



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

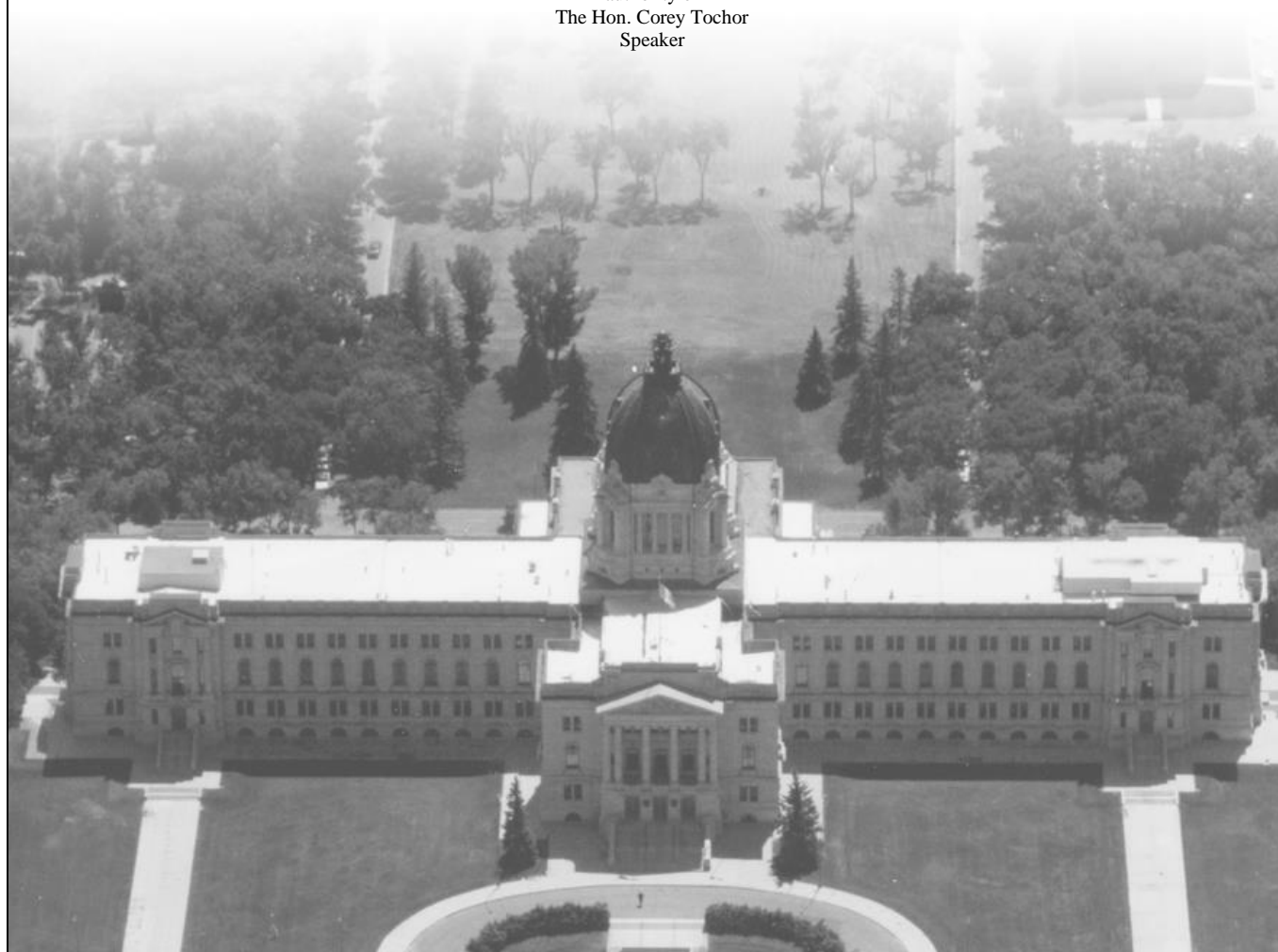
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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

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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)

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Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

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Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

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

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce a visiting delegation from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. FICCI, as it is known, is the largest apex business association in India. Established in 1927, it is also the oldest business organization and 20 years older than the Republic of India itself.

FICCI is a non-government, not-for-profit organization that acts as the voice of Indian business and industry. Its role is to influence policy and encourage debate. FICCI's extensive membership includes private and public Indian corporations as well as multinational companies and local chambers of commerce and industry from all 36 Indian states and territories.

In total, FICCI represents more than 250,000 companies. FICCI is the first port of call for any international company wanting to do business in India, as I discovered during my recent trips there. FICCI is also a strong supporter of international trade in general and Canadian trade in particular.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan and India have strong trade ties and those ties are growing stronger every year. For example, Saskatchewan exports roughly 1.4 million metric tons of pulses to India annually. Last year we set a record for pulse exports to India. Canola is another example of a Saskatchewan staple that is rapidly growing in popularity among Indian consumers. India's canola oil imports, although still relatively small, grew by nearly 50 per cent between 2014 and '15.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some examples of the trade between India and Saskatchewan. There are many other examples and even more untapped opportunities. And that is why the FICCI delegation is in Saskatchewan. They've had a busy few days since arriving in Saskatoon on Sunday, so I'll only give you a bit of their schedule.

Monday included a meeting with the Ministry of Economy for a presentation on Saskatchewan's agricultural machinery manufacturing, and a trip to the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre. On Tuesday they were in Outlook for a tour of the Canada-Saskatchewan Irrigation Development

Centre, and then visited Simpson Seeds in Moose Jaw. On Wednesday they were at CanMar Grain Products here in Regina, and today they are visiting us. And they will be off to Canada's Farm Progress Show tomorrow which includes a meeting with AgWest Bio, and then back home to India.

It's a busy schedule but one that will surely contribute to the growing economic relationship between Canada and Saskatchewan and India.

So now, while they are here, I would like to introduce the delegates to this Assembly and thank them for their interest in Saskatchewan. And I would ask the individuals to give a wave if they recognize my pronunciation of their names, and if they don't, I'll beg forgiveness.

Ashwani Kumar is joint secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare with the Government of India. Jasmeet Singh is head of agriculture for FICCI and leader of the delegation. Duvoor Subramania Reddy represents Farm Implements (India) Pvt. Ltd. Thekkepat Raman Kesavan represents TAFE, Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd., which sells Massey Ferguson and other farm equipment brands as well as its own line of equipment. Ruchira Saini is FICCI's deputy director with responsibility for agriculture. And finally, Joginder Singh, who represents Bankura Precision Agriculture Equipment, a manufacturer of high-tech agricultural tools and equipment.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for your time and your continued focus on trade with Saskatchewan. And I look forward to our meeting after question period this morning. I hope you've had a productive and enjoyable time here in Saskatchewan, and I hope to see you back here in years to come as I hope to return to your beautiful country. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's pleasure to join with the minister and welcome this very important and very valued delegation from India here today of business leaders that are strengthening relationships from an economic perspective with our province. The program that was laid out by the minister seems to be a very impressive, rigorous program with some exceptional businesses and innovators here in Saskatchewan. I'm glad you're taking in the Farm Progress Show as well.

It's fair to say that we all value the very important relationship that we have with India. It's important to us on so many levels, whether that be from an economic perspective, also from a democratic perspective and an educational perspective, where there's an important relationship in place.

And Saskatchewan has not just benefited from a trade relationship with India. We have benefited with the immigration. Upon generation of generation of Indo-Canadians who have come to Canada to build and shape our province and have contributed to all facets of our province from health care through academia, through business, education, civil society, and beyond. So it's indeed my pleasure to join with the minister and welcome this delegation from India. We wish you productive meetings and thank you for your presence here

today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And while on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I see a very special guest in your gallery, someone by the name of Kat Norton, along with baby Isla, that's here today. Kat is somebody who's served our caucus in the official opposition for many years as a staff. She's on maternity leave right now. It's a pleasure to have her here today. She's just a wonderful individual who gives so much, not just to the official opposition in her work, but to her community and our province as a whole. So it's my pleasure to welcome Kat Norton and baby Isla to their Assembly.

And while still on my feet, it's a pleasure to welcome Trevor Peterson to his Assembly with his children here today. Trevor is an exceptional teacher down in Assiniboia. He grew up on a farm just outside of Moose Jaw. He's an all around good guy who cares about his province and the future of our province. He's highly involved in the Wood River NDP [New Democratic Party] and ran as a candidate federally as well. He's a good person and it's a pleasure to welcome him to his Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to welcome these very fine guests to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to members of the legislature for granting leave here. I'm honoured to introduce a number of guests, Mr. Speaker, in this gallery, Mr. Speaker, from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources as well as the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they are visiting the legislature today. As I said, they're members of the University of Saskatchewan, but they're also members of the Canadian Agri-Marketing Association, or CAMA, Mr. Speaker, and they competed in the national agri-marketing conference in Kansas City recently where they placed second of 29 entries from across North America, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Absolutely. We're going to hear more about it in a member's statement shortly, Mr. Speaker. This is the best that CAMA has performed at NAMA [National Agri-Marketing Association], Mr. Speaker, if you will. And I would just like to introduce each of them. We have with us Shayla Hertz — back to her in a moment — Brayden Connor, Ty Kehrig, Megan Crone, Ryley Cozart, Jackson Campbell, Paige Connor. We have Erin Cote, Mr. Speaker, who was a previous constituent near the community of Leask in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook. Now I believe lives and helps her parents with Tierra Del Sol just outside of Saskatoon.

We have Mason Ballek. We have Bailey Ogilvie. We have Derek Moses and Warren McAuley from the fine community of Vermilion, Alberta. We have Aftyn Campbell. We have Jackson MacMillan. We have Bailey Wilson, Bayley Blackwell. We have Chad Scott.

Mr. Speaker, we also have with them their professor, Eric Micheels from the University of Saskatchewan, who has informed me that he did not lead this group, although he was the adult along for the ride if you will. But very much the members of the group took control of this. They not only went down and competed — and competed well — and represented our province, our institution, and agriculture well, Mr. Speaker, but they raised all of the money to attend the event and self-funded their effort.

Mr. Speaker, joining them are some very proud parents: Steven Connor, Bobbi-Jo Connor, Kim Kehrig, Albert Kehrig, Chelsea Richter, Lorna MacMillan, Justine Ogilvie, and Alanna Koch, Mr. Speaker, the mother of Shayla Hertz.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in this Assembly to join with me in welcoming these fine, I won't say . . . They will be future leaders, but already leaders in our province of Saskatchewan, to their Legislative Assembly and wish them all of the best as they enter their careers in the agriculture and agri-marketing industry in Western Canada. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to join with the minister in welcoming these students, these parents, these leaders in education, and certainly in the agricultural business sector to their Legislative Assembly. I just want to add to the congratulations on the second-place finish at the competition in Kansas. And of course, Mr. Speaker, this is, as the minister says, this is not just the future; this is right now in terms of the way that people like this are leading the way forward here in Saskatchewan and holding their head high and recognized, not throughout North America, but the world over.

So just to join with the minister in welcoming and congratulating these individuals on behalf of the official opposition. And of course it's always nice to see someone named Warren McAuley doing good work and . . .

An. Hon. Member: — For once.

Mr. McCall: — For once, for once, my leader adds. But again to join the minister in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member from

Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce to you, sitting in the east gallery, this year's nominees for Saskatchewan's Outstanding Young Farmers.

Andrew and Laura Vander Kooi are dairy farmers from Dalmeny. They were both born in Chilliwack, BC [British Columbia]. But, Mr. Speaker, they were not satisfied with their career paths so they moved their family to Dalmeny in 2011, buying a dairy farm. They have two sons, Ty, age 5, and Wyatt, age 3. They own Legend Dairy Ltd., milking 200 Holstein cows three times a day.

Seated next to them are Dan and Chelsea Erlandson, third-generation vegetable growers from Outlook. They're co-owners of Spring Creek Garden Ltd. Daniel took over the family farm at the age of 16 and married Chelsea in 2010. Spring Creek Garden grows over 50 different varieties of vegetables and attends eight farmers' markets weekly. Spring Creek grows, packs, and markets 150 acres of fresh vegetables for the wholesale market. They also market some of their produce through the co-op system.

With them today is Elaine Pruim. The Pruims were 2009 winners, transitioned from BC to Saskatchewan where they now own a 380-cow dairy and a cage-free egg barn in Osler.

Mr. Speaker, Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers program recognizes the contributions of young agriculturalists under the age of 40 exemplifying excellence in their profession. The winners of tomorrow's event will represent our province in the national competition held this November in Niagara Falls.

Mr. Speaker, my wife and I have a special connection to this award. In 1999 we were selected as Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers. I would like all members to join me in welcoming this year's nominees for Saskatchewan's Outstanding Young Farmers to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to you and through you and on behalf of the official opposition, I also would like to take the moment to welcome these outstanding young professionals to their Legislative Assembly and offer them a hearty congratulations on being nominated for this award and for representing us in Niagara Falls in the upcoming event.

So we're very proud of you and I think your communities are probably very proud of you as well. And we're very lucky to have professionals like yourselves leading the way in agriculture here in Saskatchewan. So on behalf of the official opposition, I'd also like to take this opportunity to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

[10:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar-Sask Valley.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to introduce a group of 44 students from Lord Asquith School in Asquith, Saskatchewan. They're grade 6, 7, and 8, and they're seated in the west gallery. Please give us a wave. And accompanying these students are Ms. Gale Stack, Ms. Melissa Bachmeier, and educational assistants Debra Anderson and Kristy Campbell. So I look forward to getting together with you later for a photo and a bit of a question-and-answer period. So please welcome this group of students from Lord Asquith School from Asquith, Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you, a very special class from St. Edward School in Saskatoon. This is the ecojustice students — if they could give a wave — and they're a pretty special group of students from across the city of Saskatoon. And they apply and they're part of this program that's been going for seven or eight years. But this year these students have really focused on poverty as an issue to study throughout the year.

Now I have to tell you that during the campaign I was brought in to discuss our party platform. I know the member from Sutherland was brought in to discuss their party platform, and so was the Green Party. They're very intense students and actually, in many ways when we talk about future leaders, these folks are the future leaders up there.

So I'd like you to welcome the students from St. Edward School, the ecojustice class, who are here with their teachers: Mr. Dustin Kasun, Mr. Mel Sysing, and Mrs. Nancy Baum. Thank you. Mrs. Baum is the parent accompanying them. Thank you. Thank you very much. I ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleague across the floor in welcoming St. Edward School here. I had the opportunity to meet with them in their classroom on March 17th during the election. It's a very unique classroom, Mr. Speaker, set up with couches, beanbag chairs, very relaxed environment. It was somewhat like going into a coffee shop from the movie, *Friends*.

But I wanted to thank them for their great questions, and I know that they're excited to meet with the Human Services Committee after proceedings today. So I just wanted to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, a constituent of the Rosetown-Elrose constituency, but also not only a good friend of mine but a good friend of all members on this side of the House, Patrick Bundrock.

Patrick is the executive director of the Saskatchewan Party, and he does an absolutely outstanding job. Mr. Speaker, he's accompanied today — and this is what makes today special — he's accompanied by his parents, Gunter and Marianne Bundrock who are visiting from Peine, Germany. I'm told it's just a little bit outside of Hanover. It's great to have them here. And I'm sure they're very proud to be here with Patrick who, as I said, is just doing an outstanding job for us, Mr. Speaker.

In light of the fact that they're visiting from Germany, I'm going to do my best on this, Mr. Speaker. I had counselling on this from the Agriculture minister, so I'm sure it'll be good. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say to Patrick and his parents, herzliche Willkommen. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope I didn't screw that up too bad. I got the thumbs up. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members on both sides of this Assembly to welcome Patrick, Gunter, and Marianne Bundrock to this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister in welcoming Patrick and his parents here. Patrick and I have been very good friends for over 10 years, and it's always good to see him here.

I'd also like to welcome Sean Wilson. He is part of the G.W. Construction group. They have been building highways in this province for over 60 years, one of our many amazing road-building companies that we have in this province. He's also the past Chair of Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association. And I want to thank him and his family for their dedication to this province and what they've done to literally build our province, and ask all members to welcome him to his Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just briefly I'll join with members opposite . . . And the minister's heckling and her delightful self here today. But I would like to welcome Mr. Sean Wilson to his Assembly here today and certainly recognize the contributions of his business, his family's business to our province for many generations. So welcome to your Assembly.

And to Mr. Bundrock, welcome to your Assembly of course as well. Nice to have your parents here, and we're wishing that maybe you'd take an extended vacation for a period of time, maybe four years or so. But I welcome these members to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition to improve PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, can severely impact the lives of those who have it, Mr. Speaker, and that the delay in

diagnosis and treatment for PTSD can be detrimental to recovery. They're simply asking that if you experience traumatic events on the job, Mr. Speaker, and then get a diagnosis of PTSD, that those traumatic events should be presumed to cause the PTSD unless proven otherwise. 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 from citizens from Strasbourg, Govan, Lashburn, Maidstone, and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly. The individuals who have signed this wish to bring to our attention the following: *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act* is an old and outdated piece of legislation that remains largely unchanged, despite amendments over the years. It is in desperate need of modernization to reflect the current challenges that farmers and ranchers are facing today. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this are from Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of funding heritage languages here in Saskatchewan. And we know that after 25 years, the Government of Saskatchewan is discontinuing all support for heritage language learning in Saskatchewan. Since 1991 heritage language schools have depended on this modest funding from the Ministry of Education to help sustain their programs. As a result of the announcement by the Ministry of Education, many of these non-profit heritage language schools will be faced with the difficult decision of whether or not they can continue to operate. 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.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today are from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Saskatchewan Population Figures Reach All-Time High

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning Statistics Canada released their latest population figures. There are currently 1,146,655 people living in Saskatchewan as of April the 1st, 2016. This is an all-time high for our province. Since January our population has grown by just over 4,000 people, and we are up over 16,000 people since last year. We are continuing to experience sustained population growth that we haven't seen in decades. In the last 10 years, Saskatchewan has welcomed 155,000 new people and our population has grown every quarter. That is the most growth in any 10-year period in 85 years.

Mr. Speaker, our sustained population growth is a far cry from what was happening when the NDP were in government. From 1996 to 2006, our population dropped by 26,000 people leaving Saskatchewan in search of opportunities elsewhere. Young people were leaving the province for greener pastures, but that's not happening anymore.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to expanding and diversifying our economy. Our continued growth shows the strength and resilience of our diverse economy even during times of resource sector downturn. I ask all members to join me in welcoming our new citizens to this great province. Saskatchewan truly is the place to be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Moose Jaw Pride Parade

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, June is Pride Month in Saskatchewan. Pride Month recognizes gender, sex, and sexual minorities, including but not limited to the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] communities.

On Saturday, June 4th, I attended the first official Moose Jaw Pride parade, along with many New Democrats and hundreds of participants. It was a beautiful day, a perfect day to take to the streets to celebrate with the Moose Jaw Pride family. Joe

Wickenhauser, the executive director of Moose Jaw Pride, worked tirelessly along with others to make this event a success.

Although this was the first official Pride parade in Moose Jaw, the same parade route down Main Street was taken almost 40 years ago. In 1978, anti-gay crusader Anita Bryant came to Moose Jaw on her Save Our Children tour, a well-known hate-fuelled, bigoted campaign. In response, 85 gay and lesbian activists took to the streets in protest and later 150 met in Crescent Park to speak out against Bryant. One of the original participants, Roger Carriere, was honoured to be selected as the grand marshal for this year's parade.

Although many years have passed since Bryant's crusade across North America, the recent horrifying events in Orlando prove that there is work yet to be done for justice, equity, and acceptance.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Joe Wickenhauser, Roger Carriere, and Moose Jaw Pride for their years of hard work and activism that laid the path for this historical Main Street Pride Parade.

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

University of Saskatchewan Agri-Marketing Team Places Second at Conference

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here with us today is the University of Saskatchewan chapter of the Canadian Agri-Marketing Association, or CAMA. This past April, the CAMA team competed at the National Agri-Marketing Conference in Kansas City. They competed against 29 other universities from across North America. I'm proud to report that the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] placed second for their product, the Go-Fer-It Oatmeal Smoothie. In addition to making a product, the team also came up with the marketing plan for their smoothie that targeted children living a busy and active lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, this was the best showing of the U of S Agri-Marketing team in recent history. With team members from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and the Edwards School of Business, this competition gave team members a chance to show off their leaning in a very practical way. And from what I hear about the students, Mr. Speaker, this opportunity has given many of them a foot in the door with summer jobs and future careers.

I would ask all members to join with me in congratulating the U of S Canadian Agri-Marketing Association team, as well as wishing them all the best in their careers moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Sanctum Survivor Fundraiser

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Sanctum Care Group is an organization in Saskatoon that is

doing outstanding work supporting those living with HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and addressing the transmission of the illness in Saskatchewan. One of their new initiatives is a 10-bed prenatal care home for women with HIV. This care home will improve access to prenatal care for vulnerable women, improve health outcomes for both moms and babies, and help keep children in their families and out of foster care.

Tomorrow I will be taking part in the Sanctum Survivor fundraiser, the proceeds of which will go towards creating and funding these new prenatal care beds. Over the course of the 36 hours, my teammate and I will be given a number of tasks and obstacles to overcome on the streets of Saskatoon, obstacles similar to those faced by people living with HIV in our province, like trying to get access to the basics of life like food and shelter.

[10:30]

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Sanctum Care Group for everything they do for those with HIV in Saskatoon, and also considering what we can do as members of this Assembly to address the unacceptable rates of HIV across Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Filipino-Canadian Week

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 12th I had the opportunity to attend the raising of the national flag of the Philippines at city hall in Saskatoon along with the member from Saskatoon University and the member from Saskatoon Westview.

This flag raising marked the beginning of Filipino-Canadian Week in Saskatoon and commemorated the 118th anniversary of the Philippine Declaration of Independence from Spain. Mr. Speaker, the flag raising was followed by a celebration luncheon and family activities hosted by the Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon.

FILCAS [Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon] is a vibrant community association which has been working to preserve and promote Filipino culture in Saskatoon since 1973. This organization strives to encourage youth and to help build a stronger community.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is home to many Filipinos who have come to our province full of hope, seeking opportunity. Saskatchewan's Filipino community has made many contributions to our communities and has helped to build and grow our great province. As you know, Mr. Speaker, our provincial motto is "from many peoples, strength," and our province's diversity is an important part of what makes Saskatchewan strong.

I would like to thank the mayor and council of the city of Saskatoon for proclaiming Filipino-Canadian Week. I ask all members to join me in thanking the Filipino-Canadian Association of Saskatoon and all Filipino residents of

Saskatchewan for their valuable contributions to our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

House of Hope Opening

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise in the House today to talk about a successful fundraiser supporting an important organization in Melfort.

A local telethon raised over \$30,000 for the recently opened House of Hope. The House of Hope, a project of the North East Outreach and Support Services, opened a 24-hour residential crisis centre this past Monday at 8 a.m. that is providing services for women and their children in the northeast area of the province who are experiencing interprovincial violence and abuse.

The money raised through the telethon shown on Access cable across the province two weeks ago featured local talent and helped to bring awareness to domestic violence. Mr. Speaker, our government takes the issue of domestic violence and interpersonal violence very seriously, and has provided \$500,000 for start-up and operational costs of this new centre, as well as \$1.665 million through joint provincial-federal funding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members of the House to join me in congratulating the organizers of the telethon and thanking all contributors and, Mr. Speaker, a special thanks to the people at the House of Hope for their hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Liquor Retailing

Mr. Bradshaw: — When it comes to the modernization of our liquor retail system, the people of Saskatchewan know where our government stands. But it's getting harder and harder to figure out where the members opposite stand. The member from Regina Douglas Park, the critic for SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority], said, "The Sask Party ran on this mandate. They were very clear on closing these stores and the people of Saskatchewan have responded." But her colleague, the member from Athabasca, disagrees and says, "They didn't campaign on that."

Meanwhile the member from Saskatoon Riversdale infers that small business can't be trusted to ID [identify] customers because money and profit becomes extra imperative and maybe training won't be the top priority for some of these stores. Then the member from Saskatoon Nutana said that "Modernization makes sense, and I think the attempts that are being done in this bill generally appear to have some positive changes." She even told the House that her grandfather used to own a liquor franchise in Lafleche, one of those smaller businesses the member from Riversdale suggests that might lack enough capacity to ID customers.

I can see why people might be confused. Perhaps the members from Athabasca and Riversdale should consult with their more progressive colleagues from Douglas Park and Nutana. If they do, they might even agree that, as the member of . . . [inaudible] . . . simply put it, "These changes will be welcomed by many customers." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Funding for Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, in 2009 the Sask Party took away school boards' ability to increase their revenues. The Sask Party has full control of the dollars in the Education budget. That's why, Mr. Speaker, it is crucial that the government sits at the negotiating table. They and they alone have the money. They control all the purse strings.

The minister said teachers "deserve to get paid, and this government will never see that they don't get paid." Well it's the government that is responsible to ensure that boards are transferred enough money to meet this agreement. The minister has argued that the funding comes in one envelope, which is true, but the increase they're offering doesn't even come close to covering the teachers' pay increase.

To be clear, by the minister's own admission, the Sask Party has refused to honour their commitment, their word, and their signature. Mr. Speaker, when you connect the dots and follow the money, how can the minister say anything at all except that they negotiated in bad faith and that he is not providing the money to pay our kids' teachers salary negotiated contract?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I caution the members opposite on fearmongering on this issue. We've made it abundantly clear, Mr. Speaker, that teachers in our province will get paid. Teachers in our province work hard. They're competent professionals. For the members opposite to infer by any stretch that they will not get fully paid is something that is dead wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to give some numbers out so the members opposite know about our commitment to funding education: 2007-2008 provincial funding to school divisions, \$694 million; that same year, education property tax was \$742 million; 2016-2017 provincial funding to school divisions from 694 up to \$1.2 billion; at the same time, education property tax down to \$680 million. So in simple terms, operating grant up 73 per cent, taxes down 8.3 per cent.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And I'd urge and caution parents and teachers to not take that minister at their word, but I don't need to because they already know they can't trust him, Mr. Speaker. Not funding the full amount of an increase for the teachers' salaries, and increases which they took full part in the negotiations, is perhaps the most egregious of the Sask Party's broken promises. Now they are scrambling to find the cash to

pay for this unexpected shortfall.

And of course students will pay the price, Mr. Speaker. This will mean that there's going to be cuts to teachers and educational assistants in already strained classrooms. This will mean that overcrowded classrooms will get worse across our province. This will mean that kids that are going to schools that are in need of urgent repairs, that are in disrepair, aren't going to see what they need, Mr. Speaker. And it will mean that school boards will have much less autonomy to give our kids the education that they need and that they deserve.

My question is this: when will the minister finally admit that his budget is a broken promise and a slap in the face to our teachers, and is undermining the education our kids receive?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the House I read out some of the past performance of the members opposite, times when they gave teachers zero per cent. We've never done that. Times when they gave school boards negative numbers. We've never done that. We value our education system. We value our teachers. We value our students. Mr. Speaker, overall our budget is up this year by 7.8 per cent to \$2.2 billion. The school division operating income has increased \$16 million. It includes \$288 million for supports for learning, \$5.4 million for Syrian refugees, \$391 million for capital, including \$310 million for the ongoing construction of joint-use schools.

Mr. Speaker, that's something that never happened under the members opposite simply because the kids were being driven away. They went to another province. They were not here. Mr. Speaker, we now have ongoing capital projects all across the province and, Mr. Speaker, those projects will continue.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, of course teachers will get paid, because unlike this minister, school boards keep their commitments. The money has to come from somewhere, however, and school divisions are already stretched thin. The minister claims he doesn't want literacy and numeracy rates to head in the wrong direction. He claims that negotiating in bad faith was just another day at the office and won't hurt anyone. And he claims he wants to keep the cuts out of the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that none of that is reflected in the Sask Party's budget or in reality. Teachers and administrators have been clear. This budget will lead straight to cuts in the classroom. Still this government is continuing to push school divisions to their financial limits. One school division is already having to take almost \$2 million out of their reserve funds to make up for cuts in their funding.

The minister says that he will "work with school divisions to find efficiencies in their budget." Mr. Speaker, coming from a minister who walked away from his own signature, it's hard to hear that as anything but stepping in and forcing yet deeper cuts. Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree that this is neither a sustainable nor a constructive way to fund our kids' classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in the costing platform put forward by the members opposite during the election, they talked about a \$27 million increase. Mr. Speaker, we've had increases in the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars. We're now well over \$2 billion.

We're not going to take lessons from those people over there, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, the things that we are doing are paying big dividends. Mr. Speaker, our grade reading levels have gone up in 2013 for students reading at . . . [inaudible] . . . from 65 per cent; 2014, up to 70 per cent; 2015, 73 per cent of the students are now reading at grade levels. Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of commitment that we're making to our classrooms.

The people over there never set goals. Improvement in graduation rates: '08-09 when it was 32 per cent; '14-15 up to over 40 per cent. Five-year grad rate for First Nations, Métis students, under the previous government 47 per cent, now up to 56 per cent. More work to do, Mr. Speaker, but we're making progress, unlike when the members opposite were in government.

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

Management of Health Care System

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan hospitals are feeling the Sask Party cuts too. We've been hearing for a while that they're bursting at the seams. Hospitals are at critical capacity, and back in February, health regions were saying that they were one patient away from a bad situation. Mr. Speaker, that was back in February. Since then, nothing has changed and we continue to see our hospitals beyond capacity.

Yesterday in just two Saskatoon hospitals there were 76 over-capacity beds. We know that some of these people are squashed into units. We know that some of these people are waiting in the ER [emergency room] for a bed, and we know that some of these people are placed in a pod where there are no beds. We have heard from this government that they are getting rid of hallway medicine but, Mr. Speaker, sometimes there are over 20 people in these pods.

Mr. Speaker, a pod at the RUH [Royal University Hospital] for example is IV [intravenous] poles and bedsheets used to create a makeshift room around patients in a hallway. Mr. Speaker, does it not still count as hallway medicine if you've just built a fort around that patient in a hallway?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for what I think was a question. Mr. Speaker, we have as a government worked hard with our regional health authorities to first and foremost ensure that we're investing record amounts each and every year, Mr. Speaker, and we are again this year.

No doubt it is a more difficult budget year, but in fact this budget does include in the base budget the \$4.7 million that was

identified last year for emergency department waits. And that's resulting in things like our seniors' house call program, Mr. Speaker, our Home First/Quick Response program, the policing crisis action teams, Mr. Speaker, that are seeing hundreds of patients being diverted away from the emergency departments, Mr. Speaker.

As well, what we have done as a government, Mr. Speaker, is reopened beds, reopened rooms in our hospitals — our tertiary hospitals — which were closed by the members opposite. We knew as a government with a growing population, an aging population, changing demographics, that we needed to add to the number of hospital beds. And we have in significant ways in Regina and Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do that work with our regions.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, we hear all the time from the minister about things they are doing or supposedly doing, but things are not getting better. The minister is avoiding the reality of this situation. Mr. Speaker, we know that yesterday the Dubé Centre was over capacity. When we asked yesterday, he tried telling us that this wasn't the case. His proof? The 2013-14 numbers.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, we know that yesterday there were over-capacity beds in use at the Dubé Centre and another four patients waiting in the ER for a bed. Mr. Speaker, these are folks with serious mental health issues that need help right away. But the minister thinks things are rosy because they were okay in 2013-14. Is the minister hiding a DeLorean and Marty McFly back in his office? Now that he has his numbers, thanks to the NDP researcher, what will the Health minister do to fix this growing crisis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we are working very hard with our regional health authorities to ensure that we are able to provide a more appropriate service for our residents and our patients regardless, Mr. Speaker, of what their need is, whether it's a mental health crisis or whether or not it is a physical crisis, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we have invested in this budget, as we have in the past budgets, on some, I think some pretty ground-breaking initiatives. For example, the police and crisis teams in Saskatoon and Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region pair a mental health professional and a police officer. Over the first six months in Saskatoon, the program made 238 patient contacts, which only less than half of those actually required transportation to the hospital, Mr. Speaker. As well, in one quarter in the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, under that team they diverted eight individuals away from the emergency department and diverted nine arrests from occurring.

Mr. Speaker, this is the kind of work that we need to be doing. If the members opposite just want to keep doing the same thing over and over again, Mr. Speaker, we will not see

improvements in the system That's why we're trying these new programs, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully going to spread them beyond where they're already operating.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, makeshift forts in hallways is the reality today under this government. Mr. Speaker, last year we heard from an infectious disease specialist who said that Saskatchewan's HIV epidemic was unbelievable. As a physician from Toronto, she said, "You don't need to go to Africa to do HIV humanitarian work. You can go to Saskatchewan."

Saskatchewan HIV rates are the highest of all provinces and territories. Mr. Speaker, that was before we heard about the new numbers that are up again. Last night we heard that new cases of HIV climbed up to 160, a significant increase from the 112 reported the previous year. Certainly we know that more testing is happening, and that's a good thing. But what we see is that this increase in testing is showing the true epidemic that is going on in Saskatchewan. Community health workers and HIV advocates have been warning the government for years about how bad things are.

How has this government remained so lax on this issue instead of taking action? Why are they frozen and so squeamish when it comes to harm reduction?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. We are working with our stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. We are working with experts from across the province and outside of the province, Mr. Speaker, in looking at ways that we can reduce, Mr. Speaker, the number of new HIV infections in the province that we have, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, compared to 2014, in Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and Saskatoon Health Region, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region saw a 16 per cent decline in new cases. Saskatoon Health Region saw a 37 per cent decline in new cases, Mr. Speaker.

What we are seeing is, since 2009, a 48 per cent increase in the number of tests that are performed on an annual basis — 26,000 more than 2009, Mr. Speaker. We're up to over 70,000 tests. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we're moving out into areas that were perhaps undertested in the past, into rural and remote areas of the province, Mr. Speaker. As well, since 2012 we have more than doubled the number of HIV point-of-care testing sites from 20 to 48, Mr. Speaker.

Is there more work to be done on this? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. Are we doing more testing? Absolutely. And are we spreading the message, Mr. Speaker, that people should know their status? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue to work with the experts in this field.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Employment and Job Training Initiatives for Aboriginal Population

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan is climbing and it should be a cause for everyone. For off-reserve First Nations, unemployment is up sharply from 16.7 per cent a year ago to an alarming 25.3 per cent. Those numbers come straight from Statistics Canada, Mr. Speaker. And the situation is much worse for those living on-reserve.

Mr. Speaker, yet again in this House we draw attention to the work of Eric Howe, University of Saskatchewan economist, who has shown that closing the education gap and reducing First Nations and Métis unemployment could produce a \$90 billion economic boost to the entire province.

I know this government likes to use their own financial woes as an excuse to cut everything, but you would think the opportunity to invest in people and get a \$90 billion payback would be a chance that they, that even them, could not turn down. Investing instead of cutting is the moral thing, the right thing, and the economically smart thing.

Mr. Speaker, what more will it take for the Sask Party to take this issue seriously?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank my friend for the question. In terms of the unemployment rate, we saw last month the province go from the third lowest unemployment rate in Canada to the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada, which is an improvement.

We added jobs last month. In fact, we've added over 60,000 full-time jobs over the course of the last eight years.

And in terms of the specific question, in terms of Aboriginal employment, we know that the Aboriginal unemployment number reached its height under the NDP. We've made significant progress. We're about seven or eight points lower in terms of Aboriginal unemployment than when the members opposite were in government.

The way we did that, Mr. Speaker, was by making very significant investments into adult basic education, into job training programs so . . . matter of fact, we're the first province in Canada to actually fund adult basic education on a reserve. We spend about \$7 million per year on ABE [adult basic education] on-reserve, about \$30 million in Aboriginal employment programs in the general sense, Mr. Speaker, and we've made some very real progress.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, in fact it was the then NDP government that extended adult basic education on-reserve. The fact is that the Sask Party has shamefully cut important training and education economic development programs for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan. So let me make the economic argument one more time for my friends across the

way — \$90 billion. That's more than the total value of all potash that's ever been produced in Saskatchewan.

This government needs to reverse their cuts and work with the communities to ensure that First Nations and Métis people are employed at the same rate as non-Aboriginal people. The minister says they will work closely . . . the Education minister says they'll work to close the education gap, but the deep divide still exists. Working together to solve this crisis is not only fair, it's also good for all Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, in this budget, in this Throne Speech, we didn't see a call to action; we saw the issue being ignored. Will they stop ignoring the issue and get the job done?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I said, we've made record investments into adult basic education. We're making record investments into job training programs. SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] is an example, receiving record investments, far more than were ever made by the members opposite. And on top of that, Mr. Speaker, creating genuine economic opportunity for Aboriginal people in this province to take advantage of. We've created a tremendous amount of economic growth. We've been in government and seen tremendous economic growth over the last number of years that First Nations and other folks from this province have been able to take advantage of.

As a matter of fact, as I just indicated, \$7 million spent on-reserve this year for adult basic education, a significant increase over when the members opposite were in government. We're seeing progress being made. The second lowest unemployment rate in the entire country. In fact for most of the last two years we've had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We're moving in the right direction. We added jobs last month, as an example, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to make those record investments going forward.

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

Illegal Drainage and Flooding Issues

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, for Saskatchewan farmers, illegal drainage continues to be a serious issue. And this government needs to take meaningful action on the backlog of over 700 complaints. The Provincial Ombudsman's report last week is an indictment of this government's failure to take these complaints seriously. Here are some of the words she used in her report to describe this government's handling of just one of the dozens of complaints she has received: unreasonable, not served well, not procedurally fair.

On October 5th, 2010, the Water Security Agency's investigation in this case revealed that the complainant's neighbour's ditches were constructed without the WSA's [Water Security Agency] approval. The ditches were illegal. What did they do? They insisted on following through with both the informal and formal complaint-handling process before, some 26 months later, finally ordering these illegal

works to be fixed. Are you kidding me? Twenty-six months? What is this government doing to ensure that other farmers don't have to wait 26 months for action?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And you know, at the outset I'd certainly like to apologize for the time that it did take to get this decision resolved, these drainage problems resolved. But at the time that this was occurring, I think everyone knows we had a huge water problem on that side of the province. We had a lot of rain that year. And we certainly thank the Ombudsman for the recommendations that were made. And this is not the level of service that we want to provide from water security agencies.

But since that time we have passed our new drainage regulations, last September 1st, last year. And that's why we introduced them, was to take care of some of these complaint processes. We've streamlined them. We've made them a lot more risk-based type things. And that is how we're going to streamline that. And the new approach to that drainage is going to definitely affect and address the time that it took to handle these complaints.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well we're certainly thankful for the apology, Mr. Speaker, but until we see some actual meaningful action on the backlog, there's no evidence that the new regulations are going to do anything unless . . . the actual staff that can do the job.

On another issue, Mr. Speaker, there is a slow water torture impacting producers in the Quill Lakes area of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, in the last 10 years, water levels in the Quill Lakes have risen by almost 7 metres. People living there are fed up. The lakes have flooded 29,000 acres of their farm land and 56,000 acres of pasture land. Mr. Speaker, recently local producer Darrel Allen said, "I don't think the government is working very hard at it, myself. I'm getting more upset about it every year." Mr. Allen has watched more than 500 of his acres wash away. Another local resident described the government's action on this issue as "pretty slow."

Last summer the minister announced his solution to the problem, but quickly, and to his credit, pulled his flood plan to fix the problem. But the issue remains a major concern for the people of the Quill Lakes region. Plan A was soundly rejected last summer. Now what is Plan B? To the minister: when can the people of the Quill Lakes region expect you to finally take some meaningful action and address this very serious problem? What's the plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you for that question. And the Quill Lakes problem is certainly a very complex problem and we're aware of that. And we did do extensive work, studies, and looked at the situation that the member opposite alluded to, the Kutawagan project, but after consultation and hearing reports from some 500 people, 74 per

cent of which were opposed to that project for various reasons, we decided not to proceed with it.

What we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is we are very active out there looking at various alternatives that we can undertake to solve this problem. We're looking at such things as closing some illegal drainage works. As I mentioned in my previous question, we did pass new drainage regulations last fall. This is giving us an opportunity to take a look, and we've identified the 100 top illegal drainage works in that area. We're looking at closing them. We're looking at reservoir storage. We're looking at all sorts of things, and I would be happy to mention more of them next.

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

Health Policies in Correctional Facilities

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the government's refusal to act on urgent issues is tragically clear in the Children's Advocate report of a death that occurred at a provincial youth facility. The report clearly outlines that lack of overview from the ministries to ensure that youth have access to health services contributed to this young man's death.

Mr. Speaker, there was no overarching provincial health policy for the Ministry of Justice, Corrections and Policing. The report points out that these ministries needed to have better health policies for corrections. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the minister doesn't seem interested in meaningfully addressing these challenges, and families have been left waiting for answers. We need more accountability from this minister when it comes to giving these issues the attention and compassion they need. To the minister: has she read the report, and when will she commit to implementing the necessary changes?

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

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start off by first giving my sincere condolences to the family of Dylan Lachance who have lost a son and a brother.

We take the work of the advocate very seriously, Mr. Speaker, and thank the advocate for this report and the hard work that went into it. It's always concerning when someone dies in our care, and in particular it's concerning when it's a young person. We accept the spirit of the report. I have not had a chance to really go through it. Our ministry will need the time to consider each individual recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[11:00]

Management of Automobile Injury Coverage

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, last year SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] made recommendations to improve Saskatchewan's auto injury coverage, and the government promised that they would implement those recommendations.

And now they are recommending them, but they've left two out. They've dropped their pledge to increase assistance to those with cognitive impairment and their pledge to reduce income benefits by the amount someone receives through the Canadian pension plan.

Mr. Speaker, when asked about why they were backing away from these promises, the minister responsible had a baffling explanation. He said it would be a huge cost to summary financial statements. In other words, Mr. Speaker, people with disabilities and seniors were left out because of the Sask Party's massive deficit.

Mr. Speaker, people depend on those payments as their source of income. And Saskatchewan people paid into their insurance policies in good faith, trusting this government to ensure the quality of life after a serious accident.

Mr. Speaker, this government had years of record resource revenues. Why does the minister think it's fair for victims of auto accidents to have to pay the price for this government's mismanagement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we received the review on auto injury. We've went forward on 20, over 20 of the recommendations, Mr. Speaker, costing SGI anywhere from 12 to \$17 million as we move forward.

There were two we didn't move forward on, and the member is correct. That isn't meaning that we're backing away from them, Mr. Speaker. We will implement those as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, whether it's a CPP [Canada Pension Plan] or other benefits. We will follow through, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to say, day after day, Mr. Speaker, the opposition I guess does a very good job. They come in, and pretty much every issue that they raise is a scandal. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition one day used the word scandal about eight to nine times, Mr. Speaker — whether it was BD3 [Boundary dam 3] in Estevan where the NDP got less than 7 per cent, or whether it's the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], Mr. Speaker, where the member of Kindersley put the NDP down to 10 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Just because the NDP says it's a scandal doesn't mean it's a scandal, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, they use the word crisis over and over and over again, Mr. Speaker, and they try and tie the Premier to that. I'd say to the NDP opposite, we've got the most popular premier in Canada. He has come off of a historic third-term majority as a Sask Party centre to right wing Premier, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's only the NDP who would talk about this as a crisis.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, we heard earlier this week that the NDP would be going through a leadership race. Mr. Speaker, it's going to take . . .

The Speaker: — I'm having trouble hearing the Deputy Premier with his response. I would ask that he would rise and complete his answer to the question, please.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's going to take the NDP, we've learned, two years to push, to prod, to persuade somebody to run for that seat, Mr. Speaker. That's the new P3 for the NDP — push, persuade, or prod to take that ejection seat, Mr. Speaker, to take the ejection seat. That party come off the lowest popular vote it's ever received in 85 years, Mr. Speaker. If there's a crisis in this House, it's right over there.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has raised a point of privilege. Point of order. I recognize the Government House Leader.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to draw the attention of the Speaker to words spoken in question period by the Leader of the Opposition. He cautioned parents not to take this minister at his word. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is certainly language that's unbecoming a member of the House and certainly out of order, and this isn't the first time that this happened to this particular member. I refer the Speaker to *Hansard*, page 4511 and page 4488. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I ask that the member opposite, that he withdraw the remarks and apologize.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I will . . . It's a serious matter, although I will withdraw and apologize the remark to ensure that we have the proper discourse in this Assembly. Doesn't dismiss the seriousness of the matter.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Domestic and Interpersonal Violence

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege and an honour to rise in this House for the first 75-minute debate of this session, first 75-minute debate since the election, and my first debate, although it's a very, very serious issue and it's one that I hope that the members opposite — including the members that are heckling right now — take serious as well.

As we've been discussing in opposition here and we've been bringing to the government's attention time and time again, we have the highest rate of domestic violence amongst provinces in Canada. It's an astoundingly high rate, Mr. Speaker. Not only that, but we have extremely high rates of sexual assault. We

have extremely high rates of intimate partner death as well. And although this is an issue that affects both women and men, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, women bear the higher brunt of this issue and are more likely actually to be assaulted or murdered by somebody that they know than men are, and that's a really unfortunate situation, Mr. Speaker.

I had some . . . In my previous work I had some instances where I had clients who were trying to flee and deal with intimate partner violence, and unfortunately they struggled in trying to find ways of escaping the situation that they were in. They were afraid to flee or they had nowhere where they could go; they had children with them and they didn't want to leave their children. Sometimes actually, frankly, Mr. Speaker, they'll have pets; they'll have loved pets that they can't take with them to shelters, and have partners that are threatening to do harm to those pets if they choose to escape. We've been hearing about deaths more and more, Mr. Speaker, but the more concerning thing to me is the . . . are all of the instances in the province that we don't hear about, all of the silent victims, all the victims that are still suffering through this to this day.

The government is doing a few good things in this area, and I will give them credit for that. They've created, and I'm not sure when it was created — if it was NDP or it was now — but some attention's been paid to the domestic violence courts in the province and I do know that that's working quite well, and that there's some new shelters that have been built. And I know other members on my side will join me in the debate and talk a little about the good things, but also the bad things in terms of the funding and where the direction has been going.

But there's more that needs to be done, clearly. We need to be paying attention to this and we need to be doing something about this immediately. It's quite a stain on our province that we have such high intimate partner violence and death rates. And there's really no reason for why we should be so much higher than the rest of the provinces, Mr. Speaker.

Another one that I know the government just put out a news release for today was the death review panels that had been worked on for a while and they're coming out, I believe shortly, with reports to happen perhaps in the fall which . . . I'm happy to see that.

We're doing more now, Mr. Speaker, but there's so much more that needs to be done. And we don't have to tie it to the price of oil, Mr. Speaker. People's lives don't have to be tied to the price of oil. And we can be doing something about this now, something that's low cost or no cost. We can look to other jurisdictions to help us find other ways to address this. We don't have to wait for another person to die, frankly, Mr. Speaker. We don't have to wait for a committee to meet and then another committee with a subcommittee having another committee, and then that report gets tabled and then we talk about what parts of the recommendations can we implement. You know, I don't want to see this continue on and more people suffer before we seriously address this issue.

There's things that we already know about this problem, Mr. Speaker, that we can start to look at. Poverty and domestic violence, they go hand in hand. We know that women are disproportionately impacted by poverty. They are more likely to

be caregivers for our children and our seniors, and they are often the lifeblood of our families and communities. However, we continually allow for these economic disparities to occur. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, the economic inequality between men and women should be well understood by now, and it is one of the reasons why women are more disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence and death than men are.

Research shows us that the most important time to invest in domestic violence initiatives is when times are tough because, frankly, when families are struggling financially is sometimes when instances of violence heighten, Mr. Speaker. And that's a problem. And as the members opposite keep reminding us, we're in a tougher economic time now than we were before which causes me to worry about, like I said earlier, the instances that we're not even hearing about, all the silent victims, the ones that are struggling right now. So therefore now is the time that we need prevention, and now is the time that we need action. And this issue isn't just a women's issue, Mr. Speaker. This is an issue for everybody. It's an issue that we all need to be engaged in.

We know that domestic violence is also rooted in greater societal and historical marginalization of women. And our society needs to fully value women — our grandmothers, mothers, and daughters. And sexism and the value of women also play a part in why women experience a higher rate of domestic violence and interpersonal violence as well.

And that leads up to the other issue of violence against women and girls, Mr. Speaker, and the high rates we have of missing and murdered indigenous, in particular women and girls, in the province. We need to acknowledge the fact that race and ethnicity can play a factor into this, into the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. And we need to be seriously addressing this issue. This government has not done enough to seriously address this very, very important concern.

I attended a Mother's Day walk a few months ago on this issue in Regina in Wascana Park with families of women, with families of women and girls who have disappeared in the city and surrounding area, and then allies were there as well. There was a few hundred people. Unfortunately, I didn't see anybody from the Sask Party there. It would be really nice to see somebody from the Sask Party there with their families. Next May when they do another walk, hopefully we're not there to mourn the loss of more women and girls. But in any event, if we are, I'd really like to see more government there and showing that they take it seriously.

We need to be supporting women better, Mr. Speaker, with better maternity leaves and affordable child care. We need to move more women into decision-making roles. And I'm so proud to be part of a caucus that has 50 per cent women. And we're taking steps to ensure that the voices of women are heard in this legislature, which is extremely important to do, Mr. Speaker, when we're talking about these issues. We need more women at the table. We need more women at the decision-making table. We need more women at the executive level. We need more women in cabinet. It just, studies show, goes to make better decisions overall, frankly.

Another issue with respect to domestic violence and the high

rates of domestic violence in the province that we already know about and therefore don't have to wait for another report is the factor of isolation that many families feel in our rural and remote communities in our province, which goes to one of the reasons why we have a higher rate of domestic violence. And domestic violence, interpersonal violence, interpersonal death — these are issues that need to be addressed.

There's families in rural and remote communities who . . . There's women rather who are, you know, struggling to try and find where they can go. If the closest shelter is 300 kilometres away and they have children, it's very difficult to have to uproot your children from their schools, from where they're used to. But you also don't want to necessarily leave them there because you're afraid for their safety, but you're afraid for your safety. And at times you also are at an economic disadvantage, frankly, Mr. Speaker, where you may have trouble being able to leave or even having the means to leave.

[11:15]

And you may not have anybody to reach out to as well, and that's the concern, is often when you're in these types of situations, you become isolated from those you love. It's part of the cycle, Mr. Speaker, of abuse, where a perpetrator will isolate a victim and put them in a situation where they don't feel like they can leave because they don't have anybody to reach out to. And those issues get exacerbated, Mr. Speaker, when you're in a small community and you can't necessarily walk next door and ask somebody for help, or you maybe don't see somebody every day. So these are things that have been studied already. They've been studied in other jurisdictions. They've been studied in Saskatchewan. There's some low- to no-cost solutions, Mr. Speaker, that we could be doing.

You know, there's been recent events in the news that have emphasized how much better our justice and policing systems need to do when it comes to sexual assault and violence against women. We need to change these systems to better support women, Mr. Speaker. There's often a conversation about, when you're going through a sexual assault trial, for example, or an assault trial between two partners, it's very much a revictimization process for that individual. And most people will unfortunately choose to not go through the court system, especially in instances of sexual assault, Mr. Speaker, instead of having to relive the trauma again. And that's why, especially in sexual assault issues, the numbers that we have are . . . It's quite common, it's quite well known that it's an under-reported number, Mr. Speaker, and the rates are actually significantly higher than they are.

In a past history I used to volunteer on the Regina sexual assault 24-hour crisis line. And there we would hear oftentimes from many women, sometimes men but many women who . . . and girls, frankly, high school students as well who had recently usually had a sexual assault type violent situation happen to them, and they were at a loss of what to do. So what we would do is, Mr. Speaker, we would explain to them the process and how they would have to, you know, go to the hospital, go to the emergency room, go get the rape kit done, and then you'll talk to the police and then at that point the police will take it over in terms of laying a charge. And the thought of having to get a rape kit done and the thought of having to discuss this with

other people is a traumatizing, a retraumatizing experience for a lot of women and girls, frankly, Mr. Speaker.

And oftentimes they'll just say, you know what, I don't want to talk to anybody else about this. I just would rather forget about it and pretend it never happened. And that creates a lot of concerns and a lot of problems throughout their lives and in terms of the justice system, in terms of addressing this issue. So it's something that needs to be addressed. We have some really well-educated nurses in our province. Unfortunately we . . . who are specifically trained to deal with sexual assault in our ER, in our emergency rooms, Mr. Speaker. We need more of them. We need to make sure that they're available 24 hours a day, Mr. Speaker, because these sexual assaults happen 24 hours a day.

There's also other things we can do, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I'm glad we're having this discussion today because yes, the government has done some things, but there's other things we can do, and it doesn't have to be tied to the price of oil. They can be low-cost; they can be no-cost. And we can look to our neighbours in Alberta, Mr. Speaker, who recently passed legislation dealing with an individual who has experienced or is dealing with a domestic violence situation to be able to break a lease early, because that can be a limiting factor for someone trying to get help.

There is also the Ontario . . . no, I believe it's Manitoba legislation that was just recently passed, Mr. Speaker, that gives the right to time off work without fear of job loss should you be experiencing an intimate personal violence situation, Mr. Speaker. And that's extremely important as well. If you don't have a safe place in the home, you should be able to have a safe place in the work. You should be able to have at least somewhere where you can go where you can reach out to a colleague or a boss and explain to them the situation without fear of recrimination, without fear of any type of financial penalty or job loss as a result of perhaps you having to take a few days off to be able to get your living arrangements sorted out, Mr. Speaker, or trying to get your kids into a new school or, you know, trying to buy new furniture because you had to quickly leave your home without any of your belongings.

So these are just a very few, but very important legislation that I hope this government looks at and deals with. We do need a Saskatchewan-specific response but we need to act now. There is also an Ontario death review panel that's been out for a while that has a bystander awareness program that I think would also be one that I would like to see this government look into. There's other recommendations as well that would be really a good idea for this government to look into.

But I see that my time is running out. I know other people want to join in this debate so at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly condemns the government for failing to appropriately address the issue of domestic violence and violence against women and girls, and for refusing to implement a plan to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence until the province's fiscal capacity allows.

And I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Douglas Park has moved:

That this Assembly condemns the government for failing to appropriately address the issue of domestic violence and violence against women and girls, and for refusing to implement a plan to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence until the provincial fiscal capacity allows.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is with great disappointment that I need to stand up here today and speak on the topic of domestic violence and the violence against women and girls. After all of the good work that has been happening in this province under this government, and will continue to happen, it would appear as though our colleagues across the floor have not been paying attention to what is going on.

When I read the motion I would think that they were talking about the 16 years that they were in power when there was little to nothing done with regards to domestic violence and violence against women and girls. One of the definitions of domestic violence is violent or aggressive behaviour within the home, typically involving the violent abuse of a spouse or partner. We are aware that Saskatchewan's high rate of violence affects all communities and cannot be tolerated. As part of the Saskatchewan plan for growth, the government is committed to building safe communities and a better quality of life for all citizens. I'm not about to stand up here and say that there is not more work that needs to be done with regards to this subject. There is more work to be done.

Having said that, there are lots of great works that have been happening and will continue to happen. We are getting this work done by partnering with several organizations throughout the province. Today the member from Melfort stood here and gave a member's statement about the work happening in his constituency. On June 13th, 2016, in partnership with North East Outreach and Support Services, a full operation of a 24-hour residential crisis service centre in Melfort was opened. This facility will provide services for women and children in the northeast area of the province who are experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse. This is some very good work that is happening in our province under this government.

For this very important facility, included in the 2016-17 budget, the Ministry of Justice is providing up to \$500,000 for start-up operational of this facility. Considering the fact that our opposition does not believe we are investing in domestic violence, I would say that maybe they need to look at the numbers a little bit closer. And who put some money up to build this facility?

In 2015-16 and '16-17, capital costs for construction and rebuild of this facility has been provided through the shelter enhancement program, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation through the Ministry of Social Services. The Ministry of Justice supports domestic violence services through community agencies in 17 communities across the province, right from the

south part of the province to the north — Archerwill, The Battlefords, Estevan, Fort Qu'Appelle, Hudson Bay, Humboldt, Kindersley, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Melfort, as well as all of the major cities.

Mr. Speaker, police-based victims service programs are available across the province in 92 police districts, as well as victim witness services and the victims compensation program. I am very familiar with the victims services program in Estevan, and I'm fully aware of the valuable service this program provides the individuals that need to use it. The people who volunteer with this program are some of the most caring and compassionate people I know. They work tirelessly to ensure this service is in place when it is needed. These volunteer support workers do the majority of the service delivery to these clients. They are all well trained and highly skilled.

All the volunteers have passed a police security check and have signed an oath of secrecy, a code of ethics, and a contract that speaks to the commitment of personal conduct. Every volunteer has completed a classroom training program delivered by community people with expertise, and a minimum of 12 hours of shadowing with experienced support workers. Ongoing training is a requirement for all of our volunteers. The expectations for the volunteers are very high. This reflects the high level of their responsibilities and need for professionalism. It is a uniquely hands-on volunteer experience which offers a significant level of personal satisfaction and educational gain. Victims services is more excellent work that is taking place and will continue to take place in the future. This program is also funded by the Ministry of Justice. We value the programs and services delivered by community organizations that support people who experience interpersonal violence and abuse. These organizations make vital contributions to the safety of Saskatchewan citizens and families.

Mr. Speaker, as I was researching what this government has been doing with regards to this topic, I did not have to look too hard as there was a long list of things we did just last year. Last session our government introduced amendments to the victims of domestic violence Act, Bills 144 and 152, to enhance the ability of police and justice systems to engage protective measures for victims. Last year in 2015-16, we provided over \$11 million to develop and operate interpersonal violence and abuse services including transition houses, family violence outreach services, sexual assault services, just to name a few. And also last year we increased funding for sexual assault services by over 20 per cent.

We proclaimed Violence Prevention Week in October. This was to help raise awareness about how we can all take part to make our communities safer. We also ran a public awareness campaign called Who Will You Help? and it was about how we can all take part in preventing sexual assault.

I would hardly call what I have just listed, failing to address the issue. If anything, I would say we are being fairly aggressive in trying to address the issue. In 2016-17 we will be providing 11.4 million to develop and operate 43 services delivered by 33 community-based organizations in 17 communities across Saskatchewan.

As part of our government's commitment to keep Saskatchewan

individuals and communities safe and as part of its response to the 14 cases of domestic-violence-related homicides in 2014-15, the Ministry of Justice is implementing a process to review domestic violence death cases. The purpose of this review will be to identify consistent themes across domestic death cases in order to make recommendations to prevent them in the future. The goal and objective of implementing this process is to prevent deaths related from domestic violence. Within the framework, we're going to try and identify trends and risk factors and patterns. We're going to identify possible gaps and points of intervention in community systematic responses. We're going to recommend domestic violence prevention and intervention strategies as well as seek ways to prevent similar deaths from occurring in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that we were going to be putting \$11.4 million in this budget. The type of services that we will be offering in this funding will be family violence outreach, sexual assault services, transition houses, enhanced residential services, provincial coordinated services, and northern transportation and support initiatives.

And in the words of our Social Services minister and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, while much has been accomplished, more work needs to be done. We need to speak against gender violence and build upon existing work occurring between all levels of government and with community partnerships.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, when I was looking at the domestic violence death review process and reading the number of domestic violence-related homicides, I could not help but think of Lisa, and how even though we are not related by blood, she was a member of this government's family. Lisa is one of the statistics that we are talking about here today.

Once again I am angered by the fact that our opposition has made a conscious decision to bring a motion to this Assembly to try and say that we are not addressing the issue and that we are refusing to implement a plan to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence. You had 16 years to fix it and you did very little. Our government is not just sitting by the sidelines on this very important topic.

In closing I would like to applaud my new work colleagues and all of the work that they have already done on this file, and I would like to thank them for having the compassion to bring new ideas and programs forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important for me, I feel, to enter into this discussion here today. And I think that we should be even careful on how we enter into this discussion today in how we characterize the debate that we're having and how we maybe fall into the traps that we sometimes do as politicians, into referencing this government or that term, and this or that or this party, as opposed to recognizing, I think, something that's just abundantly clear to, I would hope, every single person in this Assembly and I believe to most inside the

province, is that the violence rates, domestic violence rates, sexual assault rates in Saskatchewan are not acceptable, and that it has to change.

And the fact that domestic violence in . . . that we lead all of Canada with rates of domestic violence is something that we can't accept, the fact that we're twice as high as the national average. Our statistics are a shame, but they manifest themselves in real ways in lives of girls and women all across our province, robbing them of dignity and security and safety and of opportunity, Mr. Speaker. And these are our nieces. These are our sisters. These are our daughters. These are our neighbours. These are our moms. These are our grandmas. This is the future of our province. These are those who have given so much to our province.

And I'll just simply enter into the debate here today, recognizing that there's measures that government has taken for which we would be fully supportive of and are on the record with that. And we'd recognize the efforts and leadership of many as well across our province that are working to address this abhorrent reality for many across the province — whether they be working in shelters or in violence prevention programs, or working in justice, or doing what they can in policing or in education or in victim services through justice. All of these partners are important, but it's not enough.

And it's not good enough for us to back-pat and accept that this is reasonable. And it's certainly not acceptable when you look at the tragic statistics but, more importantly, the tragic realities that are lived out in the lives of women and men all across Saskatchewan. It's not good enough for us to back-pat or to maintain the status quo.

This is an issue that impacts every last one of us, and every one of us plays a role, Mr. Speaker. Men play an important role in this as well. And somebody that speaks to this is Dr. Jackson Katz, cofounder of Mentors in Violence Prevention. He speaks about the importance of addressing violence and domestic violence as not simply a women's issue, but as an issue for all of us. If we're speaking of it as just a women's issue, it can allow men to not enter that conversation in the way that we need to or to prevent men from engaging in understanding their role in all of this as well, or not being engaged that are things that might be perceived as typically feminine, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it has to cause all of us, and certainly as men, to look at the world around us and to look at, to deconstruct what's, you know, sometimes become a perceived norm within society or a cultural norm, and to challenge that and to understand and to learn and to be able to be an active member of making things better, doing all we can as individual citizens and then doing all we can by working together.

This is a matter of right. It's a matter of equality, of opportunity, of safety and security, and of freedom for so many across our province and our province as a whole. It's not good enough to accept that, you know, we have to wait for certain fiscal conditions in the resource sector to allow further investments in these areas. It's an area that needs steady and active attention and progress, Mr. Speaker.

The reality stated by the Provincial Association of Transition

Houses is that there 2,200 spousal violence incidents were reported to police in Saskatchewan in 2007, and that women accounted for four out of five of those victims. And that between 1975 and 2004, that eight women were killed by their spouses.

The impacts of course extend beyond the victim who, you know, should be enough. It extends into a family. It extends into children. And the reality for children that are observing or witnessing or within a home with domestic violence, the impacts are real. It has cognitive impacts, Mr. Speaker. It delays their ability to grow and learn within school. It creates understandings of what's normal when these things really are not normal at all, and in fact they're hurtful, harmful, and hate-filled too often, Mr. Speaker. So it creates a very, I guess, unequal and unhealthy perception of relationships. So children are impacted all across our province, meaning that our next generation is impacted. And it's a learned behaviour, Mr. Speaker, that's in many ways difficult to deconstruct, difficult to learn other perspectives, Mr. Speaker.

We also know that of course there's, you know, a big community impact of domestic violence. And cited here by the provincial transition houses, I quote:

We all pay financially for the cost of domestic violence. It is estimated that each year in Canada domestic violence results in \$487 million in lost wages, costs the criminal justice system \$872 million, costs the health care system \$408 million, and results in increased social service costs of \$2.3 billion. In total, the economic impact of domestic violence is approximately \$6.9 billion a year.

So I mean, it's in our economic interest to act, Mr. Speaker, but we should almost even set aside that debate because it's our, a moral imperative that we act, Mr. Speaker. There's many things that we need to be supporting on this front.

The discussion, I think, moved by the member from Regina Douglas Park, the motion that was brought forward is an important one. And that member knows full well the realities for many that are subjected to domestic violence. This is somebody that was a real champion in and continues to be in ensuring access to the justice system for all people. The access to that justice system is something that's indeed a real problem to address domestic violence, and I know it's something that that member's worked long and hard before she was a member in this Assembly to extend those services. And I know it's something that she'll continue to champion within her role as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

It was also mentioned by the member from Douglas Park the impact of poverty and impact of poverty inaction, and the lack of security that many — and in many cases, women — are in within poverty, Mr. Speaker. And there's real consequences to inaction on this front, and it leaves real vulnerability for many that are trying to remove themselves from a domestic violence circumstance.

We hear of specific challenges for those that are in employment, and we hear about options that, you know, could give the guarantee of taking a leave, which is something that's important. We also hear of lack of supports and challenges

within more rural and remote parts of our province. But I don't want to point to any part of this province, you know, as being a leader in a positive way on this front. Every part of our province — in the far North, in rural Saskatchewan, and in urban Saskatchewan — has a lot more that we can do.

Obviously any measures, and I'm going to stay out of the whole budget debate here right now, but any measures that make things worse for hard-working families, that don't reduce inequality, that don't provide security to the vulnerable, make matters worse on this front. And unfortunately we see far too much of that in this budget, and it's an area that we need to really be a lot more cognizant of.

It's concerning when we see cuts to things like the mobile crisis, and their ability to respond in places like Prince Albert, knowing what sort of security and connection to service that can provide. And it's shameful, Mr. Speaker, that we see shelters all across our province having to turn far too many. We shouldn't be turning anyone away. But it breaks one's heart to hear that in Prince Albert the shelter had to turn away thousands of women within a single year, Mr. Speaker, or that in Regina alone our wait-list can often be close to 1,000 people, Mr. Speaker. So we certainly need to have better supports on that front.

So there's a lot more we all need to do. It's about cultural change, and it's also about practical supports across the province, making things better as it relates to poverty and inequality and rights and equality for women also. I see I'm out of time right now, but it's an important debate to enter.

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

Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I acknowledge the sober tenor surrounding this debate and the words of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Regina Douglas Park. Of course we all need to work together on this very serious, very important issue.

That said, I must say that the motion before us amounts to sloganeering and relies on base clichés that quite frankly are completely inaccurate, Mr. Speaker. Our record is very clear on domestic and interpersonal violence and violence against women and girls. And it's very, it's very definitive and very honourable in terms of its commitments.

The very premise of this motion put forward by the member for Douglas Park is false, that our overall plan does not include the financial commitment, the backup to address this extremely important issue of violence against women. What then, Mr. Speaker, of the \$11 million, 11 million allocated this year to develop and operate 43 services that address interpersonal violence and abuse, delivered by 33 community-based organizations in 17 communities across this province?

What then of the \$500,000 provided by the Ministry of Justice for the start-up and the ongoing operation of a 24-hour residential crisis service in Melfort, House of Hope, that will help women and their children in the Northeast who are experiencing interpersonal violence and abuse? The opening of this emergency shelter was this week, June 13, Monday.

Tragically, it was almost ready in November 2014 before it burned to the ground. But it was full steam ahead again to get it up and running. And here we are, up and running. It's the first transition home in Saskatchewan since 1989, Mr. Speaker.

I was chatting just the other day with the member from Melfort, and he was saying this motion, this motion comes this week, of all possible weeks, because he is so proud, as we all are, of this project and of our co-operation, so proud of our project and of the co-operation with North East Outreach & Support Services in Melfort. And he told me with some degree of emotion about some of the stories he's heard of women in crisis in and around the community of Melfort, particularly where children are concerned, where children are involved. And he told me how important this transition house is to the community of Melfort, of course to victims above all, but also to him personally as a representative of that community who has lobbied so tirelessly for this, honourably and committedly, Mr. Speaker.

What too of the fact that this government went above and beyond the recommendations of the poverty reduction strategy advisory group back in 2014? That advisory group included Dr. Ryan Meili no less, social activist, one-time leadership contender for the NDP. It was our government, it was the Minister for Social Services, not the advisory group, not Dr. Meili, that included interpersonal violence and domestic abuse as a root cause of poverty worthy of future direction, because it is a root cause. There are known links between being disenfranchised or unemployed or under stress and abusing. Where economies are stronger, where people feel they have more purpose, domestic violence rates tend to fall. And of course where women, where women and children don't have to pick up and leave and put their lives and their schooling and maybe their jobs on hold while they stay in a temporary shelter for example, that too becomes a poverty producer.

[11:45]

We took that direction for the future, Mr. Speaker. Take bills 144 and 152, amendments to the victims of domestic violence Act, that came into effect just last year. These amendments enhance the ability of police and of the justice system to engage, to activate protective measures for victims. As well, importantly, the Saskatchewan domestic violence death review process is being implemented this very summer. Panel members were announced today because we have been moved and stirred to action as a government to address the 14 tragic cases of domestic-violence-related homicides in this province in 2014 and 2015. They cut close to home.

The purpose of this review will be to identify consistent themes in domestic death cases and to make recommendations to prevent them in the future. Can we do more? Of course we can. Always. But we have acted too. Consider the banners surrounding some of our major initiatives: "Province enhances protection for victims of violence abuse." That was April 2015. "Province confirms commitment to review domestic violence deaths," October 2015. "Province launches powerful campaign against sexual violence and abuse," also October 2015. And this was following the proclamation for the second year in a row of awareness-raising Violence Prevention Week, Mr. Speaker.

I remember that public awareness campaign. It was very

effective. It was called, Who Will You Help? And it was about how everyone has a role to play when it comes to preventing, in this case, sexual assault. It ran on TV, in theatres, on social media where it garnered 1 million views. And when I saw some of these PSAs [public service announcement], I recalled personally how I once called the police when I was a student at McGill. Every day I was home around the supper hour I would hear a husband come home to the apartment below me, and he would start to yell and to scream at his wife and things would escalate to the point my mind raced. At first I left an anonymous note on their door and then one particularly bad night I decided to call the police. And I remember the police came to my door following their visit to the apartment below because I had placed the call. And then as it turned out the couple in question, including the man in question, came up a few days later ostensibly to apologize. But I still sometimes wonder whether that was really appropriate that my apartment number was passed along to them. But at any rate, the yelling did cease, at least for as long as I lived there, which was something.

I also recall volunteering to provide legal advice to a woman at a Saskatoon shelter back when I was a law student. And I recall the fear more than anything, the disorientation, the distraction in her demeanour. She was trying to listen to whatever strategy I was proposing, but really her mind was quite understandably on what she feared was only temporary peace. I continued to donate toys and books to that shelter, and I often wonder what happened to that lady. I hope she is well and that she found more than just temporary peace.

Of course there's no question that the high rate of violence, particularly in our North, Mr. Speaker, affects all communities. And prevention, reduction, they are everyone's responsibility. Governments, individuals, communities, they all play a part. But every single case of abuse and death from abuse is a tragedy, and we will work hard to make them avoidable tragedies. In terms of rural and northern Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Justice currently supports domestic violence services run by community agencies in 17 communities. In northern Saskatchewan specifically, the Ministry of Justice funds a program through North Sask Victim Services in La Ronge specifically designed to help northerners leave dangerous situations safely and quickly.

Police-based victims services programs are available across the province. All RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and municipal police services are ready and able to help with situations of domestic violence. There are 24-hour crisis lines available that help victims create plans for their safety.

The Ministry of Justice has also provided training on trauma through webinars and face-to-face meetings with some 700 individuals. Regina and Saskatoon provide access for offenders to earlier programming and to increase victim safety. No fewer than 14 residential services for women and their children have been licensed or relicensed under this government through *The Residential Services Act* by the Ministry of Justice.

Bottom line, there is never a more open demonstration of commitment than in the practical, the application of action. We are working to find realistic and effective solutions. That's what the Minister for Social Services called it following our

government's announcement of the domestic violence death review process. Not just words, not inflammatory words, but action, action on an issue that continues to be a major one, not only here in Saskatchewan but in Canada and around the world, Mr. Speaker. But that it's submitted that we have failed to address the issue of domestic violence and violence against women and girls and refused to implement a plan to prevent and reduce it — this after the Justice minister has said attitudes that legitimize sexual violence and misogyny are an ongoing safety to the safety of our province's women and girls — that is not refusal. That is not looking the other way.

Our record, our actions clearly show the contrary. The member for Regina Douglas Park, the Leader of the Opposition, their engagement with this issue is to be commended. We must all work together, of course. But my suggestion would be to withdraw this contrived motion, which I will not be supporting, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Regina Lakeview. Mr. Speaker, I've been thinking about how I wanted to introduce my remarks today. I did make a commitment to myself that if I were lucky enough to be able to stand in this legislature, in this space, that I would bring forth some of my experiences and the experiences of women that I have dealt with over the course of my career, over the last 25 years as a social worker. So I'm feeling a bit emotional about this, but please know that this is a great honour to be able to stand in place today and talk about the issues facing women in this province and the need for improved services to address domestic violence.

And one thing that I want to start my remarks by saying, to start with just to correct or just to address some of the remarks by the member from Estevan. I think that it's unfair to suggest that we haven't been paying attention to this issue. I know my colleague to my left here has been a long-time social worker and has dealt with victims of domestic violence. My colleague from Douglas Park, a long-time sexual assault volunteer. And certainly this is an issue our leader has consistently been strong on, and talking about the need for men to also carry this burden and find solutions to the problem of domestic violence.

I grew up . . . Like many people, I didn't have a long time in my childhood without knowing that domestic violence did happen. And while it's not my story to tell, and I would just qualify it wasn't members of my immediate family, it was people that I cared about very much who, from an early age, I recognized were experiencing violence at the hands of someone that they cared about. And that's concerning as a child, but it certainly has impacted the way that I have lived my life and the course of my career over the years.

When I left the farm in 1991, I moved to the city and immediately became involved with the Saskatchewan Action Committee on the Status of Women. It was at that time that I had the chance to meet a very special, very small, very quiet-spoken woman named Ina George. And Ina George was involved with SAC [Saskatchewan Action Committee] because her daughter Pamela had been murdered, and mom doing the best to provide for her daughters. And it was really a privilege

and . . . a tragedy, that story, but to get to work with her. And at that time — it was 25 years ago — we were calling on improvements to services for women, for children to address domestic violence. And here we are 25 years later.

Since 1995 I started as a volunteer at Regina Transition House and was really, really excited to get the position of the children's councillor in 1999, or in 2000 rather. And the stories that I heard from both the women there and the children have informed me as a parent and certainly as a member of this Assembly. I hold their stories with me and again, as I said, I consider it a great privilege to get to stand here and talk about some of those experiences.

Most recently I was manager of Regina Transition House, and I'm going to focus my remarks a little bit about Regina Transition House because that is the area that I'm most familiar with, but I think it builds into the broader context of issues around violence against women in this province.

Regina Transition House was opened in 1976 — 40 years ago. In fact next week they're going to be having their AGM [annual general meeting] and their 40th anniversary AGM. And I just want to say that, you know, I don't think that any political party can take credit for the establishment of shelters. In fact Regina Transition House was the first shelter in Regina, and the way that it came about was the result of two very dedicated mobile crisis workers, Lisa Brownstone and Karen Howe. In 1976 they recognized that they were taking women out of situations of domestic violence and then housing them temporarily in sort of . . . well I think term that Lisa uses is fleabag motels, and recognizing that, without the supports, often these women were going back home. So they got to work. They rolled up their sleeves still while being employed full-time and they got funding for Regina Transition House with a little help of the IODE, the independent order of the daughters of the empire, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire.

So I say that just by way of, you know, I don't think any government should take too much credit for the establishment of their shelters. This was really a grassroots effort to address issues that they were seeing in the community. And I think we really have to listen to those grassroots voices. And on that note, I will say that there has been work done by both the Sask Party and certainly previous NDP governments around the issue of domestic violence. I had the chance to meet Minister Wyant at Regina Transition House a couple of years ago when we opened the expansion in 2013. And I recognize that, you know, there has been money for shelters, the domestic violence courts which has been sort of a collaborative approach with many agencies and different governments, and it's certainly the death review panel.

But the question that we're talking about here today is, should we wait until oil prices rebound before we engage in a more comprehensive strategy? And my assertion is that no, we should not. As I mentioned, in 2013 when I returned to the shelter, we were in the middle of a boom and housing in Regina in particular was very, very scarce. I think the rental rate was under point six per cent, and we had just opened a new wing to the shelter that increased capacity by 50 per cent, and that was important. It was accessible, which provided opportunities for women who had mobility issues. Also unfortunately that year,

we had over 1,000 women and children on our wait list; it was also the case the next year. And the length of stay increased because of the lack of availability of affordable housing.

[12:00]

So what I suggest is, you know, funding shelters is very, very important, but if we only try to address this issue by funding shelters, we will never be able to build enough shelters. We will never be able to build enough shelters.

We need to address root causes. And something like domestic violence, you know, like many social issues, there isn't one cause. When I was hiring staff at the shelter, one of the questions I always liked to ask was, what do you think causes domestic violence? And I certainly didn't have all of the answers but it was interesting to hear what people had to say.

And then also we would ask, what do you think would address family violence? How do we get rid of family violence? Certainly in 1976, when Lisa and Karen started Transition House, their goal was the elimination of violence. They thought, you know, by now they expected — and they've told me this many times — that we would be at a point where we wouldn't be talking about this. But unfortunately in 2016, we are in a position where, not only are we still talking about this, that Saskatchewan has the highest rates of domestic violence in the country, double the national rate.

And, you know, that's cause for some hand-wringing. And I think, certainly, I hope we can, both sides of this legislature, can agree on this: that the status quo is not acceptable. And I would hope that we could also agree that we shouldn't wait until oil prices rebound. This is something that deserves our attention today.

One of the causes of violence that increases rates of violence is inequity. We know that women don't make as much money as men, on the dollar, and their choices are limited. So any time a woman is isolated or she has less access to resources, her risk of violence goes up. I thought it was going to be hard to talk for 15 minutes. So anything that we are doing that increases inequality . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In a way, this is an exercise in preaching to the choir. We on this side of the House agree that this is a very serious issue and we're definitely not proud that our province has a very high rate of domestic violence. We know that our police-reported violence is nearly double the national rate, and that this is especially acute in our northern communities. Stories like the quadruple murder-suicide of Latasha Gosling and her three little kids in Tisdale about a year ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, make every single one of us ill.

This is not an area where we disagree with members on the opposite, and we would hope that it would be elevated above scoring a political point.

The members on our side of the House, the male members on

our side of the House today, you might notice, are wearing white ribbons. It was noted earlier, the Leader of the Opposition talked about the work of Jackson Katz, and I would argue that we have a male-dominated caucus who's done a lot of work on this issue.

You know, it was noted by the member of Regina Douglas Park that their caucus has 50 per cent men and that it is noticed that when there are more women, there are better decisions overall. I think that's a terribly sexist remark. We have a number of men on this side of the House who have been involved in these initiatives and are to be commended, I think, for their leadership on this very, very serious issue. I think we need to be careful, in the words of the Leader of the Opposition, how we characterize these things.

We were admittedly a little bit surprised to see this motion come forward and even more surprised by its language condemning us. As I've said, this is an issue where there is agreement across the aisle.

And it was suggested by the member from Douglas Park earlier that our absence at an event was illustrative of our lack of interest in it. Unfortunately, as I've watched this debate unfold, I've noticed that the same member has been absent for the remarks both by the member from Estevan and by the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota. And therefore, if this is such an important motion, I'm shocked that that same member wouldn't sit attentively and listen to the response of the members on this side.

In addition to perhaps not investing the appropriate amount of energy into researching what has been done on this very serious matter and the myriad of programs, this motion also woefully ignores the fact that not only is an issue of interpersonal violence one that we agree we continue to work on for many on this side of the room, it is deeply personal. I'm a long-time supporter of the Regina Transition House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and served briefly on their board. And last summer, less than a year ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our party lost its longest serving employee to domestic-related homicide. Her name was Lisa Strang. This is her. So this issue is deeply personal to many people on this side of the House.

We understand this issue and we have acted on it. And we know, we know deeply that violence prevention and reduction is everyone's responsibility. There are members on this side of the House who have, I think, lost a lot of sleep wondering what they could have done to help this particular long-time employee of ours. The Who Will You Help campaign video which was launched last summer speaks to this by outlining the many situations where people's lack of intervention would have made the difference in preventing interpersonal violence and abuse.

We know that Aboriginal women experience a greater level of violence than non-Aboriginal women. The Aboriginal family violence initiative helps urban Aboriginal families deal with the various forms of violence and abuse. There are six of those programs offered across North Battleford, P.A. [Prince Albert], Regina, Saskatoon, and Yorkton. In P.A., which has one of the highest Aboriginal populations in our province, we have two of those programs.

We know that the cycles of violence are repeated and that's why there are nine Children Exposed to Violence programs operating in Buffalo Narrows, Estevan, La Ronge, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, P.A., Regina, and Saskatoon. These programs try to help children cope with the trauma they have experienced in witnessing or experiencing violence and helps them cope so they don't repeat it.

We know that people need help in their communities. We know that women in particular often have less resources and so having services close to home is important. There are 33 community-based organizations that we provide funding to which respond to these issues, and one of those of course is the Regina Transition House. But it is important that people outside the major centres also have service and on Monday of this week, as has been noted, we opened a 16-bed facility in Melfort. And again, as the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota has done, I want to commend the member for that constituency on championing that particular facility. That's the kind of leadership we need.

Of the 12 transition houses we provide funding for, two of those are very specific to the needs of Aboriginal women. One of those of course is the WISH [Wichihik Iskwewak Safe House] safe house which is rightly operated by Touchwood-File Hills, and the other one is Piwapan which is operated by the La Ronge Native Women's Council. And then we also have the northern transportation and support initiative which supports transitional support for residents in the North who are fleeing interpersonal violence and abuse. And the domestic violence death review process has also been talked about. And I was really pleased to see that Mary Aspinall from Family Service is involved in that. I think we would all recognize she is a leader and her voice will be very important.

And I concur with the member from Regina Lakeview that we need to look at this issue through a more than just simply a justice lens. People have to have more affordable housing to go to, and our government has certainly been working on that issue, and particularly in the area of those hard to house. I think when our Premier and my colleagues talk about Saskatchewan whose best days are ahead of us, we do mean where we have the lowest, or I would hope, non-existent rates of domestic violence and abuse.

We understand that getting people out of poverty and engaged in educational opportunities while looking forward to the jobs and opportunities across the province is key. We understand that our investments in housing are key. We understand that our investments in health are key. These are things that we work together to create the kind of society that we want to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's why three-quarters of our budget is devoted to health, education, and social services.

Of course there's more work to do. I don't know that we're ever going to be done on this issue. And it's difficult to celebrate the opening of a women's shelter, to be quite honest.

But I look forward to the proposals, not just the opposition from the other side of the House on this issue. Instead of a motion condemning us, let's start from a constructive place of common ground. And so I will not be supporting this motion, which just does not start from the level of serious reflection and a spirit of

co-operation that I think this issue so richly deserves. Thank you so much.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — There is still a few seconds available for debate, but I think we will dispense with debate. And before we go into the 10-minute question period, I'd simply like to remind members of rule 51(b) which states, "No member shall reflect on the absence of another member." And I'd particularly like to remind the member from Regina University of this rule. We now go into the 10-minute question time. I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Phillips: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are quick to condemn, but they never seem to offer any ideas or solutions. In their 2016 election platform, they said they were going to increase funding to transition houses. Well, Mr. Speaker, we've already done that. This year we're investing more than \$11 million to support interpersonal violence and abuse services, including transition houses. And this week we opened the first new transition house since 1989.

Their platform said they would establish a domestic violence death review committee. Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are already doing that. In fact, five months before the election, the Minister of Justice announced that there would a domestic violence death review process. To the member from Lakeview: instead of condemning, do you have any new ideas to offer?

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you for the question. I do have a lot of ideas. One of the first ones that comes to the top of mind would be a provincial-wide risk assessment tool in dealing with issues of domestic violence. Another would be addressing root causes of violence against women and children, particularly addressing rates of inequality, increasing access to child care spaces, forgiveness of student loans for women leaving domestic violence situations, more availability of affordable housing, because the more that women have choices to choose from when they're thinking about leaving a situation such as this, the more likely they are to be able to access those and to get out of the situation. Dealing with isolation, working with communities in rural and isolated communities . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — To the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota, this is an issue that needs to move beyond the political. Regardless of the fiscal situation, will she agree that the government needs to fully implement the poverty reduction strategy created by her own government and also mentioned by her in her speech as a means of addressing some of the risk factors of interpersonal violence?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Stonebridge-Dakota.

Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you for the question. I think it's to be clearly agreed upon here in this Assembly today that this is a cross-party, holistic, if you like, issue. And that goes absolutely without saying, Mr. Speaker. In terms of poverty reduction, it's never an either-or proposition between the fiscal and the moral, and that has been said numerous times. We can always improve, of course. That said, this is a work-in-progress, Mr. Speaker. This strategy is a work-in-progress.

But look at what we've done on that file. Not only have we created the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program, pioneered the Hub model, made record investments in housing and child care. Four pillars to guiding policy to reducing poverty including sustaining a strong economy, of course; ensuring citizens have a higher level of disposable income to use at their discretion; removing the barriers to independence; providing financial support to our most vulnerable citizens, and targets and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — The member's time has expired. I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Bonk: — Mr. Speaker, I'm saddened that members opposite are playing politics with this troubling issue. In recent days members opposite have stood in this House and called our government mean-spirited, and erroneously suggest that we are doing nothing to address this issue. Members opposite may think that this kind of talk is good for them politically, but it does nothing to help address this important issue of domestic violence.

[12:15]

Mr. Speaker, my question to the member from Regina Lakeview: will you set aside the rhetoric and instead commit to bringing forward new ideas and suggestions to working with us to try to find a way to address this difficult issue?

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

Ms. Beck: — Again, I appreciate the question. I'll watch my time more closely. I'm not sure . . . I suspect the question may have been written before listening to the debates but I have presented in a spirit of honest, honest searching to improve the rates of domestic violence, to reduce rates in this province. I have offered some suggestions. I have given credit where it's due to the minister and have come here in an honest, honest hope to improve this issue.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Next door in Alberta the NDP government created a law for breaking leases and rental agreements to make it easier for women who are experiencing domestic violence to leave their partners. Does the member for Regina University think that this is worth looking at here in Saskatchewan?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

University.

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you for the question. I actually think that's quite an interesting idea as I also think is the idea that Manitoba implemented a couple of weeks ago about the five days off. I think we've all demonstrated here today that we are open to listening to new ideas on some of these issues and so I would definitely look forward to hearing more about them and seeing if it's something that our government would be interested in implementing. I obviously can't speak for the minister responsible on that issue at the moment.

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

Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On May 19th, while talking about investments in domestic violence programming, the member from Saskatoon Riversdale said, and I quote, "These kinds of things cannot wait." Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for 16 years under the NDP government we waited for a new transition house to open and it never happened.

Earlier this week this first new transition house since 1989 opened in Melfort, Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is to the member from Regina Lakeview. How can you reconcile the statement that action on domestic violence cannot wait with the fact that your party failed to open a single new transition home in 16 years the last time you were in government?

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

Ms. Beck: — I thank the member for the question. I think, as I mentioned earlier in my comments, I think that any government has to be a little bit careful when they take too much credit for the opening of any new shelter or any new program, especially when there's such work done at the grassroots level. And I know, I believe it's Louise in Melfort worked for a very, very long time to get that shelter off the ground. So I think that she should, she deserves a great deal of credit as well as her supporters, and they had a number of efforts to raise money to see the shelter off the ground.

Of course there was support by the government but again I would caution them against taking too much credit where it's actually the community who have stepped up and demanded and raised funds and really, really pushed for that shelter to get open.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Prince Albert our women's shelters turn away thousands of women every year. And also like, we used to have a men's program, and the funding for that was taken away in 2011. And so Catholic Family Services has tried to implement a men's program to help men who admit that they're domestically violent, but they have a hard time finding funding. And just more recently, Mobile Crisis lost its funding for daytime services. So my question is for the member of Prince Albert Carlton. What are you going to do to help advocate for more services . . .

An Hon. Member: — Regina University.

Ms. Rancourt: — Regina University. How are you guys going to advocate for more services in Prince Albert?

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

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — I think, as I stated in my remarks, we do agree that support for men in particular is something that we believe is very, very important. I'm familiar with the Whitespruce initiative up in the northern part of the province, but that is the only one I'm familiar with at the moment. And I can tell you that we will be having those discussions, I'm certain.

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

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government takes this issue very seriously. We acknowledge that the rate of domestic violence in Saskatchewan is too high, and we have been working very hard to reduce this. In October of last year, the government launched the #WhoWillYouHelpSK public awareness campaign, garnering over 1 million views. Public awareness is an important way to help reduce the prevalence of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, to the member from Regina Lakeview: our government undertook the initiative to bring public awareness to this issue. What have the members opposite done to help promote awareness to this very important issue?

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

Ms. Beck: — Again thank you for the question. I'm not sure if the member means personally or as a party, but I think we've done a lot on both fronts. On a personal level, I sat on a community advisory board for the Red Cross around initiatives around domestic violence. During the campaign certainly we drew attention to the issue of the rates of violence against women in this province and the need to provide supports. Our former federal leader was very . . .

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 1 — Provision of Medical Imaging Services

Mr. Olason: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And at the end of my remarks, I'm going to move the following motion. I move:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP for their ideologically-based attacks against private provided MRI and CT scans for Saskatchewan residents, an initiative that provides better choice for patients and expands the

capacity of the public system at no extra cost to taxpayers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few short days ago, the NDP encouraged the federal government to stop this Saskatchewan government from enacting legislation that will cut waiting times for CT [computerized tomography] scans while also staying within the guidelines of the *Canada Health Act*. I can't believe this is actually happening.

Mr. Speaker, when will ideology finally be trumpeted by common sense and common decency? When will the rhetoric be put aside to allow for out-of-the-box thinking? When are we going to be allowed to step into the 21st century? Our challenges are already there, now it's time to move our solutions there too.

This legislation will save lives and improve outcomes for thousands of Saskatchewan residents. To me, this is a no-brainer. Murray Mandryk in the *Leader-Post* writes, and I quote, from June 14th:

... the government's case for private MRIs — and now CT scans — is more compelling and it's better than anything we are hearing in the form of a rebuttal.

The “buy one, get one free for the system” model for private CT scans was introduced in the Saskatchewan legislature last week, as the Sask. Party repeals its MRI law and rolls the two into a single act.

But if New Democrats still want to oppose this on philosophical principle, they have a historical problem.

Under the former NDP government, both Workers Compensation Board and SGI no-fault ... clients were frequently sent out of province to private CT and MRI facilities in Alberta simply to move forward costly cases. For New Democrats to now stand on supposed principles is more than a little hypocritical.

Of course, this former NDP government approach didn't go over well with every New Democrat. One Saskatchewan NDP convention resolution (from then-health minister John Nilson's Regina Lakeview riding, no less) urged the government to prohibit doctors from using information obtained in private Alberta CT scans.

Rather than make it a point of principle, it was laughed off on the convention floor and was not passed.

Evidently, even the most ardent medicare purists can identify occasions where [simple] practicality ... must prevail.

For that reason no one should be opposing what Duncan and the Sask Party are trying to accomplish today, simply because of philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, a little history lesson is needed to put all of this in perspective. In 2007 the wait time for CT scans was five and a half weeks and for MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] it was 12 weeks here in Saskatchewan. We were waiting longer than

the national average for both of these diagnostic tools. As more and more people needed them and as these tools became more mainstream, the demand soon outstripped resources.

In 2015, despite our government doubling the public capacity for MRI scans and expanded delivery of publicly funded diagnostics in community clinics, the wait times remained too long. The demand has grown from 15,700 patients in 2007 to over 33,000 patients in 2015. That's not good enough for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. That's not at all what we want for our seniors, our children, and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the Health minister in the *Leader-Post*, 12 November, 2015 stated, and I quote:

Our model for private-pay MRI differs from other jurisdictions. The unique “two for one” model allows a patient to pay privately for an MRI scan, but requires that an additional patient from the public list receive a scan at no additional charge. This arrangement has been available to Workers' Compensation clients and members of the [Saskatchewan] Roughriders for many years — policies of the former NDP ... that did not receive even a second of debate.

Our government has doubled the public capacity for MRI scans since 2007 and has expanded delivery of publicly-funded diagnostics in community clinics; however, wait times remain too long.

There is work to do to ensure MRI referrals are appropriate and necessary, and a patient will still need a referral from a specialist to get an MRI under this new model.

This legislation will not be a cure-all for [all] those waiting for MRIs, but we know that patients are already going out of province to pay for an MRI and then returning to Saskatchewan for further treatment. It's time to give them that choice here at home.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP started this two-for-one system years ago for the Roughriders in 2007 and Workers' Compensation Board in 2003. Few people outside of those organizations would even know that, Mr. Speaker. The NDP did this all in secret and behind closed doors.

This government has been open and transparent. We have told people exactly what we were going to do. We campaigned on the CT plan, and we are now going to follow through on our promises. Mr. Speaker, we went to the door. We knocked on the door. We said we were going to have two-for-one CT scans shortly after the election. We explained what they meant to the people, and here we are. Nothing stealthy or secretive or sneaky about that, Mr. Speaker. It's a great idea. Other provinces that allow private MRIs, Mr. Speaker, are BC, Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Quebec.

An Hon. Member: — NDP Alberta.

Mr. Olason: — Yes, NDP Alberta as well. Mr. Speaker, we think it's important to ensure Saskatchewan people who choose to pay for an MRI or CT can access that service in their own province. Patients who want medical imaging services in a

more timely fashion historically have travelled to neighbouring jurisdictions such as Alberta to obtain that service.

It's just as important not to erode the services provided in that public system or to negatively impact the wait times within that system. Requiring the licensed private facility to deliver a second scan at no cost to a patient on the public list every time it conducts a privately paid for scan will ensure greater capacity in the system and is expected to reduce overall wait times. If a patient has an MRI or CT result and can be seen by a specialist, they will move to treatment. It is not appropriate to delay treatment if someone has a diagnosis from imaging results that necessitates treatment.

Private-pay CT scans will be provided in the same way as private MRI services. Licensed facilities will be required to provide a second scan at no cost to a patient on the public list every time a scan is provided to someone who chooses to pay for their own CT. An appropriate physician referral will still be required to obtain a CT scan.

Mr. Speaker, to date, from February 29th, 2016 to date, 258 people have paid privately for their MRI scans. That means, Mr. Speaker, that 258 people are also coming off the public list, public wait list, in order to shorten those lists. Mr. Speaker, the model works, and we should continue and move into it for the CT scans.

Mr. Speaker, I won't further this any longer. I further move:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP for the ideologically-based attacks against private provided MRI and CT scans for Saskatchewan residents, an initiative that provides better choice for patients and expands the capacity of the public system at no extra cost to taxpayers.

Thank you.

[12:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon University has moved:

That this Assembly condemns the NDP for their ideologically-based attacks against privately-provided MRIs and CT scans for Saskatchewan residents, an initiative that provides better choice for patients and expands the capacity of the public system at no extra cost.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's a lot I'd like to say about this motion, and in the coming weeks when this motion comes back up on the order paper, I'll be able to speak to it. But right now I'd ask to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Walsh

Acres has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate committees that'll do their work later this day, I ask that this Assembly do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 pm.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:31.]

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