



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

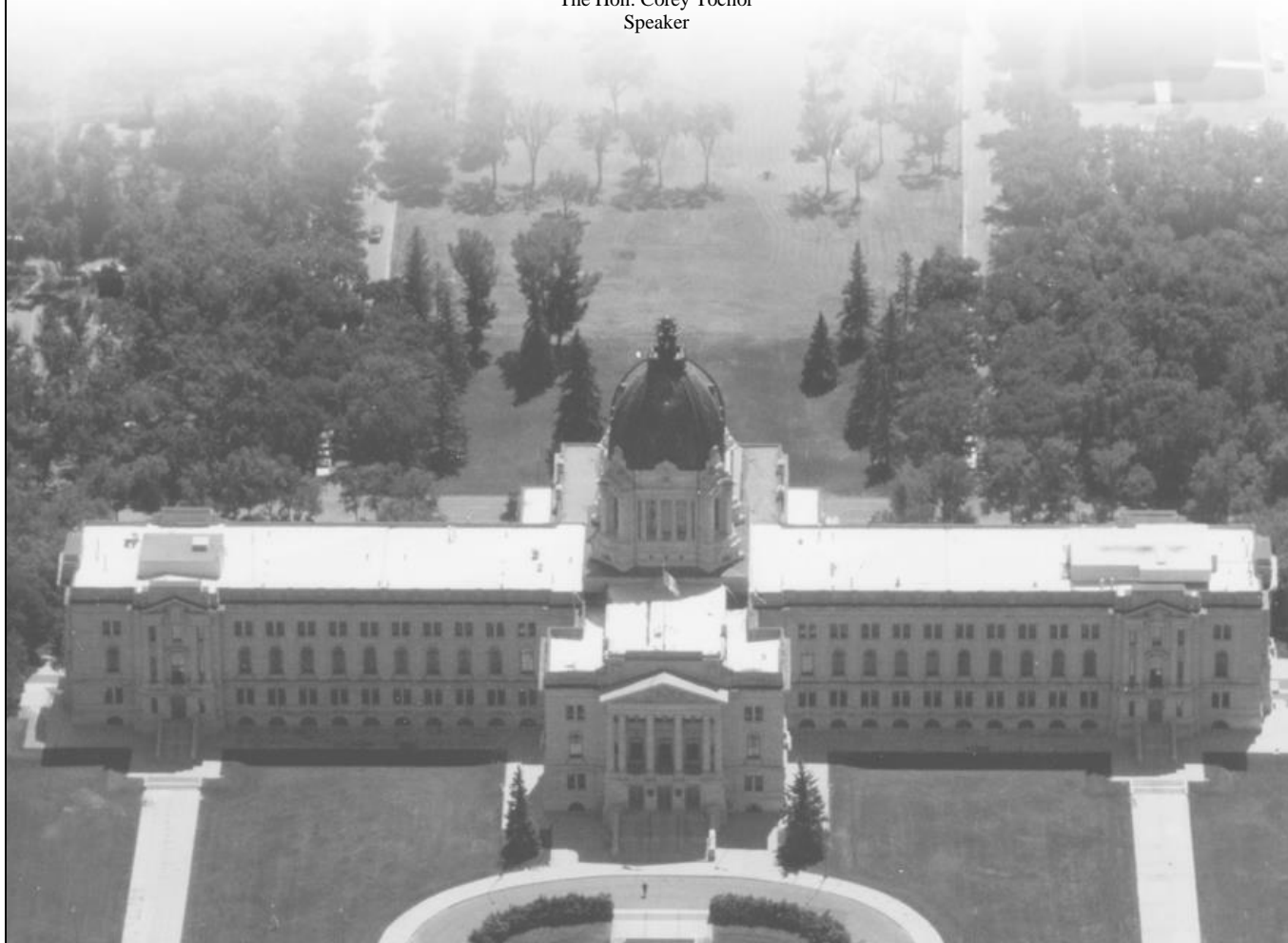
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

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

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

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Bill — Kindersley (SP)

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

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

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

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

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

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

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

**Cox**, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

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

**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

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

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

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

**Marit**, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

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

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

**Meili**, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

**Steele**, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 11

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to introduce two individuals seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. The first one — who's actually not a stranger to the legislature anymore; she's been here a few times — it's my mom, Donna Sarauer. Give a wave. I bet she never thought that in her lifetime anyone would ever say she's not a stranger to the Legislative Assembly. So I apologize for that.

But the other individual I also would like to introduce, more importantly, is my grandma Bert Szautner, who is here in town visiting from Humboldt, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say she's just in town to see her granddaughter in the legislature, but I think she's a bit more excited to see Tanya Tucker at the casino tomorrow. But I'm happy that she was able to make some time to come visit, visit me.

Now my grandma has been watching proceedings at home on TV quite religiously, Mr. Speaker, and I warned her today that when you see it live, it's a little bit more rowdy than it is on television. And I warned her that even I sometimes, dare I say, heckle on occasion, and I apologized in advance. But my grandma said, you know what? You do what you need to do, Nicole. So I'd like to thank her for that permission. And I'd like that all members join me in welcoming both of them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce some special young guests to the Legislative Assembly here this morning. Joining us are 37 students from École White City School and 13 students from South Shore elementary school with the Prairie Valley School Division.

Accompanying the students today are their teachers Marcia Shelstad, Wendy Ashton, and Paul Massier, chaperones, and ministry officials from the Provincial Capital Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the students are here today to participate in the ongoing educational program known as A Day in the Legislature. They will also have a chance to tour our historic Legislative Building and to observe MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. I want to thank you personally, Mr. Speaker, for participating in the panel discussion, leading the panel discussion later today.

I invite all members to join me in welcoming our guests to their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce three guests in your gallery who are visiting here today, not frequent visitors — I think it's only their second time to the question period anyway — but my son Mac, my daughter Finn, and my wife Alaina. So I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again to present a petition to reverse the cuts to the Lighthouse program. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners want to draw our attention to the fact that in April 2014 the minister of Social Services said that the Lighthouse in Saskatoon would “. . . take pressure off existing detox facilities, hospitals, and police cells while keeping people safe, especially in our brutally cold winters.” Mr. Speaker, they point out that on that same day, the minister of Health said, “We want to ensure that individuals with mental health and addictions issues have a safe place to stay,” Mr. Speaker. We couldn't agree more on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The petitioners point out that this government has repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospital emergency rooms and jail cells. Yet they still made this cut, Mr. Speaker. The reality is they're now trying to place the responsibility for repairing budget deficits on those experiencing addictions, unemployment, and poverty, and those who are living from day to day without proper services. And the petitioners don't think that's fair. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately reverse their recent cuts to funding that allows extremely vulnerable people to access the services of the Lighthouse stabilization unit in Saskatoon, and revisit their imposition of a strict and narrow definition of homelessness in November of 2015 which forced the Lighthouse to cut back its hours of essential services in February of 2016; and take immediate steps to ensure that homeless people in Saskatchewan have emergency shelter, clothing, and food available to them before more lives are lost.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we all realize the responsibility we have to be good stewards, and we appreciate that industry and agriculture have taken steps to reduce their carbon footprint. We know Saskatchewan and

SaskPower have made significant investments in carbon reduction. We know that an additional tax would not reduce carbon at all but would only have a devastating economic impact on our economy. 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 Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on this province.

Mr. Speaker, these signed petitions come from Moose Jaw, from Coderre, from Parkbeg, from Shamrock, and Regina. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my place under the specific direction and request by the member from Prince Albert Northcote to stand in my place today to present a petition as it relates to a second bridge for Prince Albert. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker, that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert and communities north of Prince Albert and the businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution. And they, in the prayer that reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask the Sask Party government to stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric and refusing to listen to the people calling for action and begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

And as always, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are all from throughout our land. And I so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition regarding the situation surrounding pay equity here in Saskatchewan. The undersigned residents want to bring to your attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy that's powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity; and that all women should be paid equitably, and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth and their economic empowerment benefits us all; and that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 2016, women earned on the average 63 cents for every dollar that a man makes, and in Regina women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar that a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national gender wage gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar a man makes. 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 eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors where the Government of Saskatchewan has

jurisdiction, provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of this Assembly, and that the Saskatchewan government call upon workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

And Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you very much.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present to you a petition to increase funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Mr. Speaker, people across the province are concerned about the lack of funding that mobile crisis has and, due to the lack of funding, mobile crisis has had to close its doors during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress. The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile has put stress on Prince Albert Police Service, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide the counselling and intervention services to clients. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to increase funding to Prince Albert Mobile Crisis Unit so they may once again offer 24-hour emergency crisis service.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition — like I said, this is a concern across the province — so the individuals that signed this particular petition are from Saskatoon and Hagen. And I do so present.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of sexual abuse prevention curriculum in Saskatchewan schools. Those who signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following. First of all is the fact that Saskatchewan has the second-highest rate of sexual child abuse in Canada

This abuse has lasting results throughout a child's lifetime, including mental health concerns, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, as well as physical impacts, Mr. Speaker. Currently there is no comprehensive elementary or secondary curriculum regarding the prevention and reporting of sexual child abuse in Saskatchewan, and as a province we're reminded that it is our shared responsibility to protect children and youth, to educate them, as every child has the right to be protected and safe.

I will read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan take immediate and concrete action to develop and implement Erin's law. Such legislation would ensure that a comprehensive health education program be developed and implemented in grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12.

Those signing the petition today reside in Regina. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a reversal to the cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program. Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Government of Saskatchewan cut the budget for the Aboriginal court worker program in the 2016-17 provincial budget. They point out that Aboriginal court workers play an important role helping Aboriginal people in criminal and child apprehension cases. They point out that Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional centres, and they point out that Aboriginal court workers successfully help to make our communities safer through reduced recidivism rates.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are also well aware that this government pointed to the Aboriginal court worker program as an example of them fulfilling their part in responding to the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and how that's just not right, Mr. Speaker:

In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan reverse its short-sighted and counterproductive cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program.

Mr. Speaker, this particular set of petitions is signed by individuals from Air Ronge and La Ronge. I so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the highest rates of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces, and citizens of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are concerned at the lack of support for victims of domestic abuse. One in three Canadian workers have experienced domestic violence, and for many the violence follows them to work. Employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has already enacted such legislation, and Ontario is on its way to enacting legislation that ensures job security for victims of domestic violence. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact legislation that requires all employers to provide a minimum of five paid workdays and a minimum of 17 weeks unpaid work leave with the assurance of job security upon return for all victims of domestic abuse in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing the petition today come

from Moose Jaw and Regina. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and present a petition to stop the redirection of funding of the Northern Teacher Education Program, Inc. Mr. Speaker, the NORTEP [Northern Teacher Education Program] program has been extremely successful for 40 years, graduating teachers from the North, almost all of whom stay in the teaching profession, almost all of whom stay in the North. This program produces good jobs for northern people and excellent role models for northern youth.

It's been locally controlled and managed, but we're hearing, Mr. Speaker, the plan to transfer control of this program to Northlands, yet we haven't heard any convincing reason to change this excellent program. We have many serious concerns about this: concerns about access to education for people in the North, concern about job losses, concern about sale of residences and other assets.

It's not too late, Mr. Speaker, for this government to honour its five-year agreement and maintain NORTEP as the quality program it's been for 40 years. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately restore their five-year agreement to fund the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. and continue to fund NORTEP programs in La Ronge.

This petition is signed by people from Air Ronge, La Ronge, and Pinehouse. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member from Regina Lakeview on her feet?

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for introduction of guests.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's family day here at the Legislative Assembly, I think, and it's my real pleasure to be able to introduce three special guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. These are my kids, and I'm really happy that they're here. I'm even more impressed by the fact that they got up today on their own and got themselves out of the house and down here, obviously with their ID [identification] because they've made it here.

It is really a pleasure to have you here, and I know anyone, all of us here that are parents, know that there is so much that goes into our being able to stand in these places, and it often requires the sacrifice from our kids. So I want them to know that what

we do here is in part for you, and that we miss you when we're not able to be at home. I know yesterday I missed Maya's Concours oratoire, but her dad put it up on Facebook for all to see. Maya attends École Connaught, and the minister knows how to get there; Nolan attends grade 9 at Sheldon-Williams, and Hannah is in grade 11 at Campbell Collegiate. And I couldn't be prouder of them, Mr. Speaker, and I invite all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Annual Convention

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it was a great privilege to be able to attend the 2017 Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities annual convention along with many of my colleagues. This is an incredible gathering of municipal leaders from corners of the province, where there was constructive dialogue and informal sessions and fantastic networking. Mr. Speaker, there was about 2,000 attendees at the convention, this year, that will wrap up later today.

Prior to being elected to the legislature, I spent many years in municipal politics, served on the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] board, and saw first-hand the value of SARM convention for the elected leaders and administrators from rural Saskatchewan. Now as an elected member of the Assembly, I get to see the other side, and my opinion has not changed.

Our government sees how important SARM is, and as usual, we saw the great turnout of ministers at the bear-pit session yesterday and throughout the week. Several ministers spoke to the convention attendees, including the Premier, who addressed everyone on Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all the members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating the 2017 SARM convention organizers on a great convention and to acknowledge the hard work of all our rural municipal leaders to make Saskatchewan a better place. Thank you.

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

#### Access to Feminine Hygiene Products in the North

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I expect that every member of this Assembly knows that the cost of living in northern Saskatchewan is often twice the cost of here in Regina. But some of us still fail to consider the barriers that women in northern Saskatchewan face when trying to access essential feminine hygiene products. The high cost of feminine hygiene products and pain relief products comes with a high price for women.

NDP [New Democratic Party] MP [Member of Parliament] Georgina Jolibois says that the lack of affordability and availability leads many women and girls to staying home from

work and from school.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, a community organization called Moon Time Sisters has stepped up. The Moon Time Sisters collected donations of feminine hygiene products — in fact almost 100,000 of these products — to distribute throughout northern Saskatchewan communities. One of our former NDP candidates, Nicole White, is a driving force behind this effort. Nicole has stepped up and has set up collection points in Saskatoon and Regina, I know at our office and at T + A vintage and vinyl in the member from Douglas Park's riding.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to recognize Your Time Women's Empowerment Foundation, a non-profit organization founded in the wake of the 2016 American election by three women from here in Regina: Sandy Beug, Lisa Peters, and Lois Vanderhooft. It was through their efforts that this need was originally brought to light.

I would ask all members, Mr. Speaker, to join me in recognizing Moon Time Sisters, affiliated organizations and organizers for their valuable service to northern women and girls and for their efforts in building bridges between communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### We Day Celebration in Saskatoon

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the great pleasure of being a part of the We Day celebration at SaskTel Centre in Saskatoon. I was pleased to thank the event founder Craig Kielburger whose efforts to educate this generation on the power of "we" rather than "me" is inspiring for all.

I was honoured to recognize Kenaston School, who raised \$8,000 to build a school in Kenya; and Eston Composite School, who collected nearly 3,000 pounds of food for those in need in their surrounding area. Mr. Speaker, these students are shaping Saskatchewan's future, and I could not be more proud of them.

There are so many ways to get involved in local communities in this province, and We Day provides a platform to motivate, educate, and inspire all in attendance. Students who attend the event and take part in We schools' activities are 81 per cent more likely to take action and improve the lives of others in their own communities and abroad. The impact they feel from We Day is critical as they are educated on mental health, reconciliation importance, anti-bullying, and making Saskatchewan a welcoming place for all. The students will carry these lessons and motivations they have gained from We Day throughout their entire lives.

Before leaving, I was able to participate in a round-table discussion on northern strategies with Greg Yuel, CEO [chief executive officer] of PIC Investment Group, Athabasca Basin Development, and ERCO Worldwide.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Craig and the We team, along with PotashCorp partners on a

very successful event.

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

#### Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities Annual Convention

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, SARM, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, is an independent association that represents rural municipal government in Saskatchewan. The association acts on behalf of its members and proudly takes the role as the voice of rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of attending the SARM convention on Tuesday and Wednesday this week at Prairieland Park in Saskatoon. I attended alongside close to 2,000 delegates and visitors. Reeves, councillors, and administrators of rural municipalities travelled to Saskatoon to participate in the convention.

A highlight for me and for everyone at the convention was the keynote address from Jim Hopson. Mr. Hopson has been involved in Saskatchewan football for much of his life and worked as the Saskatchewan Roughriders CEO from 2005 until 2015, and as we all know, under his guidance our team won the Grey Cup in both 2007 and 2013. His dedication to Saskatchewan football is commendable, and his words at the convention on leadership and team building were inspirational.

Mr. Speaker, I wrapped up my time at the convention last night attending the banquet alongside my colleagues the Leader of the Official Opposition and the member from Saskatoon Nutana. And we continue to engage with rural leaders, listening to their successes but also their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking SARM and their members from across Saskatchewan in the work they do to build a stronger Saskatchewan.

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

#### Dine for a Difference Fundraiser

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the fourth annual Dine for a Difference fundraiser in support of the AIM [Ability in Me] family advisory committee, along with my colleague, the member from Saskatoon University.

Mr. Speaker, AIM is the acronym for Ability in Me, a fitting name for an organization that is focused on providing innovative and individualized programs and services for both kids with Down syndrome and their families. This was an incredible event where we heard many stories of the great work that AIM does on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, my family is one who has seen the amazing ability and potential of someone with Down syndrome. My daughter, Deanna, has Down's, and I understand that programs like this are a big part of making sure that everyone is able to discover their abilities. Mr. Speaker, Deanna has taught me as much

about life as anyone else I know.

The services and supports that AIM provide are a valuable part of the support system. And I am proud that our government has supported AIM with \$360,000 in funding each year over the last two years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in thanking the staff and volunteers who made the Dine for a Difference fundraiser a resounding success, and those at AIM who help students with Down syndrome fulfill their potential every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### HomeStyles Home Show

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to speak at the HomeStyles Home Show this past weekend in Saskatoon. This year the show was put on in collaboration with the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association, Fresco design interiors, and the Saskatchewan Craft Council for the first time in the show's history. The show was an excellent showcase of quality, innovation, and an opportunity for homeowners to be educated on Saskatchewan fine arts.

Mr. Speaker, the event was energetic with approximately 15,000 attendees able to browse, shop, and engage with local craftsmen. The Home Builders' Association generously provided space for this event, giving local artists a chance to showcase their incredible works, many reflecting this beautiful province we call home.

This show plays an important role to our communities, providing opportunity and benefits to local businesses and craftsmen, and visitors from outside of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the HomeStyles Home Show has shown great success in supporting our economic growth, helping make Saskatchewan even stronger. With the support of Creative Saskatchewan as well as SaskCulture, these artists will continue to thrive through events such as this, making our communities and our homes brighter every day.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in congratulating the HomeStyles Home Show on a successful trade show. Thank you.

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

#### Statement by Opposition Member in the House

**Mr. Steinley:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the member from Athabasca and current Deputy Leader proudly rose to his feet to extol the virtues of the Coquihalla Highway in BC [British Columbia], a project completed in 1986, Mr. Speaker. I was four at the time; *Top Gun* was movie of the year, and Kenny Loggins' "Danger Zone" was the top song.

Over the next 22 years, the toll on the Coquihalla Highway

extracted nearly \$1 billion from Canadians, including families on vacation, truckers hauling goods, and hard-working men and women going back and forth to work each day.

And what happened over those 22 years here in Saskatchewan? For me, my Waldeck School was lucky enough to dodge the NDP axe as they closed 176 schools and fired hundreds of teachers. Our family and friends on farms watched as the callous NDP government turned their backs on rural Saskatchewan. In those years, the member from Athabasca was the Highways minister who took the top off the P.A. [Prince Albert] bridge but refused to put it back on.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the interim leader, or better yet maybe the future leader from Meewasin. Are carbon taxes and road tolls the NDP's plan to pay for the billions in reckless spending and take us back down the highway to the danger zone?

[10:30]

### QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker:** — Now we introduce the question zone. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

#### Role of the Global Transportation Hub in Land Acquisitions

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — You know, every day this week I've given a chance to the Deputy Premier to come clean on what he knows about the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. He's dodged question after question, just like the Premier has day after day. You know, I'm sure it's becoming frustrating for many members on that side of the Assembly to see, day after day after day, the appointed minister stand up and to read the same tired lines over and over and over again.

You know, Mr. Speaker, whether I'm out across Regina or in the south or in the north of our province, whether I'm meeting with workers or whether I'm meeting with business people, and even yesterday at SARM, people come up to tell me, keep fighting to get to the bottom of the GTH scandal. They know this scandal stinks, and they want more than those tired prepared lines. They want and deserve answers.

So here's another chance to the Deputy Premier to come clean, finally. So when people come to him, does he actually defend this scandal that wasted millions of the hard-earned dollars of Saskatchewan people while filling the pockets of those connected to the Sask Party? And finally, when did he learn that the original seller of the land in the GTH scandal was the landlord for the former minister of the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course the auditor has looked into this matter. The auditor has fully canvassed the matter. The auditor had full authority and full access to all of the documents and all of the individuals to which she requested access. By her own testimony to the Public Accounts Committee, she did a very

thorough job and the government co-operated fully in all aspects of that report. She concluded that there was, and I'll quote:

In any audit, as auditors we're always looking for red flags. And because this is a land transaction we did look for conflicts of interest. We didn't find evidence of conflict of interest or indications of fraud or wrongdoing in the course of our work so there were no red flags there.

The RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] have indicated they're looking into the matter. We're going to be fully co-operating with that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Government's Fiscal Management

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's just really unbelievable that the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan, just as the Premier can't, that they can't take to their feet and answer some pretty simple, basic questions about this scandal.

You know, this week we've also seen that government, the Sask Party, defending their mismanaged bypass contract with a billion-dollar-plus overrun. And of course all the numbers are hidden from the contract online. The words online don't say much, you know, since the dollars and figures aren't there. You know, Saskatchewan people are learning that really the Sask Party aren't really very good with numbers, Mr. Speaker. And we saw that again yesterday where the Finance minister said that they'll include a 3.5 per cent cut to everyone and everything in the budget. And if they can't make it work, well he says they'll figure that out later.

This is not how you budget, Mr. Speaker, and it's not how you treat the hard-working people of Saskatchewan. The Sask Party's latest attack on workers is already being challenged in the courts. That government's record in the courts is nearly unblemished by success, and of course it's Saskatchewan people who always pick up the tab.

Question to the Finance minister today: will he admit that ramming forward their unfair cut, through ramming forward that cut while it's being challenged in the courts, is a costly mistake? Or does he really not care what price the people and workers of Saskatchewan are forced to pay?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the interim Leader of the Opposition. And he said that we had the . . . I can't remember the exact words. He said presumptuous or . . . to include a figure in the budget with respect to compensation across the province, Mr. Speaker.

It is the government's responsibility to ask the employers when they go into the negotiating table what the target should be with respect to what they're trying to achieve at the negotiating table. This member ought to know that, Mr. Speaker.

The entire budget has forecast in it. Every expenditure line item



is forecast. We ask all ministers to manage to a forecast with respect to the health budget, the education budget. I know you've never been involved in a provincial budget. I can say that, I think, to the Leader of the Opposition. He's never been involved in a provincial budget.

Every revenue line item in the budget is a forecast, Mr. Speaker. What I said last June 1st when we presented the budget here for the province of Saskatchewan in the 2016-17 budget, Mr. Speaker, I said we would be undertaking transformational change across government, that we would be looking at every single line item in the budget, Mr. Speaker. This is exactly the process that we have undertaken. These are the kinds of decisions this government has made to undertake transformational change to deal with the challenges we have here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Provision of Cleaning Services in Government Buildings and Elimination of Gaming Corporation Positions**

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, with all that sound planning, you'd think that the third quarter report would have appeared months ago. But apparently not.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week the Minister Responsible for Central Services presided over the . . . in the firing of 230 of the hardest working and most modestly paid members in the public service. I'm talking about those 230 cleaners, Mr. Speaker. And then on top of a decision like that, yesterday we've received word that over at the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation — where that member is also the minister responsible — she presided over the elimination of four of the five positions that are dedicated to responsible gambling programming at casinos Regina and Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain to the House how that makes any sense?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Sask Gaming.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier this week as the member has spoke to, we have decided to contract out government-owned buildings and contract it out to private sector for cleaning. Of these 12 companies that are said to be awarded the contracts, six are employee-owned companies, Mr. Speaker.

Thirty government buildings in the North in Saskatchewan have been contracted out to the private sector for over 20 years, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our neighbours to the east and west, the majority, to varying degrees, have contracted out cleaning to government buildings, Mr. Speaker. If the quality of contracted-out work is raised by the member opposite, or security, all we need to do is ask for the . . . from the member from Cumberland to . . . that his family owns a private-sector cleaning company that cleans government buildings, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps we need to ask him about the quality of service and the security there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, I know the minister has been saving up that petty tirade, but perhaps she could answer the

question.

Yesterday we received word that, at the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, four of the five positions that go towards responsible gambling programming at casinos Regina and Moose Jaw have been eliminated by that government. Can the minister, who presides over a corporation where responsible gambling is part of their mandate, can the minister provide for the House some explanation of how that makes any sense whatsoever?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Sask Gaming.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, business decisions are being made over at Sask Gaming, and there's no way that we would preside over an organization that doesn't follow the legislation or take charge of problem gambling situations that arise, Mr. Speaker.

All of this will be decided. You will see it next week when the budget comes down. These are budget decisions, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Funding for Education**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the Education minister said yesterday that his words were torqued. He said his plans to rip up local agreements with our kids' teachers had been taken out of context. But, Mr. Speaker, there simply isn't enough context to cover up the facts.

The minister was clear. He wants to go after these local agreements and he believes that now is a good time to do it. Mr. Speaker, these contracts don't all expire at the same time. In fact, some will be in place until 2019. And the minister claims that his goal is consistency. Well if anyone in this Chamber honestly believes that the minister's goal is to allow a rising tide to raise all ships, well then I've got a \$2 million bypass that runs right through a city that I'd like to sell you.

The truth is, Mr. Speaker, the minister's goal is to cut more from education. How can the minister deny that these cuts will hurt our kids' classrooms?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite actually makes a point on the argument about LINC [local implementation and negotiation committee] agreements when she talks about the varying dates of the expiry of the contracts and the inconsistencies that are there. We recognize that there's a significant difference between the agreements across the province. What a teacher receives can vary significantly for things like prep time, leaves, professional development. We want to work with the divisions to try and improve consistency and address some significant disparities that are there.

Mr. Speaker, we think that those things are best done at the bargaining table, not on the floor of the Assembly, not through the media. We've indicated it's something we want to have the

discussion with, nothing more, and we welcome the process that will take place through them, unlike the NDP whose methodology for LINC was closing 176 schools. We're not there.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister himself has admitted that the government's plan to cut their way out of this massive deficit runs right through our kids' classrooms. And we've seen them cut, underfund, and undervalue the people who work in those classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's scheme to cut public servants' pay includes the people who teach and support our children. And putting everything from teacher prep time to sports and extracurricular activities at risk is simply unacceptable, Mr. Speaker, and it has Saskatchewan people worried.

The fact is that thousands of Saskatchewan people have already signed postcards and delivered them to the minister today. These people are sharing their concern for this government's underfunding of education. Will the minister finally admit that his deep cuts to education are failing teachers, failing students, and failing their families?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite wants to insert herself onto the bargaining committee when we go through the next round of negotiations, that's between her and STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]. We don't plan to negotiate on the floor of the Assembly.

The NDP's history in negotiating and dealing with LINC and dealing with teachers has been simply this, Mr. Speaker: they closed 176 schools; 32,000 students moved from here to Alberta because of the NDP history.

Mr. Speaker, our record speaks volumes about our commitment to education. In 2007 the operating funding for our schools was \$1.41 billion; 2016, \$1.88 billion; record funding for students with disabilities and special needs, \$288 million, Mr. Speaker; in 2007, 8,601 teachers; 2016, 9,355 — up 754.

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

### Child Welfare Legislation

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, first to the Minister of the Environment. Given what he said yesterday, I'm really sorry he was disappointed he didn't get a chance to see me while I was at the SARM convention this week. I would have loved to have introduced him to the people who kept coming to me to say how disappointed they are with the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

But to the Minister of Social Services, Saskatchewan's Children's Advocate has again raised concerns about the well-being of children in foster care. He's disappointed the minister decided to slow down important changes to our child

welfare legislation.

Mr. Speaker, under the current legislation, Saskatchewan's most vulnerable children are falling through the cracks. When will the minister finally make kids in care a priority? Mr. Speaker, when will she act on her promise to overhaul our child welfare legislation?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. I'm very grateful for the work of the Children's Advocate, and I look forward to working to build on our relationship together for the betterment of kids in our province.

[10:45]

There's three key areas of child welfare transformation, Mr. Speaker. They are: working differently with First Nations, prevention, and the renewal of our child welfare system. I am very proud of our ministry and the progress that we've had on all these fronts.

We've seen necessary changes to our legislation. In addition to that, we've made a number of initiatives around the flexible response pilot, which provides alternative interventions in cases that would normally trigger a child protection response and investigation. And one of the ways in which we are working differently with First Nations and Métis organizations, Mr. Speaker, is by providing support and funding to First Nations children and family CBOs [community-based organization]. To that end, Mr. Speaker, we've provided \$25.4 million in funding to First Nations children and family CBOs, which is 311 per cent since we formed government. I think we're very committed to advancing child welfare. There's always more work to do and the good people in my ministry will continue to do it, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, she actually wants us to believe that everything is going as planned, but we know something is terribly wrong because our province's Children's Advocate is publicly worried.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is failing to act on the changes they promised to make, and they are failing to look out for the safety and well-being of the kids in their care. The minister's excuse for putting off these changes is that they are still planning. Mr. Speaker, these kids in foster care need action now. So I'll ask once again: will this minister stop stalling, stop putting our most vulnerable children at risk, and finally act in a real way to follow through on her commitment to overhaul our child welfare legislation?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Mr. Speaker, we're not stalling on changes to the child welfare legislation. In fact, the majority of the issues identified with our PSI [person of sufficient interest] program, for example, have been addressed through

policy and practice changes today. This is an issue that has a lot of sensitivities around it, particularly the child and welfare piece. We are working and continuing to work on the area of child welfare and I'm happy to continue to do that with the people in our ministry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Support for the Northern Teacher Education Program

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we heard that Northlands will be taking over NORTEP. The minister said, and I quote, "... it makes good common sense." But, Mr. Speaker, we've heard no convincing rationale for this change. This is a solution in search of a problem. It doesn't make any sense at all. The teachers, students, and community members rallying today in La Ronge, they don't think it makes sense. Even the committee this minister tasked with making a recommendation about NORTEP's future doesn't think it makes sense.

Mr. Speaker, that committee unanimously recommended another institute. Northlands didn't even apply to this process. Mr. Speaker, none of this is adding up, and people are understandably worried about what other sell-offs and job cuts the Sask Party has planned for this important program. So why, Mr. Speaker, why did this minister ignore the stakeholders? Why did she ignore the committee that she established, and what other plans does she have to undermine this program and ignore the needs of the North?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this was a due transparent process. There were six submissions, one of which came from Northlands who met with NORTEP Council on November 29, Mr. Speaker, as part of that process. Ultimately we made a decision that was in our discretion — discretion acknowledged by NORTEP Council, Mr. Speaker — which is in the best interests of the students. And I would like to quote from the press release that Northlands released this morning, Mr. Speaker:

... this announcement [yesterday] does not mean the end of [NORTEP] ... the end of opportunities for students to take other university courses ... Students currently enrolled ... will see virtually no change; classes will be offered in the same classrooms, many of the instructors will remain the same, housing will continue to be provided to those who need it, and we will work diligently to keep other ... supports in place as well.

It went on:

We all want to see northern students ... receive a top rate, culturally affirming education so they can enjoy a good quality of life and continue to be proud of who they are and where they are from [Mr. Speaker].

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

### Domestic Violence Legislation

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Justice for his co-operation in acknowledging the severity and the need to take action to address domestic violence in Saskatchewan. Now we're asking him and all of his colleagues to back those good words up with solid action.

I can't help but worry that this will become another case of the Sask Party dragging their feet on their promises. They have said that they will address domestic violence when the finances allow. Mr. Speaker, domestic violence is not a problem for the future. Action to help women facing domestic violence needs to happen now.

So, Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of Justice have the support of the Minister of Labour and the rest of their colleagues to either support Bill 603 or, at the very least, bring forward legislation in this session that will implement the three policies outlined in it, to provide supports to those escaping violent intimate relationships?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will again thank the member opposite for bringing this very important issue to the floor of the House. We have a copy of the private member's bill that has been submitted, Mr. Speaker. I've sent it over to the Ministry of Justice for their review, and I've begun the consultation process with the Minister of Labour with respect to the issue that was raised on the labour side, Mr. Speaker.

But I do want to correct a piece of information that the member opposite brought forward. I never said that we would move forward with domestic violence review if the finances allow for that, Mr. Speaker. This is a priority for this government. It's a priority for my ministry, and it's a priority for me personally, Mr. Speaker.

We have indicated that we will be proceeding with some legislation. We hope to have that legislation drafted quite quickly, Mr. Speaker, to address some of the deficiencies in the bill that was presented yesterday, Mr. Speaker. But I will wait for my officials within the Ministry of Justice to give me that advice, Mr. Speaker. But we are committed to dealing with this problem.

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

### Intent of Bill No. 40 and Ownership of Crown Corporations

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, again I appreciate the Minister of Justice's willingness to work with us, and I look forward to getting these important changes passed soon. Now we're hoping he'll also work with us to stop his dangerous bill to let them sell off 49 per cent of SaskTel and the rest of our Crowns. Everyone knows, Mr. Speaker, it's a clear attempt to get through the back door what they know they can't get through the front.

Our Crowns were built by generations of Saskatchewan people, but this is risking it all with their cynical wordplay just to make a quick buck. But Saskatchewan people are making their voices heard. They know this bill is nothing more than the SaskTel sell-off by just another name. Thousands of people have signed petitions calling on the Sask Party to scrap this dangerous bill. There have been protests and town halls here at the legislature and all across our province. What more does the Minister of Justice need to see before he'll scrap Bill 40?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. And of course there's . . . We've pointed out numerous times in this House, Mr. Speaker, and outside this House, that there is no offer on the table with respect to SaskTel or the sale of any amount of equity in any of the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. So it's hypothetical. And I will tell the member opposite that this government will not proceed with respect to any matters in that regard unless those transactions are in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan.

I would point out that on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker, members opposite have spoken and they've said there's many definitions for the word privatize. And yet when the legislation was tabled in this House back in 2007 by the government of the NDP at the time, they refused and they neglected, Mr. Speaker, to define the word. Mr. Speaker, this legislation simply moves forward to correct the deficiency in the legislation, the deficiency of which should be laid at the hands of the New Democratic government at the time, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, if they're so desperate for a definition, maybe they should write down the definition for transparency, and honesty too. The privatization . . . The Canada Revenue Agency already has one. It's 10 per cent. After the Sask Party sells off 10 per cent of one of our Crowns, the CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] will collect their income taxes for Ottawa. But that Sask Party does not seem to care.

Mr. Speaker, last fall after facing huge backlash and outrage across Saskatchewan, the Justice minister did the right thing and scrapped his poorly thought-out amendments to *The Coroners Act*. The minister listened and recognized that moving forward was the wrong thing to do. Doesn't he see now, and hear, that this is the wrong move today?

Billions of dollars are at risk because this cash-strapped Sask Party government is so intent on selling off anything that isn't nailed down. The Justice minister has shown that he is strong enough to admit when he's wrong and pull the plug instead of pushing forward with a damaging and flawed bill. Can he show that same strength again?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've said many times on the floor of this House that I'm not going to pull this bill, Mr. Speaker. It's a valuable piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And instead of looking at all the negative pieces, Mr. Speaker, perhaps the members opposite should look at the opportunities that this bill presents, Mr. Speaker, to strengthen the balance sheets.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, in the House, the member from Athabasca talked about partnerships. He talked about strengthening the Crowns through partnerships, Mr. Speaker. This legislation is going to allow that to happen, Mr. Speaker. So if the member from Athabasca wants to stand up and retract his comments, that's fine. But he talked about partnerships; other members on that side of the House have talked about partnerships, Mr. Speaker. This legislation is going to allow that to happen and strengthen our Crowns, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Availability of Contract Details for Regina Bypass Project**

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister keeps saying that the bypass contract details are online. He can say it over and over and over again, but it won't make it true. The bones are there, Mr. Speaker, but none of the important information around how much they're forcing Saskatchewan people to pay is in there. They are hiding all the costs for the construction work, and they're even hiding the monthly service payments that we are making as a province.

They'll be shipping off to a company from overseas — and this matters, Mr. Speaker — the money that they're shipping to a company overseas, this matters, Mr. Speaker, because it's \$2 billion of our money. Two billion with a "b." And all they have to show for it in this deal is to build 40 kilometres of twinned highway for an average cost of \$30 million per kilometre. It is beyond belief, Mr. Speaker, if the minister still somehow stands behind this scandalous deal. The people of Saskatchewan have a right to see that contract. Will he table those contract details in full today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, I said in the House yesterday that the contract is online. And I also mentioned in the House yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that the contract has been redacted for commercially sensitive information. That is the . . . that member, the member from Athabasca, Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca . . . well if they want to . . . If you want the answer, I'll give it to you. The member from Athabasca, Mr. Speaker, the former minister . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Would the member from Athabasca come to order. He asked the question; would he please give the decency to listen to the response. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

the member from Athabasca is the former minister of Highways. He knows, he knows, Mr. Speaker, that when contracts are made public, they're redacted for commercially sensitive information, all consistent with the information and privacy Act, Mr. Speaker, and sanctioned by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the bypass, it's very interesting. The interim leader of the NDP has stood up on numerous occasions in this House complaining about truck traffic coming into the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. He's not standing up anymore, Mr. Speaker, because the bypass fixes that problem. We've heard comments from the members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, with respect to safety on Highway 1. We're not hearing those concerns anymore from the opposition because this bypass fixes it. He should stand up, Mr. Speaker, and members of his caucus should stand up and say, we support the bypass; we support economic development; we support the safety of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, to get this bypass done as quickly as possible.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — My question, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave for an introduction and for an extended introduction, please.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce some very special guests to the Legislative Assembly today seated in your gallery. Please welcome His Excellency Konstantin V. Zhigalov, ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Canada. The ambassador is accompanied by his colleague from the Kazakhstan embassy in Ottawa, Mr. Daniyar Seidaliyev, counsellor for economic affairs. They are joined by protocol staff: Chelsey Vargo Wilson and Lisa Harder.

Mr. Speaker, the ambassador is in Saskatchewan for two days. He arrived in Saskatoon yesterday and met with officials from Cameco, and today in Regina his busy schedule includes meetings with government and business representatives.

Members of the Assembly will already know that Kazakhstan and Saskatchewan share a common interest in a major global resource: uranium. Kazakhstan is the world's largest producer of uranium, and Canada is the world's second-largest producer, with all of our nation's current uranium production coming from our province. Cameco is Canada's largest investor in

Kazakhstan and owns 60 per cent of the country's Inkai mine. So undoubtedly the program yesterday with Cameco was very important and, I trust and hope, very productive.

[11:00]

Saskatchewan and Kazakhstan also share common priorities in agriculture, with both jurisdictions being large producers of wheat and other grains. This has resulted in opportunities in the past for Saskatchewan exporters of agricultural equipment. We look forward to strengthening our trading relationship in the future.

As well and on a somewhat lighter note, I refer to the welcome message on the Kazakhstan embassy's website, where the ambassador talks about all that Canada and Kazakhstan have in common, which includes a shared love for ice hockey. Talented hockey players are perhaps another one of our province's major exports to the world. I would humbly submit that if the ambassador wants to see our nation's and our province's passions for hockey on full display, he may wish to consider making another visit to our province next May while Regina will proudly host the 100th Memorial Cup.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of the relationship our province enjoys with Kazakhstan, and I'm pleased that we can extend our hospitality to Ambassador Zhigalov and Mr. Seidaliyev and meet with them to discuss the shared interests of our two jurisdictions as well as areas of future correspondence. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of the Assembly join with me in welcoming the ambassador and Mr. Seidaliyev to Saskatchewan's legislature today.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to join with the minister, the Deputy Premier, opposite to welcome this delegation from Kazakhstan to the Saskatchewan Assembly.

Once again, it's a pleasure to have you here today. It's a pleasure to welcome His Excellency Konstantin Zhigalov, ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Canada, and welcome back to the Saskatchewan legislature. I believe you were here in 2012 as well, you know, really displaying how important this relationship is to Kazakhstan and to Saskatchewan. We value your presence here.

It's also an honour to have Mr. Daniyar Seidaliyev, counsellor for the economic affairs for the Kazakh assembly in Ottawa here as well, and we welcome you. As I say, this is a very important relationship. It's nice that you are here once again. We value your presence in the Assembly.

We do have a lot in common with Kazakhstan, from agriculture through to farm machinery through to uranium mining — a lot in between. Our regions certainly have a lot in common and are made stronger through the relationship that's demonstrated with your presence here today. I hope your meetings with Cameco were productive. We wish you well with your time here in Saskatchewan.

We do have that shared love of hockey as well, from

Saskatchewan and Canada and Kazakhstan. I know that, I suspect the member from Silver Springs cheered hard for Nik Antropov with the Winnipeg Jets over the years. And the Deputy Premier's quite right that we are both proud of Saskatchewan, as I'm sure Kazakhstan is, with not just that we provide by way of energy and crops to the world, but those incredible hockey players that make us all proud worldwide.

So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming this important delegation from Kazakhstan to the Saskatchewan Assembly. On behalf of a grateful opposition and a grateful province, welcome.

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

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome the ambassador and Daniyar, someone I've known for quite a while, Daniyar Seidaliyev. We've known each other for probably four or five years now, I'd imagine.

Kazakhstan is a place that's near and dear to my heart; I've spent quite a bit of time there. I first visited Kazakhstan in 2002, I believe, and the change in the country since then has been just remarkable. So Kazakhstan and Saskatchewan share a lot of similarities. Our landscape is almost identical. Our climate is almost identical, but most importantly, the people. We have warm and hospitable people, just like Kazakhstan. So I'd like to welcome you here, and:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Russian.]

And I look forward to meeting with you later today with the Minister of Economy. So I'd like to ask all members to help me welcome you to our Legislative Assembly.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Indicators for Economic Growth in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into debate on an important motion today, a motion that I will be moving at the end of my speech. Before I talk about some key economic indicators which show that the policies of our government are creating an environment that encourages investment growth, we need to talk about what it was like in Saskatchewan when the NDP were in government.

The days under the NDP were a very difficult time for our province. Saskatchewan businesses were facing hardships. Schools were closed, classes were overcrowded. The wait time for surgery in Saskatchewan was the longest in Canada. The number of care beds were reduced due to hospitals and long-term care facilities closing. It was during these years that our young people and professionals alike had to leave Saskatchewan to go job hunting in other provinces.

We all know between 1996 to 2006 Saskatchewan's population actually decreased by 22,000 people while people were leaving our province. NDP leaders did not think it was possible for

Saskatchewan to prosper. As NDP MLA Harry Van Mulligen once said in 2003:

They . . . [prosper] to increase the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 over . . . I forget what number of the years, Mr. Speaker. Well it's so over the top, it is so farcical, Mr. Speaker, that it flies in the face of reality.

People and companies were afraid to invest in the province under the NDP because the government seemed to be actively discouraging investment.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007 there have been many changes in Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Party government took the lead and our policies have led the people and business to start investing in our province.

Mr. Speaker, not only did the NDP policies discourage private sector investment, but the NDP failed to invest in schools, hospitals, long-term care facilities, highways, bridges, overpasses, children's hospitals, colleges, and universities. This is why our government has continued to make record investments in infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, we are fixing the infrastructure deficit that the NDP left when they were voted out of office in 2007.

The members of the NDP like to ask the question, where did the money go? Well the answer is very simple. It went to building schools; new hospitals; paving roads, new, and renovating old roads; long-term care facilities; and many other things that the NDP failed to invest in. We have been fixing their mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, the policies of our government have created many employment opportunities, so people started moving back into our province. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in 2008, my family moved to Saskatchewan for a better life, and I have seen first-hand the amazing opportunity that exists here.

Over the past decade, from 2006 to 2016, Saskatchewan grew by more than 130,000. In fact, all 16 Saskatchewan cities saw their population increase from 2011 to 2016 by a total of 59,189, which is 9.9 per cent.

That is a complete turnaround from the previous decade where, from 1996 to 2006, the Saskatchewan population actually dropped by 22,000 people. That includes many young people. In fact when I speak to the people who were around in those days, they used to buy luggage for a graduation gift because there was no opportunity for them here.

Our government made it clear that Saskatchewan was ready for growth. They just needed a government that believed in the innovation and potential of this province. The Premier had this to say on the announcement of the most recent census numbers:

Obviously, given the current fiscal situation, a growing population presents some challenges for our province, but I would much rather be facing the challenges of growth than the challenges of decline.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is moving in the right direction, and the key economic indicators I have mentioned show that. In addition, we are seeing strong growth in exports and

manufacturing. This is the work, and being done by our government for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are always a top priority of our government. Despite the low commodity price and fragile global economic situation, our province is faring well.

Mr. Speaker, the job report that came out last week showed that 15,300 jobs were created across Canada. That same report showed that 8,000 jobs were created in Saskatchewan, which is a 1.5 per cent increase compared to the last year. More people were employed in Saskatchewan in February than ever before with 563,600 working in our province. We are leading the nation in month-over-month job growth, and that is a positive indication that the economy is moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote the Minister of the Economy on what he had to say on the recent job numbers:

Leading the nation in month-over-month job growth is a positive indication that the economy is moving in the right direction. This along with recent reports on retail sales growth, manufacturing sales growth and wholesale trade growth show the continued strength and resilience of Saskatchewan's economy.

Mr. Speaker, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 6 per cent, the third lowest in the country. This compared to the national unemployment rate which is 6.6 per cent. The numbers are not where we want them but they are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, along with the recent report on retail sales growth, manufacturing sales growth, and wholesale trade growth showed the continued strength, show a resilience in the Saskatchewan economy. It is worth mentioning that manufacturing sales in Saskatchewan rose 5.4 per cent, seasonally adjusted, between November 2016 and December 2016, the highest percentage in increase among the provinces, which compared to the national average, which also was up. It was only by 2.3 per cent. On a year-over-year basis, sales were up 11.9 per cent, seasonally adjusted, in Saskatchewan, the second highest among the provinces and well ahead of the 4.1 per cent posted nationally. The Saskatchewan advantage is real, and we have seen unprecedented growth and investment in our province under our government.

Capital investments. Statistics Canada forecasted total capital investment in Saskatchewan will reach \$14.5 billion in 2017, an increase of 76 per cent since 2007 and a 3 per cent increase since 2016. Between 2007 and 2016, there was an amazing \$143 billion invested into Saskatchewan's economy.

Mr. Speaker, since 2006 Saskatchewan's GDP [gross domestic product] has increased by 25 per cent. This is the second-highest GDP growth among the provinces over the last decade.

Mr. Speaker, we excelled in exports. Since 2006 Saskatchewan exports have grown by 62 per cent. This is the largest increase across Canada. This compares . . . The total national export increase was 17 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, Saskatchewan grew by more than 130,000 people over the last decade according to the 2016 census. This is the most growth in any 10-year period in the province over the last 84 years. In fact to see this kind of growth, you have go back to a decade between 1922 and 1932. According to the latest Statistics Canada estimate, Saskatchewan's population continued to grow, and there were 1,155,393 people living in the province as of October 2016.

[11:15]

Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan have a good quality of life. According to the most recent Statistics Canada data, the average weekly earning in Saskatchewan reached more than \$1,000 for the first time in the province's history and are the third highest among the provinces. In fact in December of last year, average weekly earnings were \$1,010.37.

Mr. Speaker, we have very successful businesses in our province. A great example of this, the Saskatchewan mining industry has invested close to \$30 billion over the last decade. In the past 10 years, the uranium industry has invested \$4.8 billion, including construction of \$2.6 billion in the Cigar Lake mine, the world's second-largest uranium mine.

Mr. Speaker, from 2005 onward, existing potash producers in the province has committed \$13.5 billion to expand many of the mines in Saskatchewan. K+S potash has committed to spend \$4.1 billion in the construction of the Legacy solution potash mine near Bethune. To date, BHP Billiton has committed \$3.8 billion towards the development of the Jansen Lake project and its other Saskatchewan potash interests.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the price of oil has seen lower prices but we still see significant investment in the industry. The oil and natural gas industry invested \$4.4 billion in Saskatchewan in 2015, showing a 42 per cent increase in yearly investment since 2007. It is not an accident that since 2007 we have seen the growth, since 2007 is when the NDP were voted out of the office.

Further, 2016 investment in the oil industry is estimated to be \$3.6 billion — this estimated from the Government of Saskatchewan 2016-17 mid-year report.

This is good news. Investment means jobs for our province and we support this investment, unlike the NDP who seems to only want to support the carbon tax and other policies that would want to see the oil industry and all carbon-intensive industry shut down.

But, Mr. Speaker, there's a further reason to be optimistic in a province, in the province's future. We see, in the Fraser Institute's 2016 annual global survey of mining executives, that Saskatchewan was ranked as the most attractive place in the world for mining companies to invest. Saskatchewan ranked number one out of 104 jurisdictions in the world. Competitive tax regime, efficient permitting procedure, certainty surrounding environmental regulation and land claims were the reasons for the province's top rating.

Mr. Speaker, we also see the Fraser Institute's annual global survey of petroleum sector executives ranked Saskatchewan as

the most attractive place in Canada for oil and gas companies to invest. In fact, Saskatchewan ranked fourth in the world behind only Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas. Alberta, on the other hand, ranked 43rd. Alberta has ranked 43rd in the world.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers I have talked about shows us that our government is on the right track. Our policies are encouraging the growth, attracting investment, and are keeping our population growing.

To bring me to the conclusion of my speech and, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move the following motion:

That this Assembly recognizes the recent strength in Saskatchewan job numbers, alongside a growing population, as strong economic indicators that the policies of this government are creating an environment that encourages economic growth.

I so move.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Pasqua has moved:

That this Assembly recognizes the recent strength in Saskatchewan job numbers, alongside a growing population, as strong economic indicators that the policies of this government are creating an environment that encourages economic growth.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always, it's always kind of a check-your-wallet moment when you see the Sask Party launching into a parade of self-congratulations because, you know . . . I want to state this right from the start: we're glad to see the improvement in the job numbers in the information relayed by Statistics Canada last Friday. Certainly, I don't know if it was the disbelief that was crashing the Statistics Canada website in terms of people trying to, you know, see precisely what had happened in the economy here in Saskatchewan or across the country. But again, those statistics, behind every statistic is a real human being, Mr. Speaker. And we're very glad to see an improvement for that month in terms of the job situation in Saskatchewan.

We're glad to see it for First Nations and Métis folks in this province, Mr. Speaker, where again, the kind of unemployment levels that still exist are far too high and are unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. And it represents a lost opportunity, not just for those communities but for the entirety of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in terms of realizing that tremendous human potential that is going to waste represented by those numbers. So we're glad to see those very high numbers in terms of off-reserve First Nations and Métis unemployment come down for one month. We're glad to see that, Mr. Speaker, but certainly it's not where it needs to be.

We're glad to see the overall unemployment picture improve for the most part, Mr. Speaker. There's certainly problems in the reporting district in and around Prince Albert that should be, again, cause for caution and, you know, calls for a redoubling of efforts on the part of government to work to make sure that

you're doing what you can to develop that human capital, to provide the economic capital opportunities to ensure that opportunities are realized, and also, Mr. Speaker, to look to the critical infrastructure role investments that this government can make, should be playing.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we don't dispute any of that, and I can't emphasize this enough. In the McCall family, we've had great fortune when it came to the whole situation around unemployment. But certainly we have folks in our lives, in our household, that know what it's like to be laid off, that know what it's like to have tenuous employment, to not know where that next paycheck is going to come from.

So we're very glad to see one month of improved performance in terms of the job picture here in Saskatchewan. But what we're not impressed with, Mr. Speaker, is again the way that this government takes one month and turns that into the . . . I'm always reminded of when George W. Bush declared the war in Iraq won and, you know, come flying in on an aircraft carrier and, you know, the big banner reading "mission accomplished."

And certainly this is a government that when things aren't going so well, it's like, oh well, what are we to do? It's just the resource sector. Resource prices are down. You know, what are we to do? And they stand and say, you know, the buck stops somewhere else. They decry their responsibility for those circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

But right on time, you know, you get one month of good news . . . And I'm not disputing the quality of that news. What I am disputing, Mr. Speaker, is the way that this government takes one month and then declares, and again referring to the words in the motion:

That this Assembly recognizes the recent strength in Saskatchewan job numbers, alongside a growing population, [all fair enough] as strong economic indicators that the policies of this government are creating an environment that encourages economic growth.

And the chests got puffed up, Mr. Speaker, and it was like, well you know, we're big-time job creators, and that's how it's rolling on this side of the House. And it's . . . Again, Mr. Speaker, it's the kind of hubris that was on offer, you know, in 2007 when these folks took over the government benches, where certainly they were handed a fine fiscal circumstance, Mr. Speaker. They were handed an economy that was growing. They were handed a natural resource revenue regime that certainly again they're taking credit for it. They were handed, you know, \$2 billion cash on hand, Mr. Speaker, a rainy day fund.

And they were given a pretty good hand to play that, in their more thoughtful moments, Mr. Speaker, members of that government will acknowledge. And certainly I've . . . And as much as a surprise that it is, and it gets fewer and fewer in between, Mr. Speaker, I've even heard the Premier acknowledge that on occasion, if you can imagine. But that's usually the exception, and the rule is the way that this government takes, you know, one . . .

You know, it's not about let's keep building on good news; it's



like let's take a moment to celebrate ourselves, Mr. Speaker. Let's throw a little party for us to thump our chests and say, you know, all that stuff we're talking about with the resource sector being in a downturn, and revenues are . . . There's a knock-on effect and on and on. You know, all of that goes out the door, and it's suddenly into this, let's throw a parade and, you know, deploy the confetti cannons.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, that they're picking this month of all months to do this is kind of, you know again, in terms of the way that this government likes to tempt fate with their hubris and their sort of the way they get consumed by themselves. This is on the eve of a budget that . . . Again they haven't had the decency to table a third quarter report to give us an accurate picture of what the finances are looking like, but they do like to talk about how everything is on the table. And everything except for, you know, the number of MLAs or the wages of that cabinet, Mr. Speaker. That's not on the table. Or you know, what's happening in terms of governance across the province generally; that's not on the table.

But what is on the table of course, and you know that the first stop on the tour of the cuts that this government is going to be making, that one of the very first places they stopped in to hand out the layoff notices was with 230 cleaners. And Mr. Speaker, I'm not in the habit of . . . I don't agree with everything the man writes, but certainly I recommend for the people of Saskatchewan, if you get a chance, please read from the 15 March 2017 Regina *Leader-Post* column by Murray Mandryk, the column entitled, "Fighting deficit on the backs of cleaners accomplishes little." And again, it's an indictment of the misplaced priorities of this government when it comes to who's going to be held to account for the budget mess that this government has created.

And you know, I guess I could quote as well, Mr. Speaker, from an earlier column where I again, I agreed with him. It's a bit of a streak, Mr. Speaker. But I believe the title was, and again quoting, "Wall, Doherty . . . [little more than] Devine-era incompetents." You know, I guess, I guess that's . . . And I hear the Finance minister yipping away over there, but on he goes. And I'm sure I just wish he had that much to say about the third quarter report, but again we've got to wait for the budget.

One of the stranger things I heard yesterday, Mr. Speaker, was the member from Walsh Acres say, well just you wait until March 23rd and we're going to look to you for your plan.

[11:30]

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of . . . I get, I get why they want to throw parades. I get why they want to, you know, have that mission-accomplished moment for every little bit of good news that's out there. And again, increased jobs and better job numbers, that's legitimate good news.

But this government, you know, in terms of what they have to do with it, something they've got direct control over are the choices that they make and the way that we'll see that wrapped up in a budget this week to come. And the way that, you know, it's going so far, Mr. Speaker, is that when they say everything's on the table, it's everything for those that are the most vulnerable. It's everything for those who are the hardest

working and, you know, the most modestly paid in the public service, let alone the 3.5 routine they want to pull for the entirety of the public service. So, Mr. Speaker, you'll forgive me some skepticism when it comes to the way that this government likes to . . .

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

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, it is an honour to stand before you today and enter into this debate on the economic growth in the province.

I will begin, Mr. Speaker, by citing the most recent labour survey that was released this month from Statistics Canada regarding February's employment numbers in this province. There were 563,600 people employed in Saskatchewan last month. More people employed in February in Saskatchewan than ever before. There were 8,000 jobs created in this province compared to January of this year. I want to repeat that — 8,000 jobs. This represents an increase of 1.4 per cent which is the highest percentage rate increase among the provinces. Maybe a headline read: "Saskatchewan leading Canada in job growth" and "A very positive direction" and "Jobless rate rises in Saskatchewan in February."

Nationally employment was up 15,300 from January. That means that half of the increase in jobs in the country came from our province. Mr. Speaker, within that increase of 8,000 jobs and an increase of 8,600 jobs compared to one year ago, 3,300 of those jobs were full time. Off-reserve Aboriginal employment was up 4,400 jobs for eight straight months of year-over-year increases, and Aboriginal youth employment was up 1,000 jobs for 10 months of year-over-year increases. Major year-over-year gains were reported for the retail and the wholesale trade sectors up 7,800 jobs; professional, scientific, and technical services up 4,800 jobs; educational services up 4,500 jobs; and manufacturing up 3,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, it is most exciting to see the manufacturing sales in Saskatchewan were up 5.4 per cent seasonally adjusted between November and December last year, the highest percentage increase among the provinces. In December, manufacturing sales in Saskatchewan totalled \$1.3 billion. Year-over-year manufacturing sales were up 11.9 per cent which was the second highest among the provinces.

Next let's talk about the unemployment rate in February. Saskatchewan's seasonally adjusted rate was 6 per cent, the third lowest among the provinces. Only BC and Manitoba had lower unemployment rates. The youth unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 24 was 10.3 per cent, second lowest among the provinces behind only BC. Those are the most recent job numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's take a look at the average weekly earnings according to Statistics Canada. Saskatchewan workers saw the highest month-over-month percentage growth among the provinces in December, 2016. Those average weekly earnings were above \$1,000. Our Saskatchewan workers are third highest among the provinces. This is the highest average weekly earnings in the province's history.

These are a lot of figures to digest. What do they mean? They mean that, despite the slowdown in the resource sector that has impacted government revenues, Saskatchewan is leading the nation with Canada's highest rate of job growth. They mean that, despite the recent economic challenges, the men and women of Saskatchewan continue to work hard to contribute to the economic prosperity of the province. They continue to believe that hope beats fear.

Mr. Speaker, we have three daughters. Our oldest daughter, Amy, is a chartered professional accountant and a mother of three. Monique, our middle daughter, is a lawyer and gave birth to her first child last November. Both of them have made Saskatoon their home to work and raise their families. Our youngest daughter, Janelle, completed a Master of Public Administration degree at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy located at the University of Saskatchewan. She was the youngest student in her program. I am hopeful that she will choose to remain in the province as well.

Our daughters are an example of how our fortunes have changed in this province. I remember a time not so long ago under the NDP when thousands of our brightest and most capable young people would leave this province in search of employment elsewhere because the job opportunities did not exist here. Thanks to the hard work of our government, young people are choosing Saskatchewan to be their home after graduation. I am grateful that grandparents like me now have a better chance of being close to their grandchildren.

Now I would like to draw your attention to the latest population statistics, Mr. Speaker. The 2016 census population figures that were released in February by Statistics Canada show that Saskatchewan grew by 64,971 people in the past five years. Saskatchewan's population grew by more than 130,000 people over the past decade from the 2006 census to the 2016 census. We have the second-highest growth rate among the provinces at 6.3 per cent. There were 1,155,393 people living here as of October 2016.

The NDP said it was impossible for Saskatchewan to grow by even 100,000 people in 10 years. This government has exceeded that goal. Every single one of our 16 Saskatchewan cities saw their populations increase from 2011 to 2016 by a total of 58,189 people, or 9.9 per cent. Saskatoon came in third for growth among the census metropolitan areas at 12.5 per cent, and Regina was fourth at 11.8 per cent. Towns and villages across the province also saw their populations increase. Compare that growth to the 10 years from 1996 to 2006 when the NDP were in power when Saskatchewan's population actually dropped by 22,000. That is a stark difference, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Gone are the days when Saskatchewan's greatest export was the people who called Saskatchewan home.

We have seen unprecedented growth in investment in this province. Statistics Canada forecasts total capital investment will reach 14.5 billion in 2017, an increase of 76 per cent since 2007. Saskatchewan's GDP has increased by 25 per cent since 2006. Exports have grown by 62 per cent in that same time, the largest increase of all provinces.

In the past decade the mining industry has invested close to

30 billion, and the uranium industry has invested 4.8 billion. Agriculture exports have grown by 186 per cent over the past 10 years. That is a remarkable achievement. We have over 750 more doctors practising in this province since 2007. That's a 44 per cent increase. Let's not forget that the Fraser Institute's 2016 annual global survey of mining executives ranks Saskatchewan as the most attractive place in the world for mining companies to invest. When the Fraser Institute surveyed petroleum sector executives last year, Saskatchewan ranked fourth in the world as the most attractive place for oil and gas companies to invest behind only Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas.

So how did this happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Did a fairy godmother wave a magic wand over Saskatchewan to create 8,000 jobs in one month or increase our population to over 1.1 million people? The benefits of growth and investment in Saskatchewan allow for greater investments in our quality of life. How do we explain that in the investment, the likes that we have never before witnessed in this province?

The policies of this Saskatchewan Party government, that's how. Policies that make Saskatchewan a good place to start and grow a business. Policies that attract, train, and develop a skilled workforce. Policies that support increased trade, increased investment, and increased export through engagement with international markets. Policies that advance the strength of our natural resources. Policies that encourage people to move to our province rather than move out of our province. Policies that invest in the infrastructure that is required for growth.

We know that an increase in population means that there will be greater demands on health care, education, social services, and infrastructure. I would like to quote our Premier:

Obviously, given the current fiscal situation, a growing population presents some challenges for our province, but I would much rather be facing the challenges of growth than the challenges of decline.

I couldn't agree more. We know that, as government, we have more work to do. While we are seeing indicators that our economy is showing signs of growth, this government faces some difficult but necessary decisions with the budget next week to address our significant resource revenue shortfall. But these latest job numbers and our growing population reflect that we are moving in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to offer my support to the motion brought forward by my colleague from Regina Pasqua. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have to say I find this so passing strange to get up after one month's report and we have the government jumping up and congratulating themselves, patting themselves on the back.

And once again . . . And I don't know whether it's a hazing thing over there or they have to dare new members to repeat old speeches because we hear the same thing, the same old lines. And I couldn't believe that member there or the member from

Regina Pasqua. I don't know whether they believe in the theory of abrupt appearance, the abrupt appearance that there was no oil in Saskatchewan prior to 2007, and there was no potash prior to November 2007. And what do you know? Those folks discovered it.

You know, I just find it very interesting how they kind of forget what happened in 2005, 2006, and the first three-quarters of 2007 before they took over, and how this province became a have province. And we were all very happy to be a part of that. But when she talks about policies or the member from Regina Pasqua talks about policies, I'd like to know what specific policy. Was that Enterprise Saskatchewan that you were talking about? Yes, Enterprise Saskatchewan. Whatever happened? Now that's an oldie but goldie from 2007-08-09. Whatever happened to that? Whatever happened to . . . Oh, there's silence in this room. Nobody remembers Enterprise Saskatchewan. What happened to that?

But we have these stooges from the Devine era that are coming back and bringing back this abrupt appearance. There is no answer to that.

I want to know what happened when they congratulate themselves on the back. Whatever happened to those policies? And they found out, best to keep our policies going, our policies that got potash industry going up, that got population going here. And you know that. Members over there know that for sure. They sure do.

So as they congratulate themselves on this one-month's report . . . And we are very glad to see these kinds of results. We are very . . .

[Interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I realize that members would like to all get into this debate, but currently the member from Saskatoon Centre has the floor. I recognize the member.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to highlight on another great indicator things are changing in Saskatchewan that happened just a couple of weeks ago and that was the by-election in Meewasin, which I think speaks more volumes about people seeing through that side, that government side, and what they're bringing forward to the people of Saskatchewan. We talked about government policies. We talked about policies such as the cuts to health and education, and the sell-off of the Crowns, particularly SaskTel. And what did the people do? Well 1,500 of their supporters stayed home; more supporters came out for us. People wouldn't come out to support that kind of policy from that kind of government.

Again silence in the room. They have nothing to say about that because that's the true measure of what the people of Saskatchewan are talking about.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to highlight just one article. There are many articles and we don't have much time, but here again we were talking about the journalist Murray Mandryk and his column that he wrote, "Dumping government cleaning staff is ironic and sad." And I have to tell you that this is so

interesting. There are a number, and I quote:

There are any number of ironies in the provincial government telling us it's just a business decision to explore dumping low-paid cleaning staff in favour of private contracting.

[11:45]

Did we not hear that very answer today in question period while we were asking about the four very important positions about gambling over at the casinos? And then this is one of the things I have to say, and I quote:

If there is one ministry which this government could do without, it's likely Central Services. In fact, Central didn't exist as a stand-alone ministry three years ago . . . [It became] a safe haven for Premier Brad Wall to send ministers who struggle with more formidable cabinet responsibilities.

And did we not see that in question period again today, where we couldn't get a straight answer about the laying off of four very important positions? And yet they stand up and congratulate themselves on that good news in terms of the stats. But you've got to have more than one month . . . makes a trend.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every day I stand up and I've been asked to present a petition in terms of pay equity, and I think that's a very good indicator. Now today we did hear applause on our petition about domestic abuse, domestic violence. That's very good. But I have yet to hear any applause from that side when it comes to talking about pay equity, when it comes to women's salaries here in Saskatchewan.

And we know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon, 2016, women earned on average 63 cents for every dollar that a man makes, and in Regina women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar that a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national wage gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar a man makes.

Now this is the report actually right here, and it is very interesting. It is actually pretty tough on Saskatchewan. It talks about the best and worst places to be a woman in Canada, 2016, and I really would encourage the members opposite, before they start bragging and taking their self congratulations too seriously, how are they doing in Canada, in our cities here? And what is really happening for women? And if that's the case, what is it for others?

In Regina, it's the 18th worst city in Canada to be a woman in terms of economic security, education, health, leadership, and security. Overall ranking is 18th. I think that's a sad indictment of where we are today. And we can do better, and I would rather see a motion from the government to say . . . And they always say this, there's so much more work to be done, so much more work to be done.

And yet we see strategies come out that are half-baked. And in fact what it says is that we are not going to address . . . The poverty strategy, said very clearly that they are not going to

address the issue of women's . . . domestic violence until there is money to do that. That's just not right. That's just not right. But here, here is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's what the report said, and you know it. You know it. That's the report, black and white.

In Saskatoon, out of 25 cities, it's ranked 21st as the worst city to be a woman in 2016, in terms of economic security, education, health, leadership, and security. In security, in security — and this is very serious, Mr. Deputy Speaker — it's 25th. It's 25th. The worst city in Canada to be a woman in terms of security.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there's lots of issues that we have, and we could take a moment and when we see good news like last month's job reports, fair enough, we should take a minute and say okay, that's a good start.

But what's going to happen with the budget next week? And as my colleague from Regina said, it's just passing strange that on the eve of that, when we're afraid of cuts — we've just seen the beginning of it in terms of 230 cleaning staff — what more will be coming? You know, this is something that really worries us here in Saskatchewan because they're threatening to tear up contracts, enforcing pay cuts, and job losses, and you know, this is really something that we are worried about. And what does that mean in terms of when we're finally . . . The province is coming together and things are looking good, will this government put that all at risk next week? That's the challenge that we have before us. What are their plans?

And of course we have a minister who will not even release the third quarter report — that would be a good start, something basic like that — and is hiding behind, well we need more time. But right as soon as they get stats from Stats Canada about improving job numbers, they jump up and they want to congratulate themselves.

So we have a lot of concerns, you know. Among them, and I know the new member from Saskatoon Meewasin will be talking about this, we're leading the country in food bank usage among children. Our child poverty rates are among the highest in Canada. Our HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] infection rate doubles the national average. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, the one thing this government is not talking about, is when they came to power there were 20,000 people looking for work, 20,000 people. And what is it today? It's 40,000. It's double. It's double.

So yes sir, they sure have got a lot more work to do, and that's what the motion should have been about and not this self-congratulations where they know it's way too soon, way too soon. And they have . . . And they shout from the sides, Mr. Speaker, but I really do have to say, it's way too soon. And we have to see what happens next Wednesday on the budget and what that will really mean for women, the working poor, and will we be able to keep some of these jobs here in Saskatchewan. Therefore I won't be supporting this motion. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At the end of my comments, I will be supporting the motion by the member from Regina Pasqua:

That this Assembly recognizes the recent strength in Saskatchewan job numbers, alongside a growing population, as strong economic indicators that the policies of this government are creating an environment that encourages economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, our government has created an environment where our province is growing because people recognize and respect that job creation is not a symbolic concept, but is in fact about real people achieving their potential through responding to a new economy with enthusiasm and the Saskatchewan spirit.

Mr. Speaker, the numbers that this debate is built upon have been well-positioned by my colleagues. I will simply touch on a few for perspective in my comments.

Mr. Speaker, our seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped from 6.4 per cent in January to 6 per cent in February, second only to British Columbia in the country. Mr. Speaker, this is about jobs, and the trends are pointing in the right direction. Despite members opposite ongoing campaign of misinformation, public sector employment is actually up year over year by 4.2 per cent, while private sector employment is up 3.3 per cent. It's important to note that overall public sector employment includes federal, provincial, and municipal jobs of 140,300. Private sector employment in the province is 320,500, and the self-employment number is 102,800. Mr. Speaker, jobs mean growth and growth means jobs.

Our government's track record has led to 130,000 new citizens in the province. New citizens means new demands on services which equates to new jobs and new opportunities for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, there are 5,000 more women and 3,500 more men working than a year ago. Aboriginal employment is up 4,400, 10 per cent year over year. Aboriginal youth employment is up 1,000 for the 10th consecutive month of growth.

In context, Mr. Deputy Speaker, remember when the NDP were in power and jobs were sent out of the province. Teachers, nurses, doctors, and thousands of Saskatchewan residents moved away.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would never let the facts get in the way of a good conspiracy theory. Mr. Speaker, anyone interested can drive around the bypass site and see the scope of the project. Thousands of taxpaying Saskatchewan jobs have been created. Millions of dollars are circulating through the Saskatchewan economy as a result of this project. I find it troubling that rather than celebrate the engineering marvel in front of us, members opposite are willing, day after day, to attack the very economic benefits and Saskatchewan spirit that imagines the opportunities before us.

Mr. Speaker, their opposition to the thousands of jobs created and the safety and efficient movement of goods is truly troubling. Mr. Speaker, if you listen to the members opposite, you would surely believe that the great people of this province cannot find their way without the government holding their

hands. Where have they been for the last 100-plus years as the people of Saskatchewan, those who arrived at our borders with nothing but the shirts on their back, created this dynamic, world-leading province? Mr. Speaker, for decades the people of this province have been the innovators in manufacturing, in agriculture, in mining, in forestry, and in building infrastructure to support a small but fully engaged population.

Mr. Speaker, we are the number-one mining investment destination in the world for a reason. Mr. Speaker, it is well recognized that our government has created an environment for growth and job creation. Otherwise why would world-renowned companies like Cameco invest to develop Cigar Lake as the world's highest grade uranium mine located in northern Saskatchewan? They believe in opportunity.

BHP Billiton has committed billions towards the Jansen Lake potash mine, and in so doing, are developing new ways of dropping the shaft and developing new infrastructure for movement of product. In addition, they are investing in the surrounding communities, creating a positive workplace for families in the area. Mr. Speaker, this is a major corporation that understands the principle that we hold dear: that jobs and community are not mutually exclusive, whether public sector or private sector. Mr. Speaker, they believe in our workers.

Mr. Speaker, K+S Potash has committed billions in construction to the Legacy mine near Bethune. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are prepared to assume risk and move forward. Not only do companies like Cameco and BHP and K+S and hundreds of others make these incredible investments in our province, but they develop new technologies here that can be used and marketed around the world. Mr. Speaker, that is about jobs. Mr. Speaker, these companies invest in the communities they are engaged in. They invest in employee education and training. They invest in safety and community resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member from Melville-Saltcoats reminded me yesterday that the Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board distributed 20,904,000 tax-sharing dollars last year. Mr. Deputy Speaker, does that sound like the evil big business that the members opposite would have you see? This is support for local infrastructure. Mr. Deputy Speaker, do the corporate donations to thousands of community projects across the province sound like an uncaring group?

Let me also pay tribute to those that are self-employed, which is defined as both incorporated and unincorporated self-employed persons, the entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan, those that may have a small business, those that work from home, those that provide the most basic of services. Transition from employment to self-employment is not a bad thing. Mr. Deputy Speaker, beyond the imagination of members opposite, thousands of people choose, I repeat, choose to be self-employed private industry participants because they see opportunity in front of them. They understand that risk is a real factor of self-actualization, and that they have the belief in themselves to be successful and are willing to challenge themselves to the highest possible standards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the farmers of Saskatchewan, the small businesses, the mom-and-pop operations are the backbone of our economy and the creator of a vast number of jobs. I took the

opportunity yesterday to check the SaskJobs website. 7,154 jobs were available in Saskatchewan, including 654 in oil, gas and mining, and agriculture; 1,782 in trades, transport, and construction; 294 in management; 559 in business, finance, and administration; and I could go on. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are real jobs for real people. This is only one of the many resources available to the people of Saskatchewan to find fulfillment in their chosen fields.

[12:00]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a robust economy and a robust job market as a result of the decisions our government continues to make. Mr. Deputy Speaker, members opposite are so opposed to private participation in the economy that the member from Athabasca even spoke against the participation of private companies and social agencies in the development of social impact bonds. Imagine the crippling ideology that is so anti everything that they can't even imagine the value of community participation in developing real solutions for social concerns in the province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, jobs must be considered as a continuum. As we all know, a job generates a combination of current buying power as well as an accumulation of wealth over time. Despite what members opposite would have you believe, I would position that the majority of workers today value their personal ability to succeed, to reach a level of self-actualization through a combination of education, personal priorities and opportunities, and their ability to face the world head on. To many young people I've had the good fortune of working with over the past number of years, it is not the golden handcuffs of a career that inspires them, but the opportunity for personal achievement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, ask yourself what the retail, wholesale, and service marketplace might look like in five years. Imagine the consequences of the astounding pace of change in technology today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, imagine what the advent of drone technology, self-driving cars and the trucks, communication technology, development in health sciences, and innovations in mining and production systems might look like.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I can quote in closing, in the words of the 21st century American philosopher, Larry the Cable Guy says, "Let's git 'er done."

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's always a privilege to rise in the House in the 75-minute debate and have an opportunity to enter the discussion here. I want to start out just echoing the comments from my colleague from Elphinstone-Centre where he said, of course we're glad to see the improvement in job numbers for this one month, particularly because those job numbers are real people, Mr. Speaker, and real people are impacted by decisions that this government makes. We only need to take a moment and talk to the cleaners in this building about this government's decision to privatize and cut their jobs, Mr. Speaker.

I think I would like to direct the government, to provide them a little piece of wisdom from *Reader's Digest*, from Mary Waldrip who is an author and an editor. And she points out that "When someone sings his own praise, he always gets the tune too high," Mr. Speaker. This is a government who, at a time . . . Now is not the time to boast about one month's job improvements, Mr. Speaker. This government needs to spend less time boasting and more time addressing our abysmal record here in this province in so many places.

Actually my colleague from Saskatoon Centre pointed out some of the places this government should be concentrating its efforts. When we think about the track record of this government . . . This province, our province of Saskatchewan leads the country in food bank usage among children, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan child poverty rates are among the highest in Canada. The HIV infection rate in Saskatchewan is almost double the national average. Saskatchewan led all other provinces in its rates of reported intimate partner violence and violence against children in 2015.

I think about this government boasting a little bit earlier this week too, as the Health critic, Mr. Speaker. They sent out a release about the number of physicians practising here in Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to me that they can boast about this. They're telling us that we have more docs but they fail to mention specific numbers from its own report, that people are actually getting fewer services from those doctors than they were in 2007.

This is coming out of the ministry's own reports, Mr. Speaker. They can send out a news release about the number of doctors, but they need to go check out the emergency rooms. They need to go check out the specialists' wait lists, Mr. Speaker. They need to talk to people on the front line.

So I'm wondering how this government thinks that a 3.5 per cent cut to health care staff, the support staff, the people around doctors, is going to help provide services here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But you know, the one really distasteful thing for me, Mr. Speaker, that stood out for me again was the boasting at the same time they were cutting 230 jobs of some of the most modestly paid people here in this province, Mr. Speaker, modestly paid public servants who average about \$18 an hour, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, ironically, this stood out for me as well. You know where some of these folks heard about their impending job losses? Just down the way, Mr. Speaker, at the Canada Saskatchewan Production Studios. The soundstage, Mr. Speaker, where just five years ago . . . Budget is approaching now, Mr. Speaker. This time five years ago, this government chose to cut the film employment tax credit, Mr. Speaker, which gutted the film industry here in Saskatchewan, which sent jobs . . .

It was funny listening to the member from Churchill-Wildwood talk about young people being able to stay. We have a film school here in Regina. Do you know what that decision meant, that cut to the film tax credit meant? That many of those graduates from that film school would never be able to earn a living here in Saskatchewan. It chased hundreds of people who work directly in the industry out of the province, but impacted

their families as well.

Speaking of physician recruitment, I know of one family in particular. We lost a specialist who was married to someone who worked in the film industry, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting when we talk about the film industry. This is a government who, right from the get-go, had no interest in saving it. We had the three pillars. We had SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] which was the broadcast, our provincial broadcast agency that helped trigger licences. We had a sound stage, a beautiful sound stage that now sits empty and gets used for things like firing people, Mr. Speaker, and the film tax credit.

Other provinces know the benefit of the film industry, Mr. Speaker. I'm just looking — this actually makes me very sad — it's from Reel Academy. It's just an infographic about Canadian film jobs, Mr. Speaker. You look at BC. I know you can't see this, and I'll talk little bit about numbers of people in the film industry here, Mr. Speaker, and the need for a diversified economy.

I just want to point to the fact that the day after the budget last year, the Finance minister, on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio, I recall him talking about how of course we're having economic challenges. We live in a resource-based economy. No kidding, Mr. Speaker. This is a government who cut one of those support pieces that could have helped when we saw the perfect storm of potash, oil, uranium, everything drop, Mr. Speaker. We could've had a film industry that helped bolster us at a time when things were tough, Mr. Speaker.

So the film industry . . . This government's own commissioned study over the lifetime of the film tax credit, the total investment by government was just over 100 million, Mr. Speaker, and it generated \$623.4 million in economic activity, Mr. Speaker. On average they estimated that it created 851 jobs, Mr. Speaker. Other provinces know this is the case. Again, pointing to the infographic from Reel Academy, Mr. Speaker, you see the bar for BC and Ontario are high. Quebec is doing well, Mr. Speaker. Alberta and Manitoba and Atlantic Canada all have production. There is nothing registering in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I want to tell you a little bit about . . . So Manitoba, a province not dissimilar from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba, "Our film and television industry . . ." This is from the Manitoba government:

Our film and television industry employs over 1,400 Manitobans as cast, crew, and industry support staff. In the past ten years alone, about . . . [a billion] worth of production has happened here. Over half of that amount was spent in the province on salaries, services and supplies [Mr. Speaker].

We can point to Calgary actually, Mr. Speaker, who opened up a sound stage a year ago, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to draw your attention to an article where, "New Calgary film studio hoped to help struggling Alberta economy." "Officials say a new film studio being constructed in southeast Calgary is nearing completion and could help bolster Alberta's struggling

economy.” And that’s from January 1st, 2016. Just a short while later they actually had the grand opening.

“Film Commissioner with Calgary Economic Development Luke Azevedo said the facility will be a benefit to the local economy, especially with a deflated Canadian dollar.” Azevedo goes on to say, “This industry is also purposeful diversification. The industry itself attaches nicely with the economic strategy for Calgary with diversification and innovation.” So those are two of the smaller provinces, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to film production.

But I want to point you to BC, Mr. Speaker, and this is not all of BC. This is just in Vancouver. This is actually the north shore, so all three of the north shore’s municipalities. This is from *The North Shore News* on March 9th, 2017:

The District of North Vancouver hosted 122 TV, movie and commercial productions in 2016, 38 per cent more than the previous year. That brought in \$643,000 in fees for general revenues, up 17 per cent . . .

That’s just in the district of North Van, Mr. Speaker.

West Vancouver almost doubled the number of film permits issued to 60 and more than tripled the amount of cash it brought in from film permits, inspection and . . . [local] fees, and contributions to park amenities at \$175,000.

The City of North Vancouver, meanwhile enjoyed a 47 per cent increase in film permits . . .

Mr. Speaker, we have multiple jurisdictions who’ve seen the value of a film tax credit, particularly when the Canadian dollar is low and when other parts of the economy are struggling. This government can boast about jobs — I think wrongfully so, Mr. Speaker — but they certainly have not done a good job of diversifying our economy. And I will not be supporting the motion. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, we’ve made a lot . . . We talked a lot about the custodial cleaners, the 230 that will be laid off, and it’s in 95 buildings across the province. We know the folks who are working and cleaning this building here today, but we also know that it’s 95 buildings across this province.

So I want to know from the member from Churchill-Wildwood Saskatoon — because it’s going to be some of her constituents that are being laid off next week — how can she brag about the job stats last month when next week people are going to be worried about how they’re going to make ends meet?

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

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to thank the member opposite for this question. I would start by pointing out that from 2000 to 2007, the NDP were the last in the country when it comes to job creation. I will repeat that. We

have created 8,000 jobs in the province from January to February of this year. Unemployment rate in this province for February was 6 per cent, the third-lowest among the provinces. The latest job numbers show the continued strength and resilience of our economy here in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 30th, 2016, to the CBC news, the member for Saskatoon Meewasin said, and I quote, “. . . we applaud the federal government’s recent announcement of a minimum price on carbon.” He said this even though on June 21st, 2016, article from the Fraser Institute said, and I quote, “. . . carbon tax will lead to loss of jobs, income, exports, revenues, etc.”

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Elphinstone-Centre. Do you support your colleague’s championing the carbon tax even though it will lead to loss of jobs in Saskatchewan?

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, again I know that this government likes to throw a nice parade for itself every now and then and reflect on all the good that they like to take claim for. And in terms of, you know, decisions that help or hurt the economy, I guess maybe that member could take a look in the mirror and see what’s happened with the consecutive power rate increases that have gone on at SaskPower on this government’s watch, Mr. Speaker. And maybe if he could answer for that, then that question would have some credibility in this place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To the member from Churchill-Wildwood, does she have anything to say to the 40,000 people looking for work across the province, 20,000 more, Mr. Speaker, than when her government first took power?

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

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. I would again point out that from January to February of this year, 8,000 jobs have been created. Our unemployment rate is third lowest among the provinces. These latest job numbers show the continued strength and resilience of our economy.

We have many economic indicators that again point that our economy is moving in the right direction. I’ll just cite a few. Exports right now are \$26.5 billion, a 61 per cent increase since 2006 when the NDP were in power. Our ag-exports are \$14 billion, a 186 per cent increase since the NDP were in power in 2006. Our GDP is currently just under \$60 billion, and that’s a 25 per cent increase since 2006. Thank you very much,

Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the most recent federal NDP leadership debate, MP Guy Caron said in regards to Alberta's carbon tax, “. . . what the government in Alberta is doing should be leading the way for ourselves.”

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. MP Caron clearly supports a carbon tax in Canada. Will your party support him in his stance on implementing a carbon tax if he becomes the leader of your federal party? Thank you.

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

[12:15]

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been very clear on this side of the House that we need a Made in Saskatchewan solution, not foisted upon us by the federal Liberals, Mr. Speaker. We have been abundantly clear that that is the case. Thank you.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll refrain from asking them about, you know, are they in the Kellie Leitch camp over there or are they in the Michael Chong camp over there in terms of their federal Conservative leadership. Instead I'll ask the member from Regina Pasqua, Mr. Speaker, where he stands when it comes to the decision made earlier this week to fire 230 cleaners, some of the hardest working and least paid members of the public service. Does the member from Regina Pasqua stand behind his government to fire those 230 cleaners, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the month of February is having the 28 days, and we created 8,000 jobs which means that's 285 jobs in a day, and we are working more on it. And going back, in 2006 when a person was earning weekly only \$709.61 average, now they are earning \$1,010.37, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the most recent federal NDP leadership debate, MP Peter Julian said, and I quote:

“Sometimes it's not possible to reconcile the environment and natural resource extraction. When we talk about raw bitumen exports, when we talk about Kinder Morgan and Energy East it is very difficult to reconcile what those projects would mean in terms of accelerating climate

change . . . [and what that means in terms of our economy and our environment].”

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Saskatoon Centre. It's clear that MP Julian is firmly against pipelines. Will your party support him and his stance against pipeline development if he becomes the leader of your NDP federal party?

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's well known what our stand is on pipelines, and we . . . Well I mean if these folks over here would take half the time they focus on our federal leadership race and talk about, look at what we've said in the House, it's very, very clear. And especially that Minister of Finance should get to work on the third quarter report. But I do want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this focus on federal leadership . . . They should be focusing on saving jobs here in Saskatchewan especially for those most vulnerable in our communities.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I guess, you know, if they want to talk leaderships, I guess, you know, we'll happily go down that path. And if the members want to get on the record clarifying some things, in terms of someone running for the top job of their federal party, Mr. Speaker, can the member from Regina Pasqua clarify for us, in terms of, is he supporting Michael Chong who is out there in favour of a carbon tax? And you don't hear much about that from them, Mr. Speaker. Or is he supporting Kellie Leitch, who's got, you know, I think it was termed as a Trump-karaoke position on Canadian values? Can the member from Regina Pasqua clarify that for the House?

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about 2006 and employment was only 491,000 and now these days we have 563,600 employment these days, which is 18 per cent more than what they had in their government, Mr. Speaker. Thanks.

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

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While our government works hard to promote growth and the economy, the NDP focus on policies that would send Saskatchewan back, back to the days when our young people had no choice but to look for jobs elsewhere. Back to when Saskatchewan was the last in population growth and had the unfortunate distinction of having the highest unemployment in the country. Mr. Speaker, to the member from Saskatoon Centre, will he finally admit that supporting the principles of the Leap Manifesto will lead to higher unemployment?

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for the 75-minute debate has



expired.

I would simply like to remind members that questions in the 75-minute debate should pertain to the motion. I think we were maybe stretching a pretty long bow here this morning. So I would caution members to keep that in mind for the next 75-minute debate.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 602 — *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act*

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to speak at second reading to Bill No. 602, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act*. This is an important bill that we're proud to have put forward for Saskatchewan people to, in essence, to make sure that we have democracy, our democracy, in the hands of Saskatchewan people.

We have laws in Saskatchewan that clearly need to be fixed. By any measure and any assessment we're the wild west of electoral finance laws in Saskatchewan, with structures and laws that are inappropriate. And this is the kind of bill that, you know, that we reach across the aisle and that we have sought support for, and it's the kind of bill that we could pass with the support of government in a very urgent way to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics.

This is about our democracy. This is about the people of Saskatchewan. This is about addressing the undue influence in questions of influence that we see with the current governing party. And it's about doing it in an even-handed way, a way of levelling the playing field for all. The bill that we've brought forward, that I'm proud to have brought forward along with our official opposition team, has the support of both labour unions and people, but also business groups, Mr. Speaker, and that's important.

The bill itself would put a cap on all donations: a cap on individual donations, and it would ban corporate and union donations into the political process, to political parties. And of course it would ban out-of-province donations, something that frankly is offensive to Saskatchewan people when they realize the millions and millions and millions of dollars that have filled the coffers of that Sask Party, and the thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars, that have filled the pocket of that Premier while he's serving the people of Saskatchewan, a Premier that right now, if you can imagine it, who's accepted that offensive and inappropriate top-up for year after year after year, with almost half a million dollars in his pockets now. This is all money on top of the pay that he receives, good pay to serve the people of Saskatchewan as Premier of Saskatchewan, and leaves Saskatchewan people with all sorts of questions about who that Premier and who the Sask Party is really serving. Who's had access to that government?

And it makes you question who their masters are, Mr. Speaker. And it's, you know, pretty difficult to serve a couple of masters. And it starts to become abundantly clear when you see a government that's mired in scandal with dollars that have filled the pockets of supporters of that government, and you see a Premier and a Sask Party that are breaking promise after promise with Saskatchewan people, clearly not serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people. It leaves you questioning who's had access to that Premier, who's had access to that Sask Party cabinet, and who are they serving, Mr. Speaker.

Now we can do the right thing here in this Assembly. We can support this legislation. We would support constructive amendments from the other side to find a space that works for everyone. But it's clear that it's not appropriate that Saskatchewan is the last province standing without actions toward electoral finance reform. This is about building the basic trust that we need to have — that all of us need to have, that our democratic system needs to have — with Saskatchewan people.

You know, it's been disappointing to see, you know, the Sask Party and the Premier delay any action on this front. Of course we as the official opposition NDP, along with others, have been bringing this to the attention of the Premier and the Sask Party, highlighting the inappropriateness of that top-up that he takes, has taken annually for year after year after year, almost a half a million dollars in his own pockets, Mr. Speaker. And it took him, it took him a long time to come to the right decision, which is to end taking that top-up. But it's offensive and it's rich to see that coming from that Premier, taking that top-up of I think it was about \$37,000 a year, almost about the same amount as those cleaners that work in this very Assembly, Mr. Speaker, who that government is eliminating the jobs of right now. Its questions of influence or of who's influencing that government are significant.

Now of course, Saskatchewan people have spoken up. They've applied pressure. We've applied pressure. Christy Clark, the Premier of BC, stepped away from accepting this top-up a while ago, leaving this Premier as the last one standing taking that inappropriate top-up, finally saying he's going to do the right thing. I don't know what kind of repayment plan is being committed to by the Premier. We need some greater clarity on that front.

But now we need to go a step further, a very important step further, which is to make sure we get corporate and union donations out of Saskatchewan politics, to make sure that we ban out-of-province money. And again, like the top-up, BC has finally acted on this front as well, and on the eve of an election has indicated now, the Premier has indicated that there's going to be an electoral reform or some sort of a process to overhaul the electoral finance laws in that province.

You know, at the end of the day, each of us in this Assembly — whether it's a member of the backbench of the governing party or whether it's a member of the opposition or a member of cabinet — should do what we can to build and strengthen democracy in Saskatchewan. To have Saskatchewan standing out with these inappropriate laws, inappropriate actions of government, is something that we should all care about. It's something that we can all address. And so I implore members opposite to dig a little deeper than we've seen so far on this

front and support these changes.

You know, it's again though that we see very much that for this governing party that there's, you know, that this arrogance that's sort of taken over there. You know, serving Saskatchewan people is supposed to be just that: serving the people of this province. And it seems on day after day, it's all about — for the governing party — all about themselves, all about their political and partisan self-interest, all about their own self-interest, Mr. Speaker. We see that with the money that's in the pockets of the Premier in an inappropriate way. We see that as well even with the cabinet right now, where we have a cabinet that actually is unwilling, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, to cut their pay, their additional pay, because they get paid first of all as MLAs and then they get an additional amount of pay to serve in cabinet. And with that comes some responsibility and, we'd like to think, some accountability.

So this is a cabinet that has put us into billion-dollar mismanaged projects, that won't come clean with the state of the finances, that are breaking promise after promise, that are working to sell off our valued Crown corporations, but they won't take any responsibility themselves.

And we think it's only fair of course that that cabinet that put Saskatchewan's finances in this mess, that are breaking their word time and time again, a government that just won't be straight, that they have to show a little bit of accountability, a tiny little bit of leadership, and take that 20 per cent pay cut on the bonus or the additional amount that they receive to serve in cabinet. We think that's more than reasonable.

This is a government that's attacking Saskatchewan people's jobs at this very time, that's kicking people out of their employment — disgraceful actions where we see a government attacking low-wage workers in Saskatchewan, all while making sure things are pretty good for them. All about them, Mr. Speaker.

[12:30]

Anyways, I see that the time of the day would suggest that I might come to a conclusion of my remarks here today. But I guess I would just take it back. Our laws are wrong in Saskatchewan. What the Sask Party and what the Premier has been doing is wrong and inappropriate. We have the chance as legislators in this session, in an urgent way, to do the right thing.

And so I ask every last member of the governing Sask Party, the backbenchers, the cabinet, to join us, the NDP, the official opposition of Saskatchewan, to get big money out of politics once and for all and to bring democracy and ensure democracy is rightfully in the hands of Saskatchewan people.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time though, I move that Bill No. 602, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act* be now read a second time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member of the legislature for Rosemont, the Leader of the Opposition, has moved that Bill No. 602, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act*, be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of

the Assembly to adopt the motion? Or is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to briefly join debate on Bill No. 602, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act*, moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I'll say this: it's a great bill. It's time we showed leadership on this front and quit being the laggards that the current . . . You know, we're in the 21st century and here we are, the last on so many fronts when it comes to getting big money out of politics here in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd urge members opposite to give it some long, hard thought as to the value of this, what it means for putting the power squarely in the hands of ordinary citizens in this province to make sure that their democracy is working for them and that it's not subject to this ongoing question of who's paying the piper.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 602, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 602, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act*. 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. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:33.]



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