our education efforts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that pretty much concludes my comments today. I would just like to close by saying this is exactly the kind of budget we need to keep Saskatchewan strong, and I will therefore be supporting the budget motion. And I certainly could never support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to take part in the budget debate. But first, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank a couple of people. First I want to thank the people that I have the good fortune of working with in this building, Mr. Speaker; that's the staff of my ministerial office. Mr. Speaker, we actually have worked very closely with the Minister of Rural and Remote Health's office, Mr. Speaker, and so there is a large joint office that really works well together on a day-to-day basis. But I especially want to thank those that are

in my office, Mr. Speaker. So to Morgan, and to Jim and Dale and Chaelah, Mr. Speaker, a tremendous thanks to them as well as everybody that works in the Rural and Remote Health office, Mr. Speaker, that provides so much assistance to us in handling casework and case files and interacting with people each and every day. So I want to thank them.

[15:00]

I also want to thank my constituency assistant, Marcie, who does a great job in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency office and has been doing so even before I became the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think you will know that she has been the constituency assistant for the MLA for Weyburn-Big Muddy for a number of years now, even going beyond the 10 years that I've had this position. And so I want to thank her, Mr. Speaker.

We're in a bit of a transition due to the fact that after this election we moved office spaces. We moved a block over to 4th Street in Weyburn, in downtown Weyburn. And there's a lot that goes into moving, Mr. Speaker, and she would know that better than I because Marcie was left to do most of the moving without me. And so she did a tremendous job in getting everything organized and everything transferred over and all of our bills changed and equipment moved over. And so I want to thank her for that.

And I want to thank my good friend Mark Schmidt. Mr. Speaker, Mark is probably my oldest friend in the world and he's a co-owner of Quality Plumbing & Heating in Weyburn, and he helped out on an afternoon to move some of the bigger furniture over with me. And so I want to thank Schmitt. I want to put that on the record. Schmitt, thank you for all your help.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to again, as I did very quickly in the Throne Speech reply, I do want to thank my family, especially Amanda and Jack. You know, Mr. Speaker, I haven't . . . maybe spoke a little bit, I've spoken a little bit about Jack on the floor, but I, you know, I want to take a little bit of time to talk about him. We're into a really great age. He will be two on the 28th of this month, Mr. Speaker, and it's going by so fast. And he's got more energy than the two of us combined and so we're trying to keep up with him, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, we're into that age with him where, you know, he's doing a lot of talking, but he's not saying a lot of words that make a lot of sense, which kind of reminds me about being at work here from time to time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But you know, the words are starting to come, and we're starting to figure out what stuff means. So some's pretty obvious. So, juice. He's saying juice quite a bit. So we know he wants some juice. And he says Peas, and Peas, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is short for PJ, which is our dog. Our dog is named Pickle Juice and we call him PJ, and Jack calls him Peas. And so he'll be talking about Peas, something that Peas has done.

And he knows the word no. And we're hearing that quite a bit, and being that he's a couple weeks away from the age of two, I think we'll be hearing that for a number of years to come. But, Mr. Speaker, I think the best word is when you hear dad or dada, Mr. Speaker, and so I just want to just put on the record what a joy and a blessing he has been and how much I love my

Jacky Boy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate the Finance minister and all the members of treasury board for the work that they did in putting together a difficult budget, Mr. Speaker. And I do want to say and put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that we've been very fortunate, first with Rod Gantefer and then Ken Krawetz, Mr. Speaker, who served admirably for many years in this House even before they stepped into the chair to be the Finance minister and the Chair of the treasury board, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would say, in my opinion, that we are very lucky to have the Finance minister that is now the Finance minister of the province to follow in those footsteps. In fact, Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions back home and in Swift Current when I was at an event, I had a number of people come up to me to say that they actually watched the budget address and they were so very impressed with our Finance minister and the way he delivered that address but the content of the budget that he was able to put together. So I congratulate the member.

Mr. Speaker, and I also want to congratulate other members that have taken part in great speeches, and I had an opportunity to hear a lot of them last night. But I especially want to congratulate the member from Lloydminster for a great speech, especially one that I think will be one that not only for . . . And I think members know that I'm a bit of a history buff, as you are. But I think that's one speech not just for her own family members — because I think that that'll be quite a treat for her family members 50 years from now and 100 years from now to read that speech and note the connection with her family and this building, Mr. Speaker — but I think that's a speech that anybody that has an interest in this province will sure enjoy and find quite interesting. So I want to thank the member from Lloydminster for delivering that.

Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of representing the great constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy, Mr. Speaker, and I want to talk a little bit about my constituency before I get into how I think the budget will be reviewed and viewed back home. Mr. Speaker, we've had a bit of a change in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, so I'm still very fortunate to represent the city of Weyburn and towns like Bengough and Ogema and Pangman, Yellow Grass, Minton, Gladmar, Ceylon. And now Radville and Lake Alma are two new communities in our constituency, even though they were in the constituency up until 10 years ago, and then there was some boundaries that were redrawn. And there's other smaller communities along the way — Trossachs and others, Mr. Speaker — as well as our rural municipalities, that make up a really great constituency.

And, Mr. Speaker, I now no longer represent Willow Bunch, well at least half of Willow Bunch, Mr. Speaker, because the highway divided Willow Bunch between myself and Wood River, as well as the community of Coronach, Mr. Speaker. But I think they will be well represented for many years to come by the new member for Wood River, Mr. Speaker. But I want to thank people in those communities for all of their support but as well their encouragement and their advice all those many years.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll talk a little bit about each one of them, and I'll try to be pretty brief. So, Mr. Speaker, on the far west side

of the constituency is the community of Bengough, Mr. Speaker. This is really the gateway to the Big Muddy Valley, Mr. Speaker. In fact, they host for the 12th year in a row this year, this July will be the Gateway Festival, Mr. Speaker. And I would encourage members, if you have an opportunity to be down in the Big Muddy Valley area down near Bengough, to check out the Gateway Festival, Mr. Speaker.

It is a real great festival for a community of, you know, somewhere between 3 and 500 people, Mr. Speaker. But on that weekend every year for the last 12 years — and it has grown each and every year — but that community grows by like 10 times the population. And, Mr. Speaker, Corb Lund will be the headliner this year as well as, maybe for some older members, the Stampeders if that's maybe more along your taste, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage members, if they have an opportunity, the people of Bengough do a great job.

So if you head south on 34 Highway about 20 minutes later you'll be in Montana, Mr. Speaker, but before you get there you'll hit Castle Butte which is one of the great geographical landmarks in this province, Mr. Speaker. And it's in the heart of the Big Muddy Valley, and people will know it when they see it if you haven't ever heard of it before. But if you go north on 34 and then east on Highway 13 you get to Ogema.

Mr. Speaker, there isn't enough time in this House to talk about Ogema, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, again another community of a couple of hundred people, Mr. Speaker. The town of Ogema . . . Actually the original name was Omega, Mr. Speaker, meaning the end because at the time it was the end of that rail line. But when they registered their name back in about 1911 or 1912 they realized or they were told that there was another town already incorporated Omega. So they just switched the letters around to come up with Ogema, and that's how Ogema got its name.

Mr. Speaker, for many years, I think, like a lot of communities in rural Saskatchewan, they saw their numbers dwindling and their population and communities around them going by the wayside, Mr. Speaker. And about 10 years ago, a little more than 10 years ago there was a group of citizens — I would say a little bit more than 10 years ago — headed up by people like Wayne Myron, who's the mayor of Ogema, and they decided that their fate was going to be different, Mr. Speaker. And they were not going to rely on anybody else to decide their own fate, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, they started out by buying the shortline and by buying the elevator. And then they decided, well we need a train station because ours got tore down years ago. So they found an exact replica train station, Mr. Speaker, a 1912 edition train station. It was being used to store grain up near Simpson, Saskatchewan, and they traded a couple of modern grain bins, I think two or three grain bins, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure of the capacity of them. But they traded the farmer the brand new grains bins for this old train station that had been used to store grain up near Simpson. And over about seven years and thousands of hours of volunteer work, they restored this train station, Mr. Speaker, and it's now really become the focal point of the community. And from then, other things have happened, Mr. Speaker.

Southern Prairie Railway. So if you were down in Bengough during the Gateway Festival, I'd encourage you to take a stop in Ogema and ride the train. You can ride on a Saturday and go east to Pangman and take part in the farmers' market in Pangman, or you can go west on one of their various days of operation and go to places like Horizon and get a tour of a restored grain elevator, a working grain elevator, or even a pitchfork fondue with some cowboy poetry. And, Mr. Speaker, every once in a while that train actually gets stopped by bank robbers, by train robbers, and that's quite an experience. And so I would encourage people to stop by Ogema.

Mr. Speaker, I'll say during the campaign one of the best stops was at a restaurant called Solo Italia. They make fresh made pasta and pizza, Mr. Speaker, and it's a great story. It was a young couple that met on vacation. They were either in Mexico or somewhere in the Caribbean, and he was from Italy and she was from Ogema, and they got together. They became a couple, and I think they lived in northern Italy for a time. And then they decided to relocate to Ogema where they started an Italian restaurant. Mr. Speaker, their frozen pizzas and frozen pastas can be bought all over southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and it's just a real great community, a real jewel in our province.

Mr. Speaker, when you head east on Highway 13, you can take a turn south on 28 and visit Radville and see the new Marian Health Centre that was built just in the last year or so, Mr. Speaker. Or you can keep going on 13 and get to Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, and that's the largest community in my constituency.

You know, Mr. Speaker, so those are a bit about the places, and I could talk a lot about history. I was really inspired by the member from Lloydminster that talked about history. And I don't have enough time, but you know, Weyburn was home to one of the provincial hospitals, the Souris Valley mental hospital, Mr. Speaker. At the time it was built, in 1921, when it was opened it was the largest building in the British Commonwealth, Mr. Speaker, in Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, you know, there's just so many great things about Weyburn. It is the opportunity city. We are the largest inland grain gathering point in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and really it is the opportunity city for a variety of reasons.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's a little bit about the places I represent, and I want to talk a little bit about the people I represent. Mr. Speaker, we have a pretty mixed economy between agriculture and a lot of ranching in our area, especially down in the Big Muddy Valley. And obviously the oil industry is a pretty important part of our constituency, Mr. Speaker. And so, you know, we've been fortunate on part of our economy that, you know, the agricultural part of our local economy has really been steadfast and has really been the mainstay, even at the earliest days of the communities that I've just mentioned, Mr. Speaker. But you know I would say more and more, you know, we've seen development, from the historical developments back in the '40s and '50s, and that seemed to be, you know . . . We had the benefit of some longer term plays, Mr. Speaker. And obviously we've benefited mightily from new discoveries like the Bakken and new technologies like horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, the last year, especially the last year with the low commodity prices for oil has meant, you know, it's meant some difficult times for people in my constituency, for businesses and families, Mr. Speaker. It's meant that some of our daycares . . . There's a lot less kids in some of those daycares than there were at the beginning of the year, Mr. Speaker, because families have had to make some difficult decisions in terms of leaving and trying to find work elsewhere.

But, Mr. Speaker, one thing about my constituents is they are hard working and they are optimistic, Mr. Speaker. And so I support this budget because I think it's a reflection on them, and it's a reflection on the things that I heard during the election. It keeps taxes low. Mr. Speaker, this is not a time I think that we need to be adding any more difficulty to ensuring that we have a competitive environment, ensuring that people can live in Saskatchewan and grow a business in Saskatchewan and employ people in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it keeps building. It keeps building at a time that, Mr. Speaker, our province has seen incredible growth. Mr. Speaker, it provides for more innovation and as well it thinks for the long term, Mr. Speaker. So those are some of the areas that I want to talk about.

So as I said before, certainly what I heard during the campaign is that when you live in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, you see it all around you. You see the difficulties that some of the industry is going through, some of our local economy. But we've been through this before, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a family that was very involved in the oil industry. My dad was a truck driver and, Mr. Speaker, I was pretty young at the time but, you know, I remember what the mid-'80s were like in terms of the fact that early in my life . . . I don't quite remember this but early in my life, you know, my dad took another job working for a contractor, working in the oil industry just to try to make ends meet. You know, I remember my mother taking on a second job at Christmas time, Mr. Speaker, just to ensure that we could have some presents under the Christmas tree, Mr. Speaker. So we've been through this before.

[15:15]

I have said before, I have mentioned before my grandfather, who is 88 years old — I think 88 years old this year in August, Mr. Speaker — worked in the oil patch, was a catskiner his entire life, built the lease site for the first horizontal well drilled in southern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, back in about 1989 or 1990, the last job he ever worked on, Mr. Speaker, before he shut down his business and retired.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've been through this before and we know, and the people in my constituency know that a strong economy is not just needed so that government can invest, but also so that communities can continue to invest. The Marian Health Centre, the new Marian Health Centre in Radville would never have been built if government didn't have the revenue and if the community couldn't have raised their 20 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

You know, you hear from members opposite about the dollars that were left behind when the government changed in 2007. Well why weren't they building some of this infrastructure that we needed, Mr. Speaker? So we've had a lot of catch-up and I'm going to talk a little bit more about that later.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think at a time like this we need to be . . . I'll very quickly say we need to be supporting our industry. We need to be supporting ways to get our industries' products to market. We must not be advocating some of the things that we're hearing from members opposite in terms of some manifestos that are going around. And we need federal leadership, Mr. Speaker, and we certainly know where that's coming from in this province, and frankly in Western Canada, and it's coming from a member that sits over here on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we need to keep building and, you know, I'll talk a little bit about some of the infrastructure that we're trying to build in my ministry, Mr. Speaker. But you know, even if you look at SaskPower . . . So 60,000 customers in the last eight years and a projection of about 82,000 customers over the next 10 years, Mr. Speaker. So a business, a private company . . . And I think it doesn't really matter if it's a Crown corporation or a private company. Certainly it was the case when my grandfather started his business in . . . Basically he owned a couple of Cats, owned a couple of bulldozers, a couple of scrapers, and he built municipal roads and he built lease sites. And he was told when he went out on his own, Mr. Speaker . . . The bank gave him a year. He had six kids at the time, Mr. Speaker, and he used to work for other . . . He was a contractor, worked for others and decided he was going to take the leap and go on his own, Mr. Speaker. And he had a year to make things work, Mr. Speaker. Like any business, you have a couple of options. You can invest using your earnings or you can take on debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, but the members opposite don't like either one. They don't like, well they don't like when rates go up, Mr. Speaker. They're always against when rates go up, even though, Mr. Speaker, on average I think the maintenance costs for SaskPower are about \$400 million a year just to keep the maintenance going. And I think the average under the members opposite was less than \$400 million a year. So they weren't even keeping up with the maintenance, Mr. Speaker. So never . . . If you're the NDP, never raise a rate. Never take capital dollars out of the earnings of the company, but never take on any debt as a company.

So, Mr. Speaker, how do you square those two? That's the answer that we still don't have from the members opposite, which we don't have on a lot of issues, Mr. Speaker. They take all sorts of positions of what they're against, and what they wouldn't do if they were the government, but we don't really hear what they would do to ensure that this province continues to grow.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's actually a third option. I said two. You can take it out of the earnings, you can take on debt, or you can stop growing. And I think that that's a little bit of what the philosophy from the members opposite was, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it was a coincidence when a member from Prince Albert under the NDP said that it's okay when people leave the province because there's more for the rest of us, because I think that that was the mentality. Because you don't have to make the decisions on capital infrastructure. You don't have to make some of the decisions that we've had to make, Mr. Speaker, when the province isn't growing, Mr. Speaker. And I think that that tells a lot about the members on the NDP side of the House

and what their party stands for. So, Mr. Speaker, we're going to keep building, and we're going to be innovative when we do it, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member from Riversdale, my colleague, my friend from Riversdale, who I have a great deal of respect for, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we agree on not a lot, disagree on most, Mr. Speaker, but she mentioned in her speech, and I read it, she mentioned that, so we put 14.1 million into RUH [Royal University Hospital] and the Pasqua and the General Hospital. Well, Mr. Speaker, we actually have more than that. Those are for three special projects on heating and cooling and electrical, and over top of that we've actually found, in a difficult year, a 25 per cent increase in maintenance for our capital facilities, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — Still not enough.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — So, Mr. Speaker, on one hand . . . The member from Riversdale points out that it's not enough. We're not putting enough in because she said they're putting \$14.1 million into these buildings, but they need \$675 million in maintenance. And, Mr. Speaker, I would agree. We have, in terms of the capital needs of our province just in health care, not including education or highways or other areas, in health care it's in the billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

And so the member opposite criticizes: well you're putting 14 million in, not including what we've done on new buildings and the over \$1 billion that we spent in eight years, Mr. Speaker. But at a time when the members opposite commissioned a study on health care facilities and the maintenance, they commissioned the study and then they sat on it. And when we were elected, the new Health minister and the members of the cabinet looked at it and it was well over \$1 billion that was needed.

You know what the NDP spent on maintenance of health facilities at a time that their report said they needed over \$1 billion in maintenance — \$4.4 million. Less than the amount of money that we're going to put into the heating and cooling at RUH, Mr. Speaker. For the entire province, \$4.4 million.

So on one hand, it's spend more. On the other hand, they say, don't spend in a different way. Don't spend in the non-traditional way. So, Mr. Speaker, if that was the case we would never have a brand new long-term care facility in Swift Current. We'd never have it. We P3'd that one, Mr. Speaker, on time, on budget, and the first residents started moving in on Sunday, Mr. Speaker. That would never have been built.

The Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford would never have been built. There just isn't enough money in the budget to do it. And, Mr. Speaker, that's even considering the members opposite saying that anything less than 6 per cent in health care is a zero. So you've got to spend 6 per cent in health care plus you've got to build everything traditional like the way we've always done it, Mr. Speaker. It just doesn't add up.

And you know what else doesn't add up? The fact that the Finance critic said on budget day you have to spend more than 6 per cent in health care or else it's a zero. Well that's \$335 million, and frankly I'd love a 6 . . . In case the Finance

minister's listening, in the event that I have this seat next year, I'd love a 6 per cent increase. Just so you know. Just so you know, I'm not turning down 6 per cent.

But the members opposite campaigned two months ago in an election . . . Now keep in mind 6 per cent is what we have to spend in health care according to the NDP, yet their own platform called for a point eight per cent increase in health.

So if you're the Sask Party, you have to spend 6 per cent in health care, which is zero, but if you're the NDP, less than 1 per cent is fine. That's what we get from the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit . . . I don't have a lot of time left. Okay, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be really quick.

The member from Riversdale talked a lot about the drug plan, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one thing that she mentioned is, she talked about a report called *Pharmacare 2020*. It's a UBC [University of British Columbia] report. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she talked a little bit about that this is apparently the gold standard of what a pharmacare or a pharmacy program should look like, and it should be based on efficacy and safety, Mr. Speaker. So let's make decisions based on efficacy; I think that that's reasonable. We make decisions based on the common drug review and work through the health innovation working group to determine, can we afford the drug? Can we negotiate a price that makes sense? And is it effective?

Yet from time to time we get the member from Riversdale that says, don't worry about the common drug review, just approve the drug. Why aren't you paying for the drug? And so we'll say, well we've got to go through a process to ensure that it's effective. Is there efficacy in terms of funding this drug? So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't understand that. On one hand she said it should be based on efficacy, and on the other hand she says, just fund everything, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It doesn't make sense.

And the other thing she said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I don't have all the details, but I know she did talk about a constituent of hers. And she talked about a constituent of hers, and I'll quote:

I'm thinking about a woman I talked to on Friday who lives in low-income housing in Riversdale on 20th Street. She earns . . . \$1,200, [actually] \$1,180 a month with her CPP and OAS, and she pays . . . 800 in rent. So she has about \$400 a month to live on. So an increase for her medications at \$5 a pop . . . Mr. Speaker, and her comment to me: I'm lucky I live where I do, which is low-income . . . [but otherwise] I'd be using the food bank.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the member opposite would have taken the time for that constituent. Based on hearing that she only makes \$1,180 a month, I hope she would have taken the time to say — instead of just maybe a partisan comment about, you know, the government raised it up to \$25, and how dare they raise it \$5, all those types of political comments — I hope she would have said, why don't you, madam constituent that lives on 20th Street, it's Friday, make an appointment. Come down to my office. Because if you only make \$1,180 a month, well you may be eligible for SIP [seniors' income plan],

which would add to your income. And if you're eligible for SIP, then that means that you're also eligible for some of our special support drug plans, which means that you get chiro and you get eyeglasses and you get a reduced deductible two times a year at \$100 a month, and then 35 per cent is your cap on your drugs.

Then if you still are eligible, you may be eligible for special support, which basically is if your drug costs are still above 3.4 per cent of your income, then we basically will take the lower of the two, either \$25 per prescription or the lower amount, and in many cases it's actually lower. So I hope she didn't just do what I fear that she did, is just make a political comment about the government raising her drug prices again by 25, and actually provided some help and some assistance to say, you actually may be eligible for additional programs. If she didn't do that, I would hope that she would perhaps refer that constituent on to my office because we'd be happy to try to help that constituent out of hers.

But, Mr. Speaker, so these are not easy decisions. I know Tatagwa View got their funding cut, Mr. Speaker. That's a park in my constituency in the city of Weyburn. It's, I believe, \$47,000 a year that they receive. But the good news is, what they received in increased revenue sharing, well in amount . . . well exceeds that. In fact Weyburn, the city of Weyburn's revenue sharing has gone from \$820,000 under the NDP to over \$2.2 million under this government, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, difficult decisions had to be made. Difficult decisions in raising from 20 to \$25, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, the answer isn't what the NDP is offering. The answer is not to never change, as we hear from the members opposite, because I don't even know what their ideas is, Mr. Speaker. Would they think that in 2007 a \$15 drug plan should be put in place and never touched ever again? Should it have stayed at \$20 forever? Should we never have touched that program ever again, Mr. Speaker? So is it a drug plan that never changes? Is it saying no to P3s [public-private partnership]? Is it saying no to private surgical suites? No for two-for-one MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] and CTs [computerized tomography] and no to innovation, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, for all those reasons, that's why I'm saying no to the amendment and I'm saying yes to the budget. Thank you.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a great pleasure to join in the debate today, my first opportunity as the new member from Moosomin constituency.

You know, Mr. Speaker, as I campaigned in the run-up to the April 4th election, standing on the doorsteps in Moosomin constituency, I kept getting one message from the great majority of the people I encountered. The message, Mr. Speaker, that came across again and again was that people knew we were in challenging times, but they overwhelmingly expressed their confidence and optimism in having the province's economy in the hands of the Saskatchewan Party. And, Mr. Speaker, they were very appreciative of the things that this government has done for them in the last two terms. This includes over 100 million in road improvements: 20 million in

the last year and another 14 million in the budget for this year.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, in the community of Moosomin alone there has been a 142 per cent increase in revenue sharing since 2007, an \$18 million integrated health care facility in Kipling, a new hospital in Moosomin, significant budget increases for the health regions and school divisions that serve our constituency, improvements to area schools, and the list goes on and on. Mr. Speaker, the good people of Moosomin constituency know where the money went. They see evidence of it every day.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I told you in my maiden speech, I've had the opportunity to live and work in many countries around the world. I've seen first-hand that the world wants what Saskatchewan has to offer, and it has always made me proud to realize that we have world-class products, world-class technology, and world-class know-how that the world is eager to acquire. And the Saskatchewan Party government has done everything in their power to facilitate this process, and we continue to do so.

Our government continues to receive excellent reviews from rural Saskatchewan for the assets of this budget. Just a week ago, Mr. Speaker, SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, stated in a June 1st new release, and I quote, "First and foremost, SARM is very pleased that the government's . . . commitment to maintaining the municipal revenue sharing formula has remained strong." Here's another, Mr. Speaker. The president of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan remarked, "I'll just fall short of saying Christmas [has come] . . . early. All the programs are fully funded. In fact, I've seen increases."

But, Mr. Speaker, in order for me to join this budget, I have to get something off my chest that's been bothering me for some time now. And the reason I want to include this in the debate is because it goes right to the root of one of the most important questions in our province. And that question is, just who is best suited to look after our economy? As our Finance minister told us, our province's strength is being tested. So the question remains, who is best suited to face these tests? Who is best suited to find the solutions to the challenges we're going to have to deal with in the upcoming years?

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I want to take a close look at a document that appeared during the last federal election campaign. It was called the Leap Manifesto. When I read it, I was absolutely astounded by what it said, and I was sure it would soon be discredited and never to be seen or heard of again. But no, it's still with us, and would it surprise you, Mr. Speaker, that it would resurface at the NDP's national convention in Edmonton where they have adopted this dogma, this ideology of the Leap Manifesto in principle.

And I suppose it wouldn't surprise you, Mr. Speaker, to discover that among our friends opposite and those who work for them, there are those that have endorsed it. The Leap Manifesto, Mr. Speaker, is really an astonishing study conceived by armchair economists who seem to be going off in all directions at once and ending up at a dead end. The eminent Canadian political commentator, Rex Murphy, has dubbed it a

world-shaking bleat likely concocted at a Greenpeace séance in a crop circle.

But before I get into my objections to the Leap Manifesto and how it relates to our budget, there were a couple of phrases in that document that caught my eye. For instance, Mr. Speaker, they make mention of crumbling infrastructure. And the reason it caught my eye is because its crumbling infrastructure is something that Saskatchewan knew a lot about.

In November 2007 when this government was elected, one of the things we were confronted with was crumbling infrastructure. The previous government had failed in their upkeep of highways, had failed to adequately maintain schools and hospitals, although in many cases they just closed them rather than fix them. Mr. Speaker, they had left an infrastructure deficit that had to be dealt with by the Saskatchewan Party government. And deal with it we did — \$8 billion in eight years. Mr. Speaker, from 2007 to 2015 the Saskatchewan Party government more than doubled the commitment to infrastructure of the previous 16 years.

But as the Minister of Finance clearly stated, keeping Saskatchewan strong means there's more to do. That's why, Mr. Speaker, this budget includes allocation of a record 1.15 billion for the highways and infrastructure budget. For the first time in Saskatchewan's history, the highways and infrastructure budget is more than \$1 billion.

And the reviews are in, Mr. Speaker. A June 1st news release from the Canadian Press stated: "Winners: Drivers. More than 1,300 kilometres of provincial highways to see repairs or upgrades this year." In another release from SARM, they commented this time about the 16 million allocated for the municipal roads for the economy program: "This speaks to the Saskatchewan Party's commitment to help municipalities facilitate the movement of grain, oil, and other products over their roads."

And that's only roads. Looking further into the budget, we see municipal infrastructure, an increase; school construction, maintenance, renewal, an increase. In fact the largest capital investment for the Saskatchewan Builds capital plan, \$1.7 billion, which is an increase — in challenging times, mind you — of \$400 million. In 2016-2017, Mr. Speaker, Crown corporations including SaskPower, SaskTel, SaskEnergy are projected to spend almost \$1.8 billion on infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, in challenging times, our government is actually increasing the budget allocations for infrastructure. Does that begin to answer the question, who is best suited to look after our economy?

The Leap Manifesto also references our First Nations, and I quote: "Indigenous Peoples should be first to receive public support for their own clean energy projects." Well that might be a good point, Mr. Speaker, but not very original idea. In 2011, four years before the Leap Manifesto appeared, the province's First Nations Power Authority negotiated a mutually beneficial 10-year agreement with SaskPower to develop First Nations-led power projects in Saskatchewan. One of these projects is forecasted to result in the production of 40 megawatts of clean energy from solar and flare gas. This is a one-of-a-kind contract in North America. It creates business and investment

opportunities and clearly demonstrates this government's commitment to partner with our First Nations population in Saskatchewan's economy.

And this budget shows our further commitment to First Nations people with an increase — yes, in challenging times — an increase in program funding targeted at First Nations and Métis organizations and individuals. More funding for on- and off-reserve job training programs and on-reserve basic education, and there is an increase, shows an increase in gaming agreement transfers. Further it includes increased funding for additional wildfire crews and for the Ministry of Highway and Infrastructure's First Nations apprenticeship program. Again, when we ask ourselves the question who is best suited to look after our economy, the answer becomes quite obvious.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the Leap Manifesto attempts to set its hand to agriculture policy, this is really when we separate the wheat from the chaff. Here's their take on agriculture, and I quote:

We must develop a more localized and ecologically-based agricultural system to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, absorb shocks in the global [food] supply — and produce healthier and more affordable food for everyone.

And there's more, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

We call for an end to all trade deals that interfere with our attempts to rebuild local economies, regulate corporations and stop damaging extractive projects.

I think that the most accurate statement I have heard regarding this policy was put forward by my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture. He said, I've never read two paragraphs which voiced more ignorance of a subject than these two in my whole life, and we know that's a long time. He goes on to say, they couldn't have got it more wrong. This is absolutely the opposite of the truth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to illustrate to you just how ridiculous this section of the Leap Manifesto is. So I questioned some of the legislative staff, took some measurements and, according to my calculations, this Chamber would hold approximately 195,000 bushels of grain. Now bear with me, Mr. Speaker. When I tell you that my good friend and neighbour down the road operates a modern and efficient farm, last year he harvested 400,000 bushels of canola. So he would have filled this Chamber more than two times over. He could have filled this Chamber twice with his barley crop and one more time with the wheat he harvested.

And here's the point I'm making. Mr. Speaker, if we were to end all trade deals as the Leap Manifesto proposes, where would my neighbour and all the other farmers in our rural municipalities sell their grain? End all trade deals. End one of the cornerstones of our economy. Imagine if you will, if there were no international trade deals, the farmers in my RM, all 176 of them, and keeping in mind the huge volumes of grain we're talking about, if they were to descend on our local town, Glenavon, a town of 188 people, if they were to arrive there selling their products at the locals farmers' market, what would that be like?

Mr. Speaker, my wife tells me that you need about 3 cups of flour to make a loaf of bread. I just don't see myself having the time to calculate how many loaves of bread the good folks of Glenavon would have to consume to use all that grain. And of course, Mr. Speaker, it's ridiculous. And thinking that people who support the Leap Manifesto want to be put in charge of Saskatchewan's economy, well that's also ridiculous. Does that help answer the question, who is best suited to look after Saskatchewan's economy?

Mr. Speaker, fully 20 per cent of the jobs in this province are directly related to international exports. That is why this budget acknowledges loud and clear that agriculture is still a central force in Saskatchewan's economy.

The Minister of Finance in his opening message clearly stated, and I quote, "The provincial government continues its significant commitment to the agriculture sector." Accordingly this budget includes a 7.5 increase in funding for the Agriculture ministry. It further provides almost 15 million increased funding for agriculture business risk management programs and 27 million for agricultural research.

Saskatchewan exports 95 per cent of all our agricultural production. Only 5 per cent is consumed in Canada. Trade is absolutely vital to our province and our economy. And this government is proud of our agricultural producers. We are proud of our world-leading technology, and we are proud that we produce some of the best and safest products you will find anywhere in the world. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, through Growing Forward 2 program, the provincial government will contribute 11 million of the 37 million that will see the construction of the new international trade centre at Evraz Place in Regina.

This 150,000 square foot space will be a suitable showplace for such major events as Canadian Western Agribition and Canadian Farm Progress Show. It further solidifies this government's commitment to aggressively market and promote what our province has to offer.

We welcome trade. We encourage trade. And we will support the good people of this province by standing up for their interests.

The NDP are always asking, where did the money go? Well I'd like to ask the NDP and their Leap Manifesto, where will the money come from? And the answer is simple. The answer, Mr. Speaker, is raise taxes. Raise taxes on the wealthy. Raise taxes on corporations. Increase resource royalties. Invent new taxes. Yes, it's simple, Mr. Speaker. In the 16 years previous that the Saskatchewan Party was elected, the NDP raised taxes 21 times. And the equalization payments flowed in, and the silence in the agricultural, resource, and manufacturing sectors was deafening.

Mr. Speaker, in the Moosomin constituency, we have a success story that we're all proud of. Seed Hawk Inc. in Langbank has thrived in an environment where successive Saskatchewan Party governments have created a business environment that has given them the opportunity to succeed. Seed Hawk is at the very cutting edge of precision seeding equipment. They are among the best in the world at what they do. Mr. Speaker, my

business dealings have taken me to a number of countries overseas and when I see Seed Hawk equipment working in these countries, I feel such pride that this is Saskatchewan innovation, know-how, and technology competing with the best in the world.

Companies like Seed Hawk contribute greatly to the provincial economy, provide good jobs for the people in rural Saskatchewan, and by the way, Mr. Speaker, for the second year in a row, Seed Hawk has been chosen as one of the best places to work in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Seed Hawk are innovators and the patents that they have registered demonstrate how they are at the forefront of modern scientific agricultural research and development. I can't wait to see what they'll do with this government's patent box initiative. This patent box incentive is another example of how our government supports homegrown innovation.

This is the kind of business that has contributed to our province's record exports. Mr. Speaker, in 2015 Saskatchewan exports reached \$32.6 billion. To put it another way, that works out to be roughly \$30,000 for every man, woman, and child in this province. This is an amazing achievement and something that everyone in this province should be proud of.

In 2007 under the NDP government, Saskatchewan agricultural exports were 6.4 billion. In 2015 our exports reached 15.3 billion. That's 139 per cent increase. Is there still any question who is best suited to look after Saskatchewan's economy? And all this, Mr. Speaker, is because of a business environment where they haven't been overburdened with taxes, where we cut red tape, where we reward innovation, innovation that we are seeing developed by companies like Seed Hawk and many others. It shows how our government's budget with its \$27 million commitment to research funding will keep Saskatchewan at the forefront of agricultural science. So who is better suited to look after Saskatchewan's economy?

The Minister of Finance has presented us with a well-considered document, a budget, as he said, that is doing the prudent thing, to run a manageable deficit rather than implement severe cuts to programs and services or increase the tax burden on Saskatchewan people and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, when Saskatchewan people are given the opportunity to succeed, they will succeed. And the Saskatchewan Party government continues to foster this opportunity. Mr. Speaker, this budget provides real benefits for real people, real Saskatchewan people, real people who are innovators and need government encouragement, not roadblocks; real people who need to move their technology and products to the rest of the world; real people who want their children to attend the best schools, and their loved ones to be cared for in the best hospitals and care homes; real people who enjoy the shortest surgical wait times in Canada; real people who have reasonable utility rates, still the second lowest in Canada; people who appreciate the second lowest taxes in Canada; and people who might need one of the 15 new cancer drugs now approved — but, Mr. Speaker, real people who are proud to live in the only province in Canada that plans to reach a balanced budget by next year.



[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, we are a government that looks before it leaps, that gives its people the opportunity to succeed, not by burdening them with new and higher taxes. And we are a government that knows that this job isn't finished. We are a government that listens to the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, the citizens of Saskatchewan bestowed a great confidence on Saskatchewan Party on April 4th. They have shouted loud and clear that they feel we are the ones best suited to look after Saskatchewan's economy.

I am proud, Mr. Speaker, to support this budget put forward by the Minister of Finance that will keep Saskatchewan strong. Further I will not support any amendments. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege and an honour to rise today in the House to join in the budget debate. It's always a privilege and honour to join in these debates and, this being my first budget debate, it's extra special, I suppose.

I don't think I'll shock anybody but I am rising to support the amendment to the budget and will not be supporting the budget itself. I do want to thank our Finance critic. I think she's done a fantastic, remarkable job of looking at the budget and giving it the analysis that it deserves and highlighting the concerns that we have in the budget.

In particular we feel the budget reveals more cuts, more fees, and no plan to protect and create jobs. And of course the Finance critic says it a little bit more eloquently than I do but that's what my focus of this discussion will be. And I'm going to educate the members opposite a little bit because if you hear from their speeches it sounds like everything is great about this budget. Nobody is raising any red flags; nothing's wrong. And I think already . . . It's only been a week and a day since the budget was released. We've already seen quite a few articles in the newspaper, quite a few groups speaking out and raising concerns, so I'm going to highlight those.

But I know this budget is the opposite of the gift that keeps on giving. It's the budget that keeps on taking away, and it's a bit of a slow burn of a budget that seems like more and more we'll see what the truth is behind these cuts and the problems that will be associated with that. Every day, I think every single day our caucus is hearing from different organizations, new organizations every single day about what this budget means to them negatively and the cuts that they're going to be forced to face and the very difficult decisions they're going to have to have.

Before I get into that any more . . . But I do want to highlight that it's clear that in the budget that was revealed to us, there was no reason why we had to wait until June 1st for this budget to come out. It was no shock to anybody at this point in time that the price of oil was low and wasn't going to go up any time soon. There's no reason why this couldn't have come out before the election was called and then we would have had a little bit of honesty from this government, and the Saskatchewan people

could have gone into the election with their eyes open and they could have made an informed decision.

And I know from trying to figure out, Mr. Speaker, whether or not or how this budget will affect my constituents in Regina Douglas Park, there were a few things that I'm assuming will be concerning for them and it would have been nice if they would have been able to see those before they voted.

For example, they failed to mention the plan to hike prescription drug costs for seniors and children, and that would have been of particular concern because I do have a lot of young families and a lot of seniors on fixed income who live in my constituency. And that's one of the ones that have already been highlighted as a concern.

I'm looking at a *Leader-Post* article, June 6th, where some local groups were already highlighting the concern. And I think we talked about this in question period already today, but I want to highlight. Holly Schick who's the executive director of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism pointed out that, "My immediate take would be that even that \$5 per prescription increase can be significant for some people. A lot of older adults have multiple prescriptions." And then she says here again later on in the article, "Older adults are in a position where their income is quite fixed and they have no options to do anything about it. Some people can go out and get a job but for many folks, they are not able to do that anymore."

And that's the problem with this, Mr. Speaker, is that a lot of seniors are on fixed income and any type of changes to their expenses, it hurts them. And it's a problem, and that's what the concern is. And that's the problem with having these increases go on the backs of vulnerable people in our community. They're already struggling. You know, they're already having a hard time making ends meet, especially in Regina, I would say, with the cost of rent going up and cost of food going up, and now the cost of prescription going up as well.

The other one that is concerning is the reversal of the active families tax benefit which really helps give a leg up to middle-class families especially, who wanted to give their children an opportunity to participate in sports. As we all know, that it's such an important thing to give kids the opportunity to participate in kind of group sports. I have been a volunteer with Regina Big Sisters for a few years, and I know the value it is for kids from seeing my little . . . And you know, when she doesn't have the opportunity to participate in sports . . . But when she does get the opportunity to be in a team environment, it's huge. It's a huge impact on their self-esteem, and it's a huge impact on the people that they become as they get older.

The other one also is the increases to our utilities that weren't discussed in the budget but were conveniently talked about very shortly after session started, and that's another one that would have been really nice to know as well. And like I said, lots of seniors in my constituency, lots of young families, so lots of concerns, especially with seniors, when the costs are going up when you have a fixed income. So all these aren't platform items that the Sask Party ran on, but now we're having to deal with them.

Another one is the Wascana Centre Authority funding which,

you know, we've heard is potentially on the chopping block. It's up for discussion, apparently. That borders my constituency. It's a very beautiful, large part of Regina. I know I run around there almost every other day. I know my leader runs there quite often as well, and I have a lot of constituents who spend their weekends there having family barbecues. It's amazing, if you walk around the lake, how many groups, how many families are there on a Sunday barbecuing and enjoying their family time. Especially a lot of new Canadians actually, you see, Mr. Speaker, a lot using the park and loving it. So I would hate to see these really, really important institutions in our communities go away. And off-loading tough decisions onto municipalities, which is what I think happened here, isn't an excuse, and I think people will see through it.

There are so many cuts that, you know, hadn't been discussed before the election and are being discussed now. And sometimes the members opposite like to butter it up and say that it's not a cut, but it is a cut, frankly, Mr. Speaker. When health spending is up only 1.8 per cent, education is up point seven per cent, and social services up 2.8 per cent, it's simply not sufficient. And it's a case of priorities, Mr. Speaker. I know the members opposite sometimes think that we're telling them to spend, spend, spend, but it's all about priorities, and their priorities are in the wrong place. And that's the problem here, and that's why families are suffering, for sure. Seniors are bearing the brunt of this. Children are bearing the brunt of this, and it's just not acceptable.

These increases that I just alluded to are simply not enough to cover the basic increases that we see in these areas, and that's the problem, Mr. Speaker. So what happens is that these very difficult decisions get off-loaded onto, like I said, our municipalities, our universities, our hospitals, and our schools. And it's frustrating is what I would say, when the provincial government tries to blame, you know, more grassroots level, locally elected school boards, for example, for tough decisions that they're being forced to make because of these funding decisions that the provincial government has made.

Like I said, I know this first-hand from being a school board trustee for the last four years. I have colleagues on my side and I know that there are members opposite who are trustees or were trustees as well, and I'm hoping that the members opposite are expressing their concern because I know as trustees we've all expressed our concerns to the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] about the off-loading of these difficult decisions and these funding cuts that are ultimately cuts, and they're resulting in larger class sizes, less supports for our students, especially considering we have such a rise in English as additional language students in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker.

It's becoming a huge problem, especially in our city schools. It's great; it's a wonderful problem to have because it means that we're growing as a community. It means we're diversifying as a community, and that's so important. But we need to make sure that we're supporting these kids and that they're getting the language training, for example, that they need so that they're integrating into our communities and they don't feel like they're cut off from communities and that they're . . . We need to get them involved and a part of our community as soon as possible because we lose them quickly if we don't, and then they feel isolated. And we want to make sure that they're integrating into

the community as soon as possible and the funding in the schools is so integral to that, Mr. Speaker.

I know my colleague from Regina Lakeview talks about it also, more eloquently than I do, but it's a concern that we're going to keep talking about. It's resulting in teacher turnover as well because teachers are feeling the pressure, and they told me that all the time as a trustee. It's not like I'm not hearing it anymore now as an MLA. Teachers are feeling undervalued. They're feeling pressured in the classroom. They're feeling like they have more and more . . . They're being asked to do more and more with less and less, and when we don't have enough supports, we don't have enough educational assistants in the classroom, they're really feeling the pinch.

We also have a quote here from a concern that the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] president, Peter . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Stoicheff.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Stoicheff said. Thank you. In a *Leader-Post* article . . . Oh, it was a Saskatoon *StarPhoenix* article, sorry, on June the 5th, 2016, who also expressed some concern about the funding that was occurring. And he, towards the end of the article, stated that a zero per cent increase is not sustainable. And that's what I'm saying when I say, well even if they're painting something as not being a cut, it's ultimately a cut.

And it's all about priorities, Mr. Speaker, and that's the concern that we have here — asking these organizations to be austere in a time when they have been austere for the past couple of years. We know the clawbacks that happened to universities last year and the problems that we had faced, or that school boards faced, in the last couple of years in terms of being asked to be austere. We had an efficiency factor that happened to us — was that last year? Two years — that was just a baseline cut to school divisions, and now it's happening again essentially. And that's what's not appropriate, Mr. Speaker.

There's also a problem with the mean-spirited social assistance cuts. And I know we talked about this quite a bit, and we're going to continue talking about this again because like I've been stating, with the seniors and the children, these are vulnerable people. We shouldn't be letting the government's mismanagement of their finances go onto the backs of the most vulnerable people in our community. Government is transitioning to social assistance with no wage exemption, and this has been described by some poverty advocates already, so already we're hearing concerns.

I'm looking at another *StarPhoenix* article, June 3rd. It was described by, this is the Regina anti-poverty ministry worker, Peter Gilmer, who I have a lot of personal experience with in my past life as a pro bono lawyer, and he's very well respected in the Regina community, very well known as a great advocate for vulnerable people in our city. He described this as short sighted and worried that it would end up costing the province more in the long run, and he said: "A person on the TEA, the very first dollar they earn gets clawed back from their benefits. There's no wage exemption whatsoever." And then he says again, ". . . blatant cost saving at the expense of some of the most vulnerable people in the province."

And that's the problem, Mr. Speaker, this cost saving at the expense of some of the most vulnerable people in the province. And we're not really sure how much this is actually going to save. When you're off-loading and tiering, essentially, recipients of social assistance programming, you're basically creating a situation where you're saying some social assistance recipients are more deserving than others, and that creates a very, very difficult and complicated situation. And it's essentially an ideological decision. It's not a fiscally prudent decision. It's ideological and that's just not acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

The other concern we had about this budget, Mr. Speaker, is that we really find nothing in terms of a way to address jobs in the province. Unemployment is up. I believe it's at 7 per cent now which is the highest in five years. I have particular concerns about this, Mr. Speaker. I have family in construction who have been laid off in the past six months. I have family in the oil and gas sector who are having a hard time finding jobs. I think everyone in the House probably has either personally or has family who have been affected by the drop in oil prices.

But this shouldn't come as a shock to anybody, the fact that oil prices fluctuate. I think it's quite common sense. We should be doing a better job. And this government, I'd like to see this government do a better job of making sure that we're not tied to the rise and fall of oil and gas prices. We have great people who are working in the oil and gas sector and they deserve to be thought of as . . . They deserve to be protected, essentially, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure that we're creating an economy and our government is working to create a situation where we're not so tied to the rise and fall of these oil and gas prices.

And the frustrating thing about this budget, Mr. Speaker, is the government is mostly just talking about investments that have already occurred or construction projects that have already been announced. There really isn't much new in this budget, Mr. Speaker, so there really isn't, from what I can see, any well-thought-out plan in terms of creating opportunities, creating jobs for people in the province.

And I understand that we're in a difficult time now because of the drop in oil prices but that's a great opportunity for us to look at ways we can diversify our economy. There are so many different ways we could do that. We can look at other jurisdictions for examples. We're seeing province after province put out very exciting climate change policies, creating more green jobs. It doesn't have to be one at the expense of the other frankly, Mr. Speaker, and that's what the members opposite keep seeming to want to argue.

And that's not the case. Right now when the price of oil is low, it's such a great opportunity, Mr. Speaker, for us to really look at this and see what we can do better as a province. You know, we want to create, like we were saying in our campaign, we want more eggs in more baskets. I understand we lost the campaign, and I probably shouldn't use slogans from our campaign, but I liked that one and I think it's important. It's important. Yes, it's not about . . . We need more eggs and we need more baskets. I'm fine with that. I'm holding on to that one.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, with what this government has done so far is it seems like, based on what we see in the budget, is that they're just trying to white-knuckle it until the price of oil increases. Like, let's just hold on and just hope we can ride this through for 12 months. And that's not a fiscally prudent way of planning for the future. Like, that's not how I plan for my future. That's not how I'd like to see my government plan for their future as well — plan for all of our future, frankly. I think they could do better. I'd like to see them, you know, rise to the challenge. And you know, instead of trying to hope that the price of oil will rise, which maybe it will . . . but it may not rise to what this government had got to enjoy for the last eight and a half years. So let's plan then. Let's put some thought into this. Let's figure out what we're going to do for our future.

Moving on to some concerns I have in my particular critic portfolios, which is what we've been highlighting in question period. We're trying to get more answers, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to ask more questions and hopefully get some answers.

I'm looking forward to estimates so that I can parse this out. I have a hard time actually reading the budget, figuring out exactly where these cuts are, because there are actually . . . There's real cuts in Justice, like there's . . . I don't even have to, you know, say that a slight rise is a cut. No, there are straight-up cuts in Justice. So I'm looking forward to the opportunity to spend some time with the two ministers opposite and get some more details about these in particular. You know, we've talked about this time and time again, and we'll continue talking about it.

We had a great gentleman in the House today to highlight the closing of the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre. And my colleague from Athabasca is doing a fantastic job of supporting them and standing up for them, and I know he's going to continue standing up for them. It's really important that we have good-paying jobs in the North, Mr. Speaker, and unique correctional facilities like Buffalo Narrows, Mr. Speaker. It's a minimum security prison. It allowed inmates to give back to their community. It allowed them to stay in the community, first of all, so that families could actually visit them, which is really important.

If you look at the studies, it's really important for inmates in terms of lowering recidivism rates, in terms of allowing them to reintegrate and hopefully not reoffend. Because that's the whole point of our corrections system is it not, so that people don't reoffend? And that's what Buffalo Narrows gave them that opportunity to do. They were, like we heard today, they were shovelling sidewalks for elders. They were cleaning, picking up garbage in the community. They were helping and they were contributing, pulling firewood for their community. It's such an important correctional centre.

And then aside from that, they were great-paying jobs for the North, and we've seen so many crises in the North lately that are going unaddressed. We saw what happened in La Loche, and this government's response hasn't been to provide them with much other than closing a correctional centre that was providing great-paying jobs. And it's a little offensive, frankly, to the workers to tell them that they can, you know, because of their, through their union and through their collective

agreement, they can bid into new jobs in different parts of the province.

Well the great thing about Buffalo Narrows correctional centre is it was in Buffalo Narrows. And these families lived there. The families still live there. They want to live there. We don't want to see this community break apart. And that's essentially what's going to happen once this facility closes. And I know the member from Athabasca is very, very passionate about this and he's going to continue to speak on behalf of the community, and I'm so proud that he's doing that.

The other concerns I have about the cutting for funding for Aboriginal police consultation groups and the Aboriginal court worker program. I don't understand, frankly, the logic behind that when the rates of First Nations people in custody are so much higher than they should be in proportion to the population in the province. So what are we doing to address this? We're cutting programs that are dealt, that are created specifically to address these problems, so I just don't understand what the logic is behind that. I had first-hand knowledge working with these organizations and the Aboriginal core worker program in particular in my past life as a lawyer.

The other one that I'm also particularly alarmed about, and I'm hoping to get a few more answers in terms of exactly what has happened here, is the reduction in funding for alternative measures programming. So when we're talking about a ministry that's been priding itself on innovation and working on diversion and recognizing, I thought, how expensive it is, frankly, Mr. Speaker, when we put people through the court system . . . And cutting a program or reducing the funding in a program whose sole job was to divert people away from the court system makes absolutely no sense to me. Like the amount of money he might have saved in reducing this funding is so counterintuitive. You would save so much more money than you would have had to spend in this diversion program.

And I just want to read . . . I'm still learning what this cut actually is and I'd like some more information, frankly, as to who this is actually going to affect. But these programs are so important and their strategies are so important that I actually want to read it out, because I want the members opposite to know what they're actually cutting.

So the main objectives of an alternative measures strategy, for example like the one that's in Regina, is (1) to develop a justice system perceived to be culturally sensitive by Aboriginal offenders, victims, and communities; (2) reduce the representation of Indian and Métis people in the justice system; and (3) increase the proportion of Aboriginal people employed in the justice system.

So I don't really understand what the logic is here, and I'm hoping that the minister can explain this to me in the future. And I'm hoping that the reduction in funding isn't what I think it is, which is going to cause nothing but problems in terms of our justice system in the province. And studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that alternative measures programming has not only helped to divert people away from the court system, saving us money, but it's also reduced recidivism rates. And I'm not too sure why we would ever cut programming that reduces recidivism rates, Mr. Speaker. It just makes no sense to me

logically.

I'm looking at a study that I just pulled . . . I'm sure there's others. Unfortunately it's a bit difficult to study and to actually quantify the impacts of recidivism rates in the country, and we don't do a very good job, frankly. I'd like to see us do a better job in this province of keeping track of stats in our justice system and in our corrections system, and actually be able to see what we're doing in terms of recidivism rates and how we're actually impacting them.

But this is a study called *The Impact of Restorative Justice on Recidivism Among Shoplifters*. And it's a BC [British Columbia] study, Mr. Speaker, that the University of Fraser Valley did with the Chilliwack Restorative Justice and Youth Advocacy Association. And I want to quote from it, and it speaks to the impact of restorative justice. This is something I'm going to keep fighting for, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to see any cuts in this area because it's really going to affect everybody that's involved in the justice system.

I quote: "Restorative justice is a process whereby all the parties with a stake in a particular offence come together to resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future."

It's based on principles of responsibility and accountability, Mr. Speaker, and I don't know why . . . If anything, we should be putting more funding into this, Mr. Speaker. And this study, it looked at some rates of shoplifters and some shoplifters that went through diversion programming in Chilliwack. So convicted shoplifters went through diversion programming and what the likelihood of them convicting a similar crime in the future.

So and I'm in a quote from this again, and I quote, begin quote:

. . . that restorative justice has proven to be effective in a significant number of ways, including having a positive effect in reducing the frequency and the severity of re-offending. They also noted that there appear to be no inherent limitations in the types of cases that can be referred to restorative processes.

So on top of a lot of concerns I have with this budget, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the concerns I have the most. And I'm looking forward to getting some more details and figuring out exactly what's going on here in terms of justice funding. From what I can see in the budget, Mr. Speaker, there's no new grants for shelters, no new funding for domestic violence. There's a slightly lowered funding to legal aid which is shocking to me because I know how overworked legal aid lawyers are in this province, Mr. Speaker. There's a 3.6 million reduction for court facility capital expenditures, 7.5 million reduction in office and IT [information technology] for capital improvements.

We shouldn't have to be here, Mr. Speaker. We shouldn't have to be making these kinds of decisions, and we shouldn't have to be making these cuts as I spoke already about the need to diversify our economy and the need to not white-knuckle fluctuations in oil prices. We should also be saving. And I know the members opposite, maybe they don't like saving. I'm not too sure, but they did drain the rainy day fund.

And it's not just us that are saying that we need to reinstate that rainy day fund. And I'm looking now at another *Leader-Post* article, Bruce Johnstone, June 3rd, and he was arguing that we need to dust off the Saskatchewan futures fund. And he looks at the report that this government even put about the importance of a rainy day fund. And he said, and I quote:

... we will never get off this roller-coaster ride of resource revenues rising and falling with the commodity cycle as long as we persist in spending all of our resource wealth as it comes in, rather than putting some of it away for future generations.

So it's not just the NDP making up things. Even respected business journalists in the province are saying that this just makes prudent financial sense.

[16:15]

I have more things I wanted to talk about, Mr. Speaker, but I'm going to wind up here. I'll just say briefly ... I already said it a little bit but there is nothing in here to address mental health in the North and that's particularly appalling ... [inaudible interjection] ... Actually, there's nothing in here ... You're right. Thank you. There's nothing in here to address mental health at all in this entire province. And there's no new funding for that, and that's concerning. And it's something that's going to affect us in the long term, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I'll wind up. I understand my time is up. But like I said at the beginning, I won't be voting in favour of the budget but I will be voting in favour of the amendment. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to enter into the budget debate and participate in this important discussion of the issues surrounding the constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers and the province. But first I'd like to thank the Finance minister, the member from Regina Northeast, for his dedication to Saskatchewan, as well as the members of the treasury board and the staff.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues and I stand in place and recognize the components of this budget and how it affects the citizens of Saskatchewan, I feel satisfied we are continuing to do good for the people of Saskatchewan. This budget demonstrates the government's will to continue to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan and their needs. Mr. Speaker, this is a privilege to enter into the debate and discuss the many good elements of the budget and how it will benefit all of the constituents of Saskatchewan Rivers who have entrusted me to represent their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we can point to things that were done in the past by the government that have probably helped with the momentum that we seek for the Saskatchewan economy and for the interests of Saskatchewan residents. In our recent election, we asked Saskatchewan people who was the right choice to lead us into the economy, an economy that continues to improve on, maintain, and build infrastructure such as our highways in Saskatchewan Rivers constituency,

Highway No. 263 in our beautiful lakeland area of Christopher Lake resort community that eventually arrives at our Prince Albert National Park and resort community of Waskesiu, a highway which will be safer, straighter, and more modern to suit today's needs.

Our government invested 89 million in rural areas to maintain the membrane surfaces and repair flood-damaged roads; 52 million to replace bridges and culverts across Saskatchewan; 16 million to support safety on rural municipal roads. Repairing will occur on Highway No. 2 north of Prince Albert. Repairing and repaving will occur on Highway 2 south of junction Highway 255. Repaving will occur on Highway 3 west of Crutwell. And repaving will occur on Highway 55 west of Big River. Thank you to our government. So our government is investing in Saskatchewan Rivers constituency in our highways.

Mr. Speaker, the central point of debate today on the budget is sustaining our growth to fund health care, education, and fix roads. How do we keep the economy running? The role of the economy is to get the fundamentals right, to keep taxes low and competitive, to sustain the economic momentum for the good of Saskatchewan people. In this budget there is no tax increase. There is no new taxes. This year our government's revenue sharing with municipalities will approach 272 million, more than 113 per cent since 2007. This budget will provide over 406 million of direct provincial support to Saskatchewan municipalities. In our Prince Albert Parkland Health Region there has been a dramatic increase of funding since 2007, over 74 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Protective Services Award recognizes 25 years or more of service protecting Saskatchewan people or their property. Our volunteer fire departments save lives and property of all our neighbours and friends in our local communities. Our public protective services providers and our first responders guard the citizenry of Saskatchewan, either as a volunteer or as a full-time capacity. Their role in our home communities is vital and appreciated in such communities as Big River, Buckland, Lakeland, and Smeaton.

Our budget demonstrates keeping Saskatchewan strong and reaffirms our government's strong commitment to municipalities. This budget provides over 50 million in funding to ensure services and facilities such as libraries and policing. Revenue sharing for rural municipalities, including hamlets, will total over 76 million, providing critical front-line services to rural Saskatchewan. The Candle Lake community has received an increase of 115 per cent since we formed government.

Mr. Speaker, I belong to an adopt an MLA program in which I was matched with this wonderful little family of two. Brian and his mother continue to remind me of why we are here, why all of us are here in this Assembly today. It's very humbling to meet with Brian and his mother and provide for the people of the province who need some assistance. Brian has autism spectrum disorder and our budget will continue to provide at-risk children, youth, and their families with a continued commitment to make life better for people experiencing complex needs. These Saskatchewan families will benefit from over 16 million investment, providing such necessities as safe transportation and residential services to help people live in

their home communities.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan families in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers work hard and they live within their means as they expect their government to do the same, restraint on the government's spending side with a firm commitment to living within its means. These principles are the guiding light in managing taxpayers' money. Saskatchewan resources revenues annually fluctuate from one year to the next. The budget is about moving beyond the boom and bust cycle. This government is not immune to the turmoil that shares and shakes the world economy. Our government will be guided by the principles of discipline and fiscal responsibility. Our government will balance the need for fairness and the need to protect important services that support the economic strength we, the people of this province, continue to enjoy in Saskatchewan today. We will also continue to reduce the overall government footprint and find efficiencies throughout government to keep our great province strong.

Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers we have seen many positive changes over the past nine years while reducing the taxes. Parks such as Candle Lake has received a new service centre and additional campsites. Big River received funding towards a district community centre construction. Emma Lake, funding to replace the camp entry kiosk. The newly constructed Great Blue Heron Provincial Park has a new service centre and additional campsites. I urge all my colleagues and their families and their constituents to travel towards these parks and utilize them and enjoy the serenity we have to offer in our great constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers.

As government we have worked to improve efficiencies throughout agencies, boards, and commissions. Mr. Speaker, our government . . . as their government we've asked common sense questions such as, are these programs delivering the desired outcomes? Our goal is to improve results and, using creative problem-solving techniques, achieve positive results and a better quality of life for all our Saskatchewan people. This budget has been prepared with a great deal of discipline, a great deal of prudence and caution, something our government has always exhibited to the best of our ability.

The hallmarks of our government speaks for itself. An important past initiative was implementing the greatest decrease to educational property tax in the history of this province. I think it was a very good indication of listening to what the people in rural Saskatchewan were asking for. And our government can point with a great deal of satisfaction that Saskatchewan people will always be listened to, especially by this government, Mr. Speaker. The farmers, the ranchers, the loggers of Saskatchewan Rivers constituency can rest assured that their investments and their needs will be in the forefront of this government's mind, such as the past wildlife damage compensation program that was needed for years, and our government implemented it to the relief of the livestock producers.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture still is the foundation of our great province. Saskatchewan has almost half of our nation's farm land and agriculture industry accounts for over one-third of Saskatchewan's total exports. This government has increased investment in our budget to a total of 389 million recognizing

agriculture is a very important role to Saskatchewan's economy. Mr. Speaker, nearly 40 per cent of Western Canada's 11,000 farm and ranch implement manufacturing jobs are based here in Saskatchewan contributing much to our economy. Our government will contribute to appreciate and value the backbone of our province which is agriculture. From crop insurance coverage levels rising, or 26 million for agriculture research, and support for 4-H Saskatchewan, and agriculture in the classrooms, our government recognized and is committed to building a strong industry by supporting farmers and ranchers.

As always, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of our great province and the wonderful people in Saskatchewan. The path we have chosen for Saskatchewan is one of optimism, self-assurance, and hope. Looking forward with our confidence in our people, our resources, and our firm governance, I can only speculate the wonderful future the next generation will enjoy.

We owe our thanks to the past generation. My father was one of the many that helped build this province. In fact I enjoy hearing his stories of catskinning on a bridge-building project in the late '50s, which employed many, many Saskatchewan people. Their stories are so inspiring to us as a province. The John Diefenbaker bridge crossing the North Saskatchewan River was built to last with excellent workmanship and expertise by men just like my father who incidentally was born to the first Red Cross hospital in the British Empire in the little village of Paddockwood, Saskatchewan back in 1929.

Two years later my mother was born, 1931, in the same hospital. This hospital was built for the soldiers coming back from the First World War as they settled on the northern fringe in the area that I represent. So we have a nice monument there with a red cross on top of it and it means a lot to our family and the area and, as I would say, the province as well.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I have a very large family and a growing family. We have seven grandchildren. And I was able to participate in a light horse show last weekend which is a prairie tradition across Saskatchewan as all the 4-H shows come along. So I had a toddler on my hip, holding a horse as they were getting it prepared to have the twins go into the 4-H show. So that was very enjoyable. It's a lovely prairie tradition.

[16:30]

As well, on the long weekend my daughter was married in Saskatoon at the University of Saskatchewan. Her husband is Seth Barker. So Lacey and Seth Barker, congratulations on getting married, and I have another person to love in my family. So I'm very proud to say they live in Yorkton. They have a very good MLA. So Lacey is a speech pathologist in Yorkton, and Seth is a fireman. So Seth brings the injured to Lacey and she helps fix them, so they have a very good relationship.

Our other children, Mr. Speaker, live in the province as well. Our next daughter, Brigitt, is a social worker/nurse who works for a federal MP [Member of Parliament] and she is married to a newcomer doctor and they reside in the city of Prince Albert. So they're helping out the community there as well. Our youngest boy, Markus, is at the College of Dentistry at the University of Saskatchewan, so as I travel home I get to see him once in a while too. And our oldest boy is married to a lovely

lady who has a degree in agriculture, so she's raising horses, cattle, and children. They have five. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very blessed to be the third generation, have my children the fourth, and my grandchildren to be five generations on the same farm in Saskatchewan, and I can't be more proud of being from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that I'm very, very proud of, and I'm also pleased to be part of playing a small role in serving the people of this great province. I'm very proud to be here with my colleagues who, in their way and their skills, bring a great deal of expertise to Saskatchewan. So I am pleased to support this budget and expect the people of Saskatchewan to be very well served in times of restraint. And saying that, I will not support the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join in in a little bit of discussion, a little bit of discussion on the budget, of course. The government, you know, at the end of the day, wants everyone to believe it just . . . It was great. It's wonderful. And that's fine. I understand that their members want to . . . They drank the Kool-Aid. Some of them had two glasses of it. And they're doing exactly what they're supposed to do. Everything, everything is the NDP's fault. Everything. Let me remind you, not just one thing. Everything that's gone wrong, it's the NDP's fault. They'll take no blame.

Yes, you can shake your hands. They'll take no responsibility for any decisions that they make. It's always somebody else's fault, always somebody else's fault. But that's okay. At the end of the day, I said the election went on. The people of this good province spoke. You are the government. You now get to clean up your mess as well. But unfortunately we're now seeing . . . And at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll see as things roll out, as those people that are the ones that are going to suffer for this government's budget. And they had lots of opportunity over the years — eight years, record revenue. They had such an opportunity, and I've said this before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, such an opportunity to help Saskatchewan families, those seniors, those children struggling. They had an opportunity, but did they take that opportunity? But no.

At the end of the day they want to blame somebody. Well you need to look back at yourselves and answer your own question. Is this to yourselves? And it should be to yourselves. Why did we make the choices we made? Why did we spend the money and lose money on some of the areas that we have lost money, on some of the initiatives that they have spent? And I'm going to go through some of those, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But at the end of the day, I want to talk about what's not in the budget for some families, whether it's in Saskatchewan, the North, the South, wherever the good people choose to call Saskatchewan home, and there's many of them. But having said that, government likes to pat themselves on the back for everything that's positive, everything that's positive. But when families are struggling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with some of the cuts that are coming, and we're seeing some of the things that are coming out.

I was hoping to see we'd have more money invested in roads in northern Saskatchewan. And I can talk about some of them: Highway 135, Highway 123, you know, Highway 102. We were looking at these different highways that are struggling, you know. And the list goes on, you know, 915, 915. We were hoping that we would see money for those announcements for those roads, for upgrades, correcting what needs we have. There are people travelling on these roads time and time again. Whether it's petitions, over the years this government has known. We've made it well aware. Leadership has shared it with government, whether they're First Nations, Métis, municipal leaders have talked about that. Community members have talked about the conditions of northern roads.

When this government had record revenue to spend and to take care of some of the situations they could have, unfortunately they didn't. And I'll talk about those areas where they could have done differently, could have made better choices with Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollars. It's their money, but you're entrusted with it. So at the end of the day, they can sit there . . .

And you know, when you think about the Wollaston Lake road, and I think that for the leadership over there in their community, how they've asked. They've, you know, come forward to the legislature. They've asked this government time and time again, please address this. It's about a safety thing. It's about loss of life. It's about making sure goods . . .

And you know, you talk about climate change and whether it's impacting . . . they're saying it's impacting on their all-season road that they would love to have because now they've got an ice road. But they're not sure. An all-season road would allow them to have those opportunities to bring in goods and services that the community needs, to get out, to allow economics to come into the community.

We talk about tourism. Government wants to talk about all the great things . . . [inaudible] . . . some of the opportunities why you want to work with those communities. We want to allow tourists to come into northern Saskatchewan. It is beautiful. We welcome people to come. Even members opposite, I would say come to the North. It's beautiful. The people care. They'll treat you well. The hospitality is good.

But I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, we have so many issues in the North when we look at the record revenue. And I want to talk a little bit about this because in this budget I was hoping there might have been, you know, a homeless shelter for La Ronge to deal with the North. That's not in there. You know I was hoping that would be in there.

I was hoping there'd be an announcement of a long-term care facility, you know. I was hoping that would be announced. But again year after year, oh we'll do a study. We'll do this; we'll do that. But no actual plan to say here's your announcement; you do have a long-term care facility for the health region that would cover not only La Ronge but Creighton, the east side. You know, to sit down with the leaders, Pelican, Sandy Bay, and have those serious discussions about what they need. And there's many issues that need to be addressed. This government had the opportunity, and again in this budget I was hoping, you know . . . They're spending a lot of money. They keep saying they're spending. And they're criticizing that, well you guys

want us to spend more money, but you don't want us . . . You know, at the end of the day, they've made some choices.

The government, they're the government, and I give them that. The people said yes, you will be the government and you make a decision. You've made your choices. But now we see what's going on when times are tough. You didn't save anything for the rainy day. Everyone knows that, you know, those that can save and put a little away in this province. My grandparents talked about that, you know, about saving a little bit. You put a little away. You don't spend everything. You make sure that you save a little bit so that when the hard times come — because they will come — that you can take care of it.

And those members can heckle all they want, but at the end of the day, they made their choices. They made their choices. And it's going to be our children, our grandchildren that are going to pay, and our seniors that are going to pay for the decisions that they've made.

Now they can heckle and say all they want. I know that the people that I represent in the Cumberland constituency and the people in northern Saskatchewan have asked time and time again. Everyone has an opportunity. It's a democratic society. They vote for who they want to represent them in this House. But government has to represent all people of this province. You're supposed to govern all people and you're supposed to take care of those individuals.

Now the government can do some of the mean-handed things they've done by closing some of the facilities and taking away the mean cuts. And I say they're mean cuts that they're doing . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well how many of those did you reopen? Like that's always their answer. You know always, always come back. Well let's just see how many because I'll tell you . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. The member from Cumberland currently has the floor. Other members have had their opportunity to debate. I would ask them to respect the member from Cumberland's rights to enter into the debate. I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again I want to get back into some of the areas that are struggling. We look at some of the funding that has been neglected by this government and they have kind of turned their back on our trappers, our fishermen in northern Saskatchewan.

There's maybe been many organizations, people that are trying to have affordable living. You look at the cost of . . . Government has raised, whether it's rent, utilities. You're asking now and you can brag about, oh no more taxes, no tax increase. But every time you raise utilities, you put things back on residents of this province, whether it's through taxes, water rates, utilities going up. It's the residents that pay. So they do pay for it in the end for that service. You're not giving them anything that special. You think you are, but you spin it the way you want to spin it. And that's fine. But at the end of the day when it's seniors that are having to pay more for their drugs, it's children, families struggling.

We see a poverty, you know, initiative that we thought . . . And

I have to give credit, you know, where credit's due. There was a discussion and I thought it was meaningful that, you know, they were going to tackle it and try, but no, no. That's kind of been put on the back burner and we'll see the comments about that.

And you know, you talk about the different issues, whether it's parks . . . Government made the cuts. It's school divisions and health. Yes they say, oh no, we increased spending, we increased spending. And that's fine at the end of the day to talk about that, but it will be those boards of education, health regions that will have to make . . . If there are going to be cuts, and I believe they're coming, and we'll see as they roll out. We're hearing some of that stuff. We'll see how the libraries do. We'll see how the community-based organizations do with this budget. That's all coming out and I think as things unroll, we'll hear from those organizations.

And we're starting to hear some of the unhappiness about this budget, but the government likes to spin it that it's all great, you know. And that's fine. Put the blinders on and just keep saying it's the NDP's fault like you have been. I've watched it time and time again. Not taking no responsibility for the decisions they made, and some of the projects that they have wasted taxpayers' dollars on, you know, where they could have done some good things.

Not just in the North — I realize I represent the Cumberland constituency, and I will fight for the North — but our First Nations and Métis people. You know the First Nations and Métis people of this province, as we are in Treaty 4 territory, you know this government has an obligation. And they can put a little bit of dollars in here and there, but when you see the crisis going on in many First Nations communities, within Métis . . . If you see the challenges that they're having to deal with as a leadership, and as I guess a community, when you look at the number of suicides, the addictions, it's all throughout the province. Granted we have to do a better job, but there are some communities and some of our community members that are worse than others.

And we talk about the correctional facility that, you know, they closed in Buffalo. Here is an opportunity to take Aboriginal people . . . And we keep saying, you know, at the end of the day, the numbers, you look at the population in our correctional facilities, as versus non-Aboriginal/Aboriginal people. Why would you cut programs that assist in trying to change that and try to work on that; identify that, saying okay, this is an area where we have to address. It's wrong.

What are their reasons why? Addictions, you know, is it addictions? Is it the way of life? What can we do? How can we as a government do better and help those residents, those Saskatchewan residents. It doesn't matter if they're Aboriginal or not, help those Saskatchewan residents to do better. So let's invest into them. Let's sit down with meaningful investment, and let's consult with First Nations, Métis, municipal leaders in a meaningful way to sit down and have a dialogue. And like, I say this, I mean this with the most sincere that I could ever be, talk to them. Work together. They're willing to work with you as a government.

I'd be willing to work with you to deal with those issues because every time I go and see a family that loses a loved one



because of suicide, because of addictions, it rips your heart, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the worst things to go and try to support, and I've talked about that. It's a crisis, and we have to do better. We can't put blinders on and say, oh no, we're doing all we can. We're not doing all we can. We have to do better. We owe that to those children that are left behind, to those mothers, fathers, those family members that are left behind to wonder what exactly, what could we have done? Could we have done better?

I've talked about some of the challenges that some of the families face to get help, to try to take a loved one out of their isolated community. They just don't have the resources to get there. And so many people turn away, and they're frustrated.

But again I'm going to go back to saying there are many issues that needed to be addressed in this budget. The government addressed some of the issues in some of the areas. Yes, we understand that. You're responsible for education, health care, you know, social services. We talk about that. The government talks about all the great things that they're doing. They want to pat themselves on the . . . There are some challenges. When you identify those challenges and the hurdles that are there that families are going through, you know, work with those organizations. You have to do a better job. You can't just . . . Corrections, and I go right through the whole list, you know.

[16:45]

And I talked about long-term care, and again we have to make sure our health regions have the support by this government. Again no announcement, but here's what they do have. I just want to give a little bit of this idea of what this government, you know, the Sask Party loves to . . . \$2 billion on the Regina bypass. That's one area they put money in. They made a decision. That was okay. But long-term care in La Ronge, the correctional centre in Buffalo had to close, programs for the court workers, aboriginal court workers, aboriginal programs that assist — those have to be cut. But we can spend 2 billion on the Regina bypass. Now maybe at one time it was 400 million, now it's \$2 billion. Now they'll say what they want. That's okay.

We talk about 1.5 billion on the carbon capture the government spent and the cost overruns that went on on that; if it's a good project, that's fine, but the cost overruns that went on. You know, you're willing to spend that money there but not on seniors, on children in schools. And we see that on people who are the most vulnerable, you chose to leave behind.

You know, we look at smart meter fiasco. Look at the money that was spent there. How that could have helped today if you would have put that money away in a rainy day account or whatever, if you would have saved a little bit of that money to help today when the tough times . . . to help our seniors, to make sure kids can get the medications they need.

Now you know, the list goes on. And I'm going to go through a few of them just to make sure. You know, the GTH land deal. We're waiting for that one to come out too. And we'll see, we'll see at the end of the day exactly on that. And we're waiting for the auditor to do, you know, the final report. And I'm waiting patiently to see the dollars that were spent there on that land

deal. I'm waiting to see exactly what comes out of that.

Now you know, the other thing that you look at, P3s. The money they spent on P3s is unbelievable. We are renting them. That scheme, every other area of the province is getting out of. Every other place is saying, it's a wrong way to go. It costs way too much money. They are abandoning it. This government is just, go ahead. Put the blinders on and just have at it.

So these are areas where they have wasted so much of our taxpayers' money. But now, yes, you've been elected for another four years. You get to clean up your mess. And I've said that, you're going to clean up your mess. So at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you get to clean up your mess. It isn't going to be the NDP that's going to have to clean up 16 years of your mess . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Devine, yes. And you guys don't like relating yourself to Devine, to the '80s. It's amazing how that is. Conservatives are Conservatives, but whatever.

Having said that, at this point I've talked a little bit about things here, Mr. Speaker, and I'm prepared to adjourn, or actually I'm just going to wrap up here. And I will not be supporting the motion. I will be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Before I begin, I'd like to do a few thank yous. I'd like to thank my CA, Mary Anne Telfer, and her husband, Don. I call them team Telfer, and they anchor the ship back in our office in Cudworth.

I'd also like to thank my family, my children, and of course, my grandchildren. I'd also like to thank my wife — my partner, my friend, my strongest supporter.

I'd also like to tell a little grandson story. The night of the election I was pleased to have my oldest grandson, who's now four and a half. He was there with us watching the election, and his mom showed him that when grandpa's picture comes up and there's a little white square in the corner, when there's a checkmark in there, that means grandpa won. So we're watching this, and all of a sudden grandpa's picture comes up with a checkmark. And he yells, Grandpa, you won! And a little while later they cycle through it and it comes up again. Grandpa, you won again! I won about six times that night.

In order to save time, I will, shall we say, leap into my allotted time. I feel it is my Saskatchewan duty to address the Leap Manifesto that was presented at the national NDP convention. This manifest is an all-out attack on not just Saskatchewan, but all of Western Canada. It is definitely well-named Leap, for it is a giant leap, but a backward leap unfortunately. It would drive our resource-rich province back into the dirty thirties.

My major concern is not which of our Saskatchewan NDP members did or did not sign or condone the Leap manifest. My question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is why haven't we heard even one of the other side speak up for Saskatchewan by speaking against the Leap manifest? There has been no comments from the other side. Why isn't anyone from the other

side speaking up for our resources, speaking up for our future, speaking up for our children?

Mr. Speaker, let's take a fictitious leap into the NDP manifest. In order to get there, we may have to go to Kansas and get Dorothy to lead us to the wizard of Leap. Or we could go get, see Tinker Bell and get some fairy dust. Mr. Speaker, let's now return to reality and ask some hard questions of leap and where our Saskatchewan NDP members stand.

My first question is of the NDP Ag critic. If Leap were implemented, how will we farm without the fossil fuels? No fuel for our tractors, and on and on and on. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the far left say, go back to the one-quarter farm and horse and plow. Well, Mr. Speaker, with 47 per cent of Canada's cropland, can you guess how many horses and oxen that would take? That of course brings up another very, very serious environmental question: what are you going to do with all the methane gas? That's a lot of horse gas.

Mr. Speaker, I've just given you a brief glimpse of how implementation of Leap in Saskatchewan would affect agriculture in rural Saskatchewan. I would now like to take a look at Leap for urban Saskatchewan. With no petroleum, how do you get to work? Your electric car battery is dead because there's no wind. Solar generators aren't working because it's calm and overcast. Everyone is upset because they can't get any more plastic wrap to wrap their lunch in because it's made from petroleum products, as are all plastic products.

Something you may not really have thought about in urban Saskatchewan is paved streets. With no oil, well there's no asphalt. The streets of Saskatoon and Regina would be converted back to gravel. Can you imagine the dust at rush time in Saskatoon and Regina when the morning commute or evening rush hour . . . Dust, dust that you couldn't see. What I'm trying to show, Mr. Speaker, is that the NDP talk about taking a giant Leap into a black hole supposedly to save the environment, but end up destroying the Saskatchewan economy. People will freeze and starve in the dark.

Enough said about Leap. We'll let Disney Studios finish that horror story off in a fairy tale. It's time to leave never land and return to reality. One last speaker, mister comment, on the Leap is, look before you Leap.

Looking at the results of the election, I must thank the people of this great province for believing in what they have seen happen to our province, and showing their overwhelming support for the future of this province. The people of this province want the Saskatchewan Party to continue to move this province to its rightful place in this country. Under Walter Scott, our first premier, our province of Saskatchewan was the fastest growing province in Canada. Under our Premier, Brad Wall, and the Saskatchewan Party, we are finally back on the road to reach the potential that Premier Scott saw. The dreams of our early settlers, our ancestors, are finally being achieved. Yes, there will be some bumps along the way but if we keep working together we can keep Saskatchewan strong.

Together we can weather any storm. In the past eight years we have already accomplished some amazing things. In my constituency of Batoche, we finally have, finally have the St.

Louis bridge. It was a \$60 million project that the NDP had on the drawing board for 16 years, but never got it done. We have seen the completion of the twinning of Highway 11 from Saskatoon to P.A. [Prince Albert]. The bridge at St. Louis and the twinning of Highway 11 are vital links to P.A. and area. They were much needed, not just for moving our resources south but to bring development and products north. Highway 368, a vital link for jobs and industry that is a big part of three constituencies.

Well the people of Saskatchewan have seen an amazing rebirth of our great province. We have moved from Lorne Calvert's have-not province and wee province to a world-renowned province. We have great abundance of what the world needs. By managing our resources we can have things we need. Already we are building more highways and making repairs to the ones that were neglected for so long under the previous government. We are also building schools and hospitals. We are building using the P3 model, and the first one is done on time and on budget.

But the best part, the best part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that our children are coming home. Our high school grads are finding jobs here and building homes here. They are raising their families here. They are building a future here. Mr. Speaker, I've said it in the House before but I will say it again, the real proof is when you put your money where your mouth is. A lot of world-class companies have done that and they are well worth mentioning here.

My favourite is K+S, a German potash mining company that was kicked out by the former NDP government — kicked out — and now they are back. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were told to get out, but now after careful analysis of the political and economic situation in Saskatchewan, they are back with the first new potash mine in Saskatchewan in 40 years. They are investing a whopping 4 billion-plus into the project. Mr. Speaker, they are banking on Saskatchewan staying on this path led by a strong Saskatchewan Party government.

Mr. Speaker, there are more. There are billions of dollars of investment, with a "b". Edgewood Forest Products, Crescent Point Energy, Husky Energy, Weil Group, BHP, and the list is growing. More and more companies see a future here. It is not just the investment they make. The spin created is far-reaching in our province. It creates more and more dollars for our economy, for our people, and for our future.

Thank you to the people of Saskatchewan for believing in the Saskatchewan Party and the governance of this great province. The people of this province understand the challenges we are facing due to global markets beyond our control. They understood that the budget would be a tighter one. They do understand that their province is still strong. They understand that the only way to the future is to move forward, forward through hard times, forward to a prosperous future for all of Saskatchewan, and forward to our rightful place in the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is a true picture of Saskatchewan. We are doing what every Saskatchewan family does when times get tough: you tighten your belt. Mr. Speaker, we have now had the chance to see the budget of our neighbouring provinces. When

you compare these budgets, it is easy to see that we are better off, far better off. The main reason is because we have a plan, a concrete plan that still garners an AAA credit rating.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the NDP member for P.A. Northcote started his speech on the budget by saying she expected more from the budget. That seems to be the theme from the other side, but not one, not one from the other side has said where they would get the money from. I suspect what they would have done, like former NDP Finance Minister Harry Van Mulligen said when he raised taxes right after the '03 election, he said, you don't talk about raising taxes during an election. Mr. Speaker, the most satisfying aspect of our budget for the people of Saskatchewan is no raising taxes. Mr. Speaker, thank you and thank you to the this House for the opportunity to speak on this budget, and I enthusiastically support this budget.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It now being 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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