



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

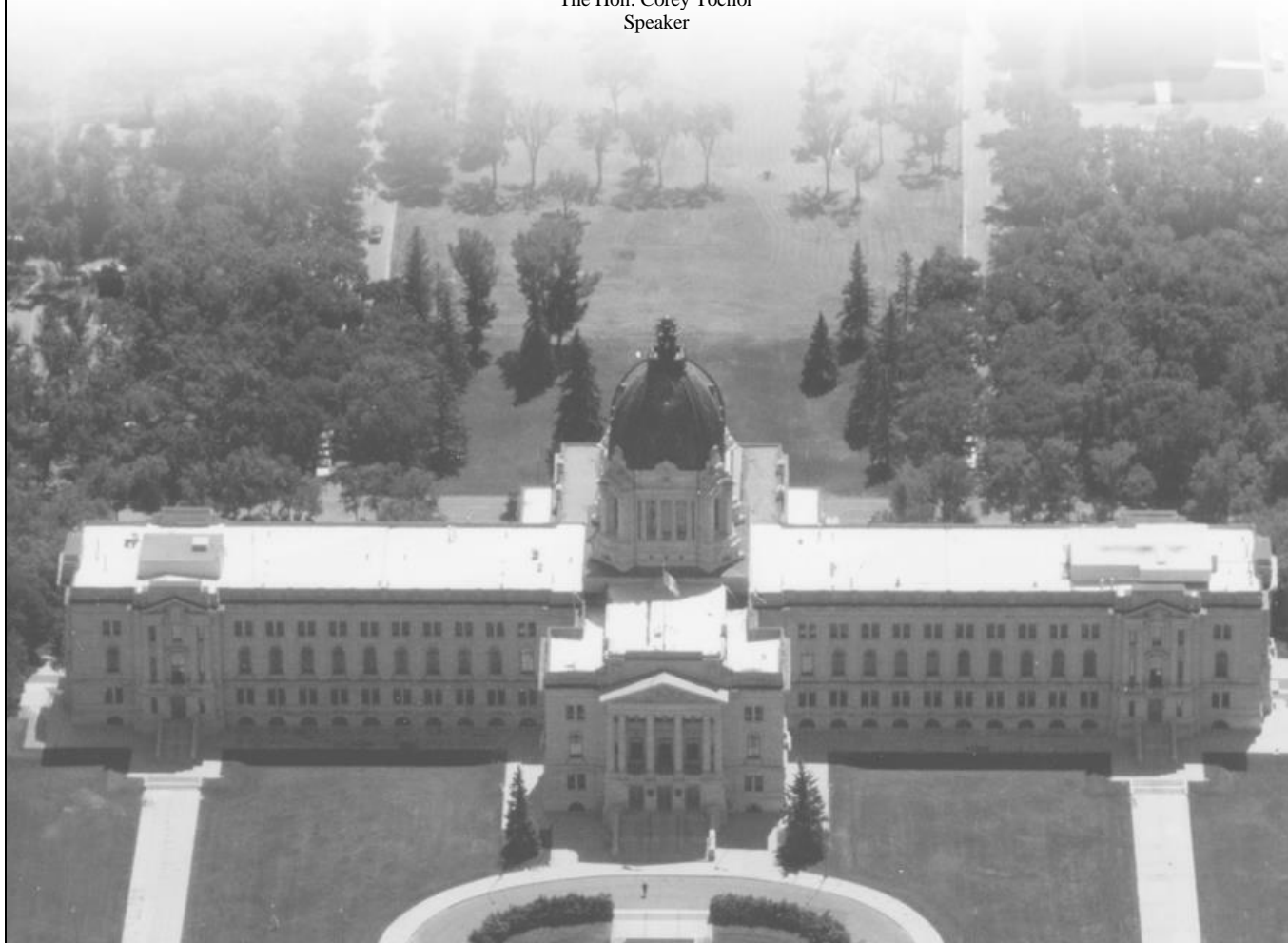
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

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

**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)

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

**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 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to introduce to you and through you to members of the House, an individual that needs no introduction. Her name is Gail Krawetz. She is a lifelong educator here in the province of Saskatchewan. She was a principal, as well a mother, Mr. Speaker. She is now, I would also offer to members of the House, in addition to writing a column as she used to in the weekly paper, she's now an author with a book forthcoming on the historical origins of a certain political party in the province of Saskatchewan. And so we're very pleased that Gail Krawetz could be here, and we're looking forward to her book.

And oh yes, by the way, Ken Krawetz has joined with her as well, the former Finance minister, former deputy leader and deputy premier. We welcome them both back to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the Premier and welcome Gail and Ken Krawetz to their Assembly here today. Gail, we wish you well with your endeavour; I look forward to reading it. But also thank you so much for your life of service as an educator. In fact I've come across many across Saskatchewan that have crossed their paths, students and others, with your service. And there's a tremendous amount of respect by many for your life of service as an educator.

And to Ken Krawetz, it's a pleasure to welcome Ken to his Assembly. I'm sure he could help me possibly describe this budget with a few key terms. But this is somebody who I always valued across the Assembly, a level of humanity beyond the fierce battles that would occur on this floor. In some ways I miss him on the floor of this Assembly, but I know, I think the Legislative Assembly Services, the audiovisual folks have turned down the microphone, or turned them up a little bit since you've departed here. Anyways it's a pleasure to welcome Ken and Gail to their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to point out my constituency assistant. Heather Howell-Shiplack is here. And I talked about her in our budget speech a little bit, and she does an amazing job for the people of Walsh Acres. She responds to calls, and I think she does a lot of the work. When we're in this House, she does a lot of work in responding to calls and makes sure I do our callbacks. And I know that people appreciate the hard work that she does in our office.

And she's put up with me now for almost six years, Mr. Speaker, and that's a long time. People are surprised. My wife's put up with me with 12, and I found someone else to put up with me for six years. So I think that shows how patient she is with our relationship, and I appreciate it very much and I respect the job she does. So join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly.

**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 Assembly, I'd like to introduce an individual seated on the floor of this gallery. Nigel Fernandez is here. He hails from Regina. He's very interested in legislative proceedings, not just today but quite often. I'd like for all members to join me in welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, to you and through you, introduce three very special and dedicated women seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, to their Legislative Assembly. With us today are Jenifer Kostur, director of Solid Futures Learning Co-operative; Donna Rice who is the director of Stepping Stones Child Care centre here in Regina; and Melanie Bacon who is also a director of Play & Discover Early Learning Centre, also in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome these women here. They're here to do something they're very good at, and that is advocate for the needs of children, as they are directed to do. So I welcome them, and I join all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these people to the legislature today. The children of our province are something that is incredibly important to every citizen in this province. The great work that is done in our child care centres is something that we all should appreciate, value, and respect. And I would certainly want to ask all members on both sides of the House to not only welcome them but thank them for the great work that they continue to do.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery is no stranger to the Assembly, a former member, Wayne Elhard who was introduced a little earlier this week. But along with Wayne is Jerry Sherman who is visiting the province and doing some work while he's here. So I'd like to ask everybody to give him a warm welcome to the Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. The people who have signed this petition are opposed to the Sask Party's plan to scrap and sell off Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They would like us to know that STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] provides a vital service to many seniors, workers, families throughout the province; and that by scrapping STC out of the blue without asking permission of the owners, the Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party is sending a clear sign about how little they care about protecting our Crowns like SaskTel; and that STC helps to drive the economy with parcel services that serve the farms and other businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the plan to scrap and sell off Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation service to the people of Saskatchewan.

It is signed and supported by many good people of the province. I so present.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, a federal imposed carbon tax would have a detrimental effect on Saskatchewan's competitiveness in the world market. In particular, I'm thinking of places like Simpson Seeds and Agropcorp, Mosaic, and K+S in the Moose Jaw area, but the negative economic effects would go right across the province. I've already had businesses concerned with the increase of prices from wholesale products bought from Alberta where the carbon tax has already been levied. A federal carbon imposed carbon tax would significantly damage the Saskatchewan 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, this petition is signed by citizens of Caronport, Moose Jaw, White City, Chaplin, and Lajord. I so present.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place to answer the call from the member from Prince Albert Northcote for someone, anyone to help her in her fight to get a second bridge for Prince Albert. And the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and the businesses that send people and products to Prince Albert require a solution.

And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

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

And as we do each and every day, Mr. Speaker, we present page after page of petitions that have been signed from people from all throughout Saskatchewan. And on these particular two pages, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from the Prince Albert area. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm rising to present a petition of people opposed to Bill 40 and the potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. People who have signed the petition wanted to bring to our attention the following: the Sask Party's Bill 40 creates a new definition for privatization that allows the government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum; that in 2015-16 alone, Saskatchewan's Crown corporations returned \$297.2 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals. And, Mr. Speaker, we know over the last decade that's over \$3 billion. Those dividends should go to the people of Saskatchewan, not private investors.

That our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province; and that under section 149 of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, Crown corporations are exempt from corporate income tax, provided that not less than 90 per cent of the shares are held by a government or province. The Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized, so this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than the people of Saskatchewan. So I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the passage of Bill 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act*, and start protecting jobs and our Crown corporations instead of selling them off to pay for Sask Party mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition that I'm presenting today are from the city of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition concerning pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy 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 we know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 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 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.

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

**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 the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its doors during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resources to people in distress. The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile has put stress on the Prince Albert Police Service, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide 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, it's advertised all over the place that mobile crisis does offer this 24-hour service, and people who are in crisis may try to contact them during the daytime hours and not get a response, which is not a good answer for people who are in much need.

So, Mr. Speaker, people across the province are indicating that this is a priority for them, and they would like to see this service offered in Prince Albert. This particular petition was signed by individuals from Saskatoon, Air Ronge, and Meadow Lake. 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 regarding cuts to libraries in our province. Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today wish to draw our attention to the following, and it's just but one means of their drawing our attention to this very important issue. In fact my office, as of a couple of minutes ago, has received 970 emails with regard to these cuts.

But this is what they want to say: the Government of Saskatchewan has cut funding for regional libraries in half or by \$3.5 million and eliminated funding for libraries in Regina and Saskatoon. The drastic funding cut will have an impact on libraries, especially regional libraries where many people depend on them.

[13:45]

They also want to draw our attention to the fact that libraries are a vital part of Saskatchewan, communities across Saskatchewan, and that the services that they provide enrich the lives of many; the drastic cuts imposed on libraries will lead to branch closures, program cuts, reductions of hours; and this will hurt people who use library services and the hard-working and dedicated public servants who work in libraries, Mr. Speaker. We're already hearing of these cuts in Palliser.

Whereas libraries are more than just about borrowing books: meeting rooms are used by community groups; library staff to host educational programs and clubs, and the publicly accessible computer terminals that are essential to many, Mr. Speaker. Whereas these cuts will have a disproportionate impact on rural communities and where libraries are vital community spaces, potential closures or reductions in services will severely impact our communities. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

Therefore in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan renew its commitment to the invaluable programming, educational opportunities, and public spaces our libraries provide across this province and restore the \$4.8 million in funding for public libraries that was cut in the 2017-18 budget.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are rolling in from all over the province. The ones that I'm submitting today were signed by residents of Saskatoon, Regina, and Silton. I do so submit.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces. One in three Canadian workers have experienced domestic violence, and for many of them the violence follows them to work.

Victims of domestic abuse should not be further victimized at work, and employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence. 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 this petition today come from Moose Jaw. I do so submit.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### 20th Annual Breaking the Silence Conference

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 17th and 18th marked the 20th annual Breaking the Silence conference on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. I was pleased, as part of the conference, to attend the Friday evening presentation of the play *The Pink Unicorn*, a powerful story of a mother coming to terms with her child's coming of age.

This conference was first organized in 1997 by Professor Don Cochrane and his students and sponsored by the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education. It is the longest-standing conference of its kind in Canada and aims to improve the conversation on the topic of gender diversity in Saskatchewan communities. This year's conference had more than 100 attendees. There was a wide array of workshops, panels, and talks by esteemed guests, including NDP [New Democratic Party] MP [Member of Parliament] Sheri Benson.

One of the highlights of the conference is the Peter Corren Award which recognizes outstanding achievement in social justice for sexual minorities. This year's winners were Anthony Bidulka and Herb McFaull, the founders of Camp fYrefly; and Fran Forsberg, the founder of Camp Caterpillar. Mr. Speaker, the theme of this year's conference was looking back and moving forward, which was very fitting since this is the final year the conference will be held.

With this in mind, I would like to ask all members to join me in celebrating 20 successful years of Breaking the Silence and congratulating this year's Peter Corren Award winners, and in thanking founder Don Cochrane and all of those who have attended throughout the years for making Saskatchewan more gender inclusive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Habitat for Humanity Gala in Moose Jaw

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, along with my colleague from Moose Jaw North and our spouses, had the pleasure of attending the inaugural Habitat for Humanity gala on March 18th in Moose Jaw. The event was a fun-filled evening with great music, a live auction, and inspiring messages from its board and volunteers.

Habitat's Moose Jaw chapter opened in 2008 and completed their first home in 2011. Since then, Mr. Speaker, they have completed one home per year. Coming into this year, they have now committed to building two homes. The gala raised close to

\$14,000 which will go towards building their next house for a very deserving family in this coming spring.

Mr. Speaker, programs like this help hard-working families get homes. Habitat for Humanity not only helps families get through tough times, it also educates its volunteers on what really goes into home building and how to do it properly.

This event was the perfect opportunity for the Habitat for Humanity's great staff to educate its guests on what the organization does and exactly where the money goes, along with its strong impact on many communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the Habitat for Humanity Moose Jaw on a successful inaugural gala and wishing them the best of luck in completing their goal to build two houses in 2017. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Hindu Society of Saskatchewan's Annual Vegetarian Dinner

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, on March 25th, I, along with several legislative colleagues, had the pleasure of attending the Hindu society's annual vegetarian dinner held in Saskatoon's Paireland Park.

Each year this sold-out event hosts hundreds of people from all walks of life, and beyond providing guests with a mouth-watering assortment of traditional Indian dishes, it aims to celebrate the Hindu community's contributions to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and all of Canada.

This year marks 32 years since the consecration of the Hindu temple in Saskatoon, and ever since, Saskatoon's Hindu community has continued to grow and flourish. And indeed they were celebrating the addition of a new hall to their temple this year.

Throughout the evening there were acknowledgements of the achievements of specific members of the Hindu community. And, Mr. Speaker, what a talented and ambitious group they have. From arts and culture to sports and community service, Saskatoon's Hindu community makes our city shine a bit brighter.

The evening also included speeches from keynote speakers including our own Lieutenant Governor, as well as Swami Yogatmananda-ji of the Vedanta Society of Providence. And, Mr. Speaker, for those who were there, I think they could easily say that he might have missed his calling as a comedian, because he was one of the funniest speakers I've ever heard and a really beautiful man to listen to. I think the Minister of Justice got to sit at his table and I think he can confirm that.

And later in the evening, the society entertained the guests with cultural programming showcasing the vibrant music and dance of India. And by the end of the night, everybody was up on their feet dancing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Hindu Society's annual banquet is a wonderful time where the communities of Saskatoon can experience the cultural diversity of our province. I welcome all members to join me in thanking the Hindu Society and their president Raj Dhir for all that they add to our province, and congratulating everyone involved for hosting another successful banquet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Kenaston Kodiaks Win Hoopla Championship**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today to talk about a championship high school ladies' basketball team from Kenaston. This past weekend, the Kodiaks defeated Middle Lake for the right to be crowned provincial 1A girls champions.

The Kodiaks had a great season, winning 22 of the 25 games that were played during this entire season. For the past six years in a row, the team has qualified to play in the Hoopla provincial high school basketball championships.

The provincial championship was held at the U of R [University of Regina], Regina, with the opening game played last Friday afternoon, in a game that Kodiaks defeated Lake Lenore with a final score of 62 to 42. The final championship game was played Saturday evening. A game against Middle Lake was hard fought with a final score of 53 to 47.

The Kodiaks attributed their win to a very talented and dedicated team coached by Jenna Zdunich-Fisher and her father, Gene Zdunich, in addition to the hard work by team manager Paula Evans.

Mr. Speaker, this just confirms once again that Arm River is the constituency of champions. I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in offering the Kenaston Kodiaks a congratulations on being crowned the 2017 provincial 1A girls basketball champions. Thank you.

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

#### **Onion Lake Woman Attends Daughters of the Vote Summit**

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a constituent of mine. Jacey Funk, a 21-year-old business student at Lakeland College, was one of 338 young women from across Canada to be selected to participate in the Daughters of the Vote summit which took place in Ottawa at the beginning of March.

Daughters of the Vote is spearheaded by Equal Voice Canada, which is a national organization dedicated to electing and seeing more women involved in politics at all levels. Equal Voice invited young women from the ages of 18 to 23 to take their seats in parliament. One young woman was chosen from every federal riding in Canada to represent their community and to communicate their vision for Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Jacey Funk was thrilled to learn that she was chosen out of 1,525 applicants. As a young indigenous woman,

this was important for Jacey to represent the voice of her community of Onion Lake. She was quoted as saying:

It is something I know I can take back to my community and to Lloydminster and show them that instead of sitting there wishing you can make a difference, why don't you get up and make the difference yourself.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that young women in my constituency follow Jacey's words and become more active in political life. I ask all members to join me in congratulating Jacey Funk on being chosen to attend the Daughters of the Vote in Ottawa. Thank you.

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

#### **New School Planned for Rosthern**

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand in my place today to talk about an exciting announcement in this year's budget: planning dollars for a new school in the community of Rosthern. Mr. Speaker, this government has allocated \$2.1 million to plan new schools in the communities of not only Rosthern but also Weyburn. Mr. Speaker, enrolment in the Prairie Spirit School Division is up 24 per cent; operating funding is up 33 per cent. Over \$130 million has been invested in capital since 2007, Mr. Speaker. But there is more work to do and we are getting that job done.

Local mayor Dennis Helmuth joined us on budget day, and he had this to say, and I quote: "Our school population is growing considerably, and there is a lot of opportunity in our town and region. We need more capacity to accommodate that growth."

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of viewing a video as this school was announced to the students at the Rosthern High School, and the excitement in the room was very, very clear.

Since 2007, our government has built 40 new schools, including 21 of which are just opening this year. We've done 25 major renovations. We've increased operating grants to the divisions by some 32 per cent, and we've seen enrolment increase by 16,000 students in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This is a far cry from the days of the NDP when 32,000 students left the province. Mr. Speaker, 176 schools were closed. On average they closed a school a month, Mr. Speaker, for 16 years. Mr. Speaker, we will never go back to the days of the NDP. Thank you.

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

#### **Opposition's Position on Federal Carbon Tax**

**Ms. Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a heavily censored briefing note, officials reveal that Prime Minister Trudeau's own already costed \$50 per tonne on carbon tax is inadequate to meet Ottawa's emission targets and that the real cost of carbon tax should be as high as \$300 per tonne. Mr. Speaker, this is six times the cost he said it would impose on provinces. So the average family in Saskatchewan won't be paying \$2,500 for Ottawa's carbon tax; they could in fact pay \$15,000 per year, according to the taxpayers federation.

Despite urging the opposition to join us in standing up for Saskatchewan against the costly and ineffective tax grab that will threaten jobs, investment, and thousands of Saskatchewan livelihoods, the NDP actually voted against the government's motion rejecting Ottawa's imposed carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of leadership on the opposition's side is well known. And it's also well known that the future leader of the NDP, the member from Saskatoon Meewasin, supports Ottawa's carbon tax. Just a few months ago he said, "We applaud the federal government's recent announcement of a minimum price on carbon."

Mr. Speaker, the interim leader failed to stand against Ottawa's \$50-a-tonne carbon tax, and now the future leader is applauding the secret \$300-per-tonne price tag. The NDP may welcome a \$15,000 carbon tax on Saskatchewan families, but this side of the House will continue to stand up for Saskatchewan.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Investigation of Land Transactions

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, day after day we ask questions on the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. Regardless of what the Premier wants people to think, this scandal that the entire Sask Party cabinet signed off on isn't going away. The Premier himself made a reference to an RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigation on the matter, and it's clear that there is more to come. I'm hoping the Premier can give us an update on that here today.

[14:00]

The thing is, if the case has been referred to prosecutors in Saskatchewan, we have a Minister of Justice in cabinet that's been intimately involved in this scandal. It seems like a conflict of interest to me, Mr. Speaker. So to the Premier: can he tell us if the investigation into the GTH has been sent to prosecutors? If so, can he commit that it's been sent to out-of-province prosecutors?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — First of all, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for the question. I think members on that side of the House and other members of the public may have lodged a complaint, and that has obviously been the reason why the RCMP are looking into the matter, Mr. Speaker, which we welcome. We want to co-operate in every way with that effort.

Mr. Speaker, I can share with members of the House, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to know the status of any investigation. And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of who would look at the recommendations from the RCMP, I can only surmise, I would only surmise that given the nature of this particular issue, this would be the kind of matter that would be referred out of province. But it all is about speculation at this point because the government ought not to know specifics about the status of the investigation or how it's looked at in terms of any particular prosecutions branch.

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

#### Financial Support for Municipalities

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's often we're not getting answers from this Premier. This is an important matter. It's very important that this will be dealt with out of province by prosecutors.

Mr. Speaker, you know, at the same time as that Premier shrugs off last week's budget — the one he delivered, a budget that hurts families and brings forward all sorts of cuts and a billion dollars in new Sask Party tax hikes and downloading the costs onto our cities and towns by cancelling the grants-in-lieu to our cities and towns — the Sask Party is forcing service cuts and tax hikes.

The cuts and tax hikes are Sask Party tax hikes, Sask Party cuts. They're mean-spirited, Mr. Speaker. They're not fair. The Sask Party is acting like a schoolyard bully, taking the lunch money of our cities and our towns and even taking the taxes collected by our schools. And, Mr. Speaker, they're handing tens of millions of that back to their wealthy and well-connected friends.

From where does the Premier get the gall to rip money back from our cities and towns? And where were these tax cuts and these tax hikes in the platform that they campaigned on just a year ago?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, for the nine or so years we've had the honour of forming government, we have spent many days trying to give back to the municipalities, not just the lunch money but the money for breakfast and supper that members opposite took from them when they were in office. The number one source of downloading on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the number one target was the municipal sector of this province, Mr. Speaker, both urban and rural.

And even with the changes in this budget, even with the changes in this budget, I hope the member will realize and understand and maybe even appreciate the fact that even with those counted into the cumulative total, revenue sharing in the province has doubled, Mr. Speaker. The major centres have gotten 2.5 times as much as they got under the NDP.

On top of that, we've invested about 8 billion, \$9 billion in infrastructure, for the most part in our major cities or in smaller urban centres, Mr. Speaker. And we can go down the list; the amount of support that has come from this side of the House for the municipal sector after years of neglect by members opposite, Mr. Speaker, is a matter for the public record. And in respect of the current budget, in respect of the current budget we're asking all parts of the province to share in the challenge that will get us back to balance in three years, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, what an arrogant and dismissive approach from that Premier. There was no consultation on this. Just ask the mayors. As SUMA



[Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] says, “Our members are outraged and so are we.” Mr. Speaker, no kidding.

It wasn't our cities and towns that blew through all the savings. It was the Sask Party. It wasn't our cities and towns that refused to save for the future during a period of record resource revenues. No, that was the Sask Party. And it wasn't our cities and towns that blew their rainy day fund. It was the Sask Party.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier really think that everyone has forgotten that he and his cabinet, with their mismanagement, scandal, and waste, are who and what caused this financial mess? And does he honestly think that people will forget that just 12 months ago he was touring around the province, hiding the true state of the finances and saying that everything was okay?

Mr. Speaker, is he so arrogant that he actually thinks there's nothing wrong with grabbing tens of millions of dollars from our cities and towns to cover up for his mismanagement?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, certainly in this budget there are a number of tough decisions that government decided to make because we're not prepared to procrastinate on the need to get back to balance.

Mr. Speaker, there was an inference in the interim leader of the NDP's question about what we had done with the money over these years. Well if you take a look at what we've invested in municipalities over these years, in revenue sharing alone, it's \$2 billion. It's a partial answer to his question, to the rhetorical question in his preamble. Mr. Speaker, on top of that, \$9 billion in infrastructure. That's additional dollars. That's more than what was put in by his party when they were the government; 9 billion more in the same period of time. Most of that went into the municipalities. Most of that went into projects that we could list in all of the major, all of the cities of our province, and also across rural municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, the CPI [consumer price index] for the time of our government is about, cumulatively the inflation rate is 18 per cent. Revenue sharing is up 103 per cent. The municipal sector is the biggest winner of all of the sectors in government. We've increased the funding for all of them.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we know that this is a challenge for municipalities. I accept that. Mr. Speaker, later this day, ministers on this side of the House will meet with leaders from the municipal sector to hear from them, Mr. Speaker. And when they meet with our government, they'll be meeting with a government that understands the importance of the partnership between the Government of Saskatchewan and all of the municipal partners.

And if you need to have proof of how we view that partnership and how we respect it, consider the actions. Consider double the revenue-sharing support for those municipalities. Consider the \$8 billion in infrastructure over and above what they used to get from members who would routinely download on municipalities until there was nothing left; not to adjust, not just adjust down overall increases but, Mr. Speaker, get them to the

point where they were net negative in a big way, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — A pretty key part of a partnership is being straight with your partner, Mr. Speaker. Speeches like that of the Premier don't cut it.

Let's just look at Moose Jaw. The Sask Party cut \$3.7 million. Councillor Dawn Luhning said, “. . . there's only two things we can do: raise taxes or cut services, and neither one of them are good options.”

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the Premier doesn't want to listen to our cities and towns, but I wonder if he'll listen to his caucus because some of them are starting to speak up. When asked about why the Sask Party was now making huge cuts and hiking taxes, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow said, “We have drained the rainy day fund, and because of that we have to control spending and expand the PST.” When asked if he thought tax hikes were good, the other member from Moose Jaw, Moose Jaw North, said, “I've talked to some restaurants and they're not particularly happy about it.”

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Premier listen to cities, listen to towns, listen to his caucus, Mr. Speaker? Will the Premier listen to reason and reconsider these cuts?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, once again I have to take exception with some, what I would characterize as not necessarily factual information or descriptions or depictions in my hon. friend's preamble. Mr. Speaker, at both SUMA and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], I specifically mentioned that everything would be on the table in the budget, including grants-in-lieu. Specifically mentioned grants-in-lieu, Mr. Speaker, and I think the president of SUMA and other leaders are certainly aware of that.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to some of the communities that are looking at some of the changes we want to make in grants-in-lieu, it is also true that they have reserves. And I think it's also fair to say that, in part, they have reserves to some degree because of historic revenue sharing from the province of Saskatchewan. I note, for example, the city of Saskatoon: in this last budget they added 50 more jobs, 50 more FTEs [full-time equivalent] to their budget that they just tabled. And, Mr. Speaker, they put money back into reserves.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is true; the member for Wakamow is right. We've said, after three years of being short about a billion two in resource revenue, the rainy day fund is depleted, Mr. Speaker. He was saying exactly what I've been saying, which is why we must take action right now, and it's why all the sectors of the province, all the segments of the province — rural and urban and even certain parts of the business community — why we're all going to share in the challenge to get back to balance. And when we do, when it's fully implemented, we'll have the lowest taxes on business, the lowest taxes on families, Mr. Speaker, the lowest manufacturing rate in all of Canada.

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

Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier and that whole cabinet are so arrogant and out of touch. They're just not listening. Instead they talk about their so-called tax shift. The truth is, like Robin Hood in reverse, they're shifting more money from families' pockets to the rich. They're also shifting a massive \$36 million of property taxes onto cities.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has run deficit after deficit after deficit, but cities are held under a higher standard. Unlike the Sask Party, cities can't just keep blowing billions on mismanagement, scandal, and waste. They have to balance their budget every year. Economists agree that property taxes do the least to help grow the economy. But SUMA's CEO [chief executive officer] Laurent Mougeot summed up the choices cities are facing: "It's either property tax increase or user fee increase."

Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party so interested in forcing these tax hikes?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier answered this question previously. We all know that we've asked all of the sectors within government to please help in order to bring the budget back to balance. We have a \$1.2 billion revenue income shortfall. We all know that, Mr. Speaker.

There are options that municipalities can look at, in particular within the cities' budgets. The Premier mentioned the city of Saskatoon budgeted to move \$5 million into their reserves. Perhaps they don't need to do that. Of the 10.6 million for each of the larger cities, in this fiscal budget they only have to find, I believe, 7.2 of it because the fiscal years do not line up. So in an \$800 million budget, perhaps they can find \$7.2 million, Mr. Speaker, by looking for efficiencies, which is what we've had to do as government.

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

### Changes to Provincial Sales Tax Collection Procedures

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we saw something that we see too little of around here. The Minister of Finance admitted that they were wrong to have added PST [provincial sales tax] to diapers and said that that was no longer the case. And so last night the notices to Saskatchewan's retailers were changed, and diapers were removed.

Mr. Speaker, even last week on budget day, independent businesses impacted by the Sask Party PST increases said that April 1st was too soon to get their point-of-sale systems aligned with these sudden tax hikes. Now this confusion has made things worse. First diapers were being taxed, now they aren't. And now with two days left, Saskatchewan businesses are left with even less time to scramble to make these newest adjustments, Mr. Speaker.

Before another day passes, can the minister tell us if there are

other items on the list that he'd like to make tax exempt? Perhaps he would like to once again make good on their "first promise kept" from 2011 and again remove the PST from children's clothes and shoes.

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to point out that the member raises a very good point with respect to any time you're making a transition with respect to tax policy here in the province, a shift from tax on productivity and income to a consumption-based tax, more of a consumption-based tax, Mr. Speaker, that some sectors have not had that tax applied before, there's going to be some transition issues. I acknowledge that, and I respect the fact that these businesses are raising these issues.

That is why we have staffed up at the Ministry of Finance over the course since the budget was announced, Mr. Speaker, fielding literally thousands of phone calls from business owners across the province in those sectors that have not had a tax applied to their particular good or service before. And we're answering those questions. We've held numerous meetings, Mr. Speaker. Senior Finance officials have held numerous meetings with different industry associations that have been impacted by the changes in this budget come effective April 1st, to help them understand with respect to what's going to happen in their particular sector.

I had a conversation with an insurance industry executive the other day who said, every other province in Canada has this, Mr. Speaker. It's simply a matter of transferring that kind of technology into their systems here in the province of Saskatchewan. Are there some transition issues? There always will be, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what date you put the transition date with respect to these changes, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister can say everything's fine, but the Sask Party's poorly executed plan to hike PST is hurting thousands of families and forcing a lot of extra work on Saskatchewan businesses. Is the minister laughing off all the other ways their PST hike is failing families and our small businesses? The Sask Party campaign on making life more affordable. Mr. Speaker, they are doing the opposite. Even with their changes to income tax, families are falling behind.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, the other victims here are small businesses. Not only are they now being forced to change and re-change their point-of-sale systems, but they're now being forced to do it for free, and the Sask Party is even eliminating the fee they use to pay these businesses. That's right. They're hitting small businesses by raising taxes on their customers, and they're not even going to pay the small businesses to collect those taxes for them anymore. Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party attacking job-creating, economy-driving Saskatchewan independent businesses?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, if any party in the history of Saskatchewan would know what burden is being placed upon business with respect to tax changes, it's the NDP, when they changed taxes 21 times the last time they were in government, Mr. Speaker. When they went from a 5 per cent PST to 6, to 7, to as high as 9 per cent. When the PST was harmonized with the federal GST, Mr. Speaker, and Premier Romanow come in and deharmonized it. You want to talk about forcing businesses to have to adapt to transition, Mr. Speaker, it was under that party.

Now with respect to the changes in our consumption tax here in the province, Mr. Speaker, yes we have made a change. Yes, we have made a change from income on productivity and income on personal income tax in this province, Mr. Speaker, that we think are going to drive jobs in this province. We have the lowest small-business tax rate in the country, with the exception of Manitoba, who I agree has a zero per cent. We still think small business in this province should pay some tax in this province, in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We will continue to implement our growth agenda here with respect to our corporate income tax changes effective July 1 of this year and July 1 of 2019, have the lowest corporate tax rate in Canada, and the lowest manufacturing and processing rate in Canada by far, to drive jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Labour Code Provisions and Saskatchewan Transportation Company Employees**

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, they don't have a plan. They drew this budget up on the back of a napkin, and now they're hoping Saskatchewan will just give them a pass. But yesterday's diaper tax change isn't the only file where they failed to do their due diligence. It's becoming increasingly clear that the Minister for STC didn't do his homework either.

Somehow he forgot that the Canada Labour Code applies to STC, and it certainly looks like he broke federal rules when he threw 224 workers out on the street without the required notice. Now either he's going to have to pay extra severance or the staff to stay on the job while the buses sit idle.

All this while the Finance minister reaches into our pockets for his billion dollars in tax hikes. Now that's not sound financial management; in fact, from top to bottom it's mismanagement. So what's the STC minister's plan? How is he going to get us out of this labour code pickle, and how much more is it going to cost Saskatchewan people to pay for their mismanagement?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, and thank the member opposite for the question. I've spoken with the legal counsel for STC and they assure me that all appropriate steps were taken in accordance with the Canadian Labour Code.

Mr. Speaker, we are very empathetic to the 224 hardworking

staff at STC, and we do thank them for their service, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, but we did look at the numbers, Mr. Speaker, and we did look at the subsidy. Mr. Speaker, the subsidy went from \$25 all the way up to \$94, Mr. Speaker, and that's unsustainable.

Mr. Speaker, I should just point out while I'm talking, Mr. Speaker, that in 1993-94 when the NDP were in power they closed, in those two years they closed 13 lines. Mr. Speaker, 13 lines. Mr. Speaker, that is when the total subsidy was \$500,000, and the subsidy per ride was \$2.18 in '93 — \$2.18 and they felt it right to close 13 lines, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

#### **Transporting Patients to Medical Appointments**

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, Nigel Fernandez is here today. He's from Regina and he takes the STC to get to his appointments at the cancer centre in Saskatoon. He has a rare form of brain cancer and relies on STC to get the specialized medical care and treatment he needs.

Mr. Speaker, while the members opposite were applauding the cuts in the Sask Party budget last week, I have to wonder how much they were thinking of people like Nigel. When they announced the rushed scrapping of STC, they offered no plan for Nigel or the other 300 cancer patients across the province who use STC to get to their appointments.

Other than hoping that some entrepreneur pops up to take advantage of these people in need, what does the minister have to say to Nigel and those 300 families he's failing today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very sorry to hear of Nigel's situation. I welcome him to his Legislative Assembly here today.

Mr. Speaker, I assume the member opposite has the appropriate consent forms signed. And while I don't know of Nigel's specific situation, I'd certainly be happy to meet with him after question period to discuss it, to see if we can be of assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I will say this: between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Services, we're assuring through various programs that the most vulnerable in society do have access to medical appointments. Mr. Speaker, that's very important to us. We're going to continue to make sure that that's the case. And once again, Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to meet with Nigel after question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to hear that he's willing to meet with Nigel, but I'm wondering if he'll ever have a concrete plan for not just Nigel, but all of the members of the province of Saskatchewan that are struggling to get to their appointments after the cuts to STC, Mr. Speaker.

Let's be clear. The Sask Party is forcing people in need of treatment for their cancer to pay for their decade-long run of mismanagement, scandal, and waste. He has said in the past that maybe these patients . . . The minister has said in the past, for STC, that maybe these patients can try to catch a ride with a friend, or lots of other communities don't have STC service, and those cancer patients seem to do just fine.

That's shameful to me, Mr. Speaker. It's shameful to every member on this side of the House. Nigel not only deserves but is entitled to fair and equal access to health care just like anyone else. What is the Sask Party's concrete, specific plan to help Nigel and others like him get to his appointments in Saskatoon and across the province after they shut down and sell off STC?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, I don't know the specifics of Nigel's situation, but I'd be happy to meet with him and to discuss that to see where we can be of assistance.

But, Mr. Speaker, to the broad, overall question, there is a plan in place. There's been a plan in place for a long time, Mr. Speaker. We assure that our most vulnerable have access to medical appointments. As of today, STC only covers approximately half the communities in the province, Mr. Speaker. So those other communities, there's people that need access to medical assistance.

There was a question yesterday about access in the North. There's programs through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Services in the North for the most vulnerable in our society. There's a number of programs that we can access in Social Services. Mr. Speaker, we're very concerned about this matter, and we're going to continue to do our best to protect the most vulnerable in our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Special Needs Children

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know about the cuts that the Sask Party is making to our schools and our libraries, and they're cutting day care centres too. They're slashing funding for day care workers that help children with special needs, and laying off inclusion coordinators at the Spadina Early Learning Centre in Saskatoon. Inclusion coordinators help children with special needs and allow them to participate in the same activities as other children in the centres do.

Inclusion funding has been lost here in Regina as well, with Solid Futures Learning Co-operative, Stepping Stones Child Care, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] day care, and Play and Discover Learning Centre being cut, leaving them no choice but laying off staff.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party claims to be committed to improving the learning success and well-being of Saskatchewan children. But how can the Sask Party possibly, possibly justify making cuts on the back of our children to pay for their mismanagement?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you for the question and thank you for the opportunity to clarify something. We have not in fact cut funding for special needs child care. Mr. Speaker, in fact there's been a change in the way that funding is being provided. We no longer offer block funding at all child care centres. We've changed it so that there's transition so that individualized funding will follow the child. So if a child's parents or family move and the child relocates from one child care centre to another, the funding will follow that child.

I saw the article, the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] article earlier today, Mr. Speaker. I've asked the officials within the ministry to contact that family to make sure they've completed the necessary forms to make sure that that child is dealt with, so that if that child moves from one day care to another, that the funding will in fact follow that child.

We want to try and ascertain, Mr. Speaker, what a child's needs are so that we can have a long-term plan for each and every child in our province as they progress through the education system.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 57 — *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 57, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 57, *The Tobacco Tax Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### Bill No. 58 — *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 58, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

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

that Bill No. 58, *The Corporation Capital Tax Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 59 — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 59, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 59 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**SPECIAL ORDER**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

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

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

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend I went with my dad to what I guess is called an outdoorsman store, outdoors people store, and he was looking for some heavy-duty waterproof matches, among other things. And when he found them and he saw the price, he put them down right away. That's sticker shock, he said; I cannot buy those. When I asked him how much they cost, he told me, four seventy-nine. That's highway robbery.

Born in 1940, my dad isn't really a depression child, but he grew up with parents of course who had lived through the 1930s. And to that generation, living within your means meant something. It still does.

Last October an obituary ran in the paper of an 82-year-old named Peter Fehr of Warman. Peter was captured in one of the most enduring photographs of the 1930s as a baby with his parents and six other siblings who were barefoot and almost literally starving. Two things struck me in that piece that historian Bill Waiser wrote about Peter Fehr. One, that through the most desperate times for the family, who would eventually farm in the Warman area, they were too proud to seek government relief, and secondly, what Peter's thoughts were in later years when he looked at that photo: "Oh, how good we've got it now [he said] . . . how things have changed."

Of course no one is suggesting we go anywhere back, near back to those desperate days or the stigma surrounding accepting even basic assistance when times are tough or individual circumstances change for the worse. But those old attitudes of such complete self-reliance and responsibility, not only generally but in the face of adversity, that's something that we should always walk with a little and recall and hold on to and not mock. And the very positive view of Peter Fehr is about how things have changed and how good we have them now. That we should remember too, and keep things always in perspective.

[14:30]

Which brings me to this budget, Mr. Speaker, presented by the Minister of Finance last week. Despite challenges, of course, things have changed in this province over the last 10 years and we do have it good. We're a have province. People are moving back and moving in. Our standard of living is high, as is our life expectancy. Income taxes are low, relative to the rest of the country. There's been record investment by this government in tangibles for the good of all people across the province: hospitals; schools, including two in the beautiful constituency of Stonebridge-Dakota; and highways, including the twining of Highway 16 between Saskatoon and Clavet, all the while paying down operating debt by over 1 billion or 15 per cent, and achieving 1.1 billion in interest savings. Perspective.

And for all the talk about how this measure or that measure in the budget might slightly affect salary, or this or that benefit, let's not only not forget the past, but as the Premier told SUMA delegates in Saskatoon in February, remember that right now, real austerity is his neighbour who hasn't worked in 18 months. That's real austerity. The question now with some of the

challenges that we face, foremost among them of course over a billion-dollar drop in resource revenue, is how best to strike a balance.

Take advanced education. Alberta is funding this sector this budget year to the tune of \$6 billion. But of course it's on borrowed money, all part of an overall budget deficit in Alberta this year of 10.3 billion and 71 billion in debt by 2020. That's their plan.

We have another plan to get our deficit under control and to balance our books within three years. We recognize that chronic deficits of course are just deferred taxation with children and grandchildren having to bear it down the road. As any addicted credit card borrower or spender will know, it's let the good times roll until the bills roll in and the creditors come calling. That's what we want to avoid.

Of course there's the additional irony that our neighbour to the west, keen advocate of course for the federal carbon tax, is hedging all this debt on a return of resource revenue. That's when, as Alberta's Finance minister put it, happy days will be here again. Sounds like a made-in-Vegas line to me.

In Manitoba meanwhile, the approach to post-secondary is unique in another way. They appear to be legislating that universities can and presumably should raise tuition by 5 per cent plus cost of living. Interestingly, the U of M [University of Manitoba] president, David Barnard, recently said that due to tuition freezes put in place by the previous NDP government, the U of M is "\$2,000 a year per student behind the University of Saskatchewan" in average undergraduate tuition fees. Had Manitoba been on par with the U of S in recent years, he said, those additional funds would have enabled the University of Manitoba to provide access to more students with financial challenges through improved scholarships and bursaries and enhanced programming and facilities. That's the downside of tuition freezes, Mr. Speaker.

We prefer to not prescribe too directly what our autonomous universities should do, to attempt to strike a balance and let them make their own decisions internally. Not, we hope, by immediately raising tuition or instituting layoffs, but by looking inward first, starting perhaps with spending, travel, hiring freezes, looking at their disproportionately high out-of-scope salaries — two, three, four times that of the Premier — and bringing about a bit of culture change of their own.

Our universities do amazing work. I'm a proud alumna of one of them. But there is no doubt that the face of the universities has changed from small-administration institutions 30 years ago to giant communication-, consultant-, conference-driven institutions today.

Is what it is, perhaps. But it is interesting that 20 years ago, then NDP minister Bob Mitchell commissioned the MacKay report which asked the universities to "take the lead to reposition themselves to meet the fiscal, economic, demographic, and technological changes occurring globally and locally." Intriguingly, 20 years ago the NDP government of the day was urging universities to "make the most effective use of scarce resources and ensure that universities were collaborating and communicating." The then government also asked them to

"develop a long-term process that would achieve efficiencies, in some cases program rationalization and innovative approaches to student services and program delivery." Sounds a lot like transformational change to me. And 20 years later, it's long overdue.

I also found it interesting to read that Quebec university rectors recently got together to tell their provincial government that 3.45 billion was woefully inadequate when it came to university funding. At least another billion was necessary, they said, or rooms would fall into disrepair and other basic infrastructure would have to go unattended to. The question is, where does it end? How can simply saying ever more is needed without instituting fundamental reform remain sustainable year after year?

Speaking of which, I received an irate letter the other day from faculty members at a federated college. They were annoyed about public sector compensation restraint and our government's respectful requests in that regard. Fair enough. But what struck me most about the letter was the lack of references to students. It was all about the faculty, Mr. Speaker, all about them, and how fiscal constraint would mean that the "best and brightest academics will easily be attracted away from our province by institutions able to provide the usual percentage increases and annual increments." Perhaps we should take our chances.

When it came to advanced education and our government, there were some difficult choices in this budget. That is for sure. But it is important to remember the broader context. In advanced education, we've invested 8.3 billion in post-secondary education over the last decade, over 4 billion to our two universities. Important to us has been retaining a focus on students and putting them first. We're investing 137 million this year in loans, scholarships, bursaries, and grants, Mr. Speaker. That includes the universal Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, \$500 a year for four years; and the graduate retention program — a program we are proud of, the envy of our neighbours, the most aggressive student attraction and retention program in Canada — which has seen \$345 million paid out to 70,000 students.

More important context, Mr. Speaker, is necessary around tuition fees. For one, some historical context: average undergraduate tuition fees ballooned under the former NDP government between 1990 and 2007 by 227 per cent. As well and contrary to what the member for Saskatoon Nutana has said, tuition across Canada is not an apples-to-apples proposition because Stats Canada averages all universities in a province. So Ontario, for example, has 20 and Saskatchewan has two, so it can affect the numbers.

Universities are of course autonomous institutions. They set their own tuition. But when you compare first year arts and science tuition rates in our two universities compared to those in comparable institutions across Canada, our tuition rates actually rank in the lower third to lower half, Mr. Speaker.

And there are many voices in the post-secondary world who also understand our current fiscal realities. One is the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union. In a recent letter, they wrote we are "well aware that the costs of running a

university are enormous and that much of the funding comes from taxpayer dollars.” They stated, it’s of critical importance that a reasonable balance — they mean between government funding and tuition — be achieved.

Another is Lee Ahenakew, board of governors Chair at the U of S who wrote in a recent letter, “I want to express deep appreciation for the current fiscal realities. We understand we have a key role in containing costs.”

Mike Fritzier of Luther College wrote, “Ultimately we will have to balance our budget as we have every year. Please know we will continue to be careful stewards of the public funds we receive.”

These comments are much appreciated as we face these challenges together and continue to undergo transformational change.

People sometimes ask me — they continue to ask all of us — what does transformational change really mean? To me it’s always been about common sense, about getting at the root, or re-getting at the root, the basics of what programs should be about. It’s what we should always be doing: ministers talking to each other, ministries talking to each other, colleagues talking to each other and talking to stakeholders. It’s not always about funding. It’s about reassessing what we could do better so that we’re not duplicating things and we’re always collaborating.

I recently met with board Chairs of the regional colleges and we discussed some very practical things. Why don’t regional colleges do joint procurement? How did one college cut its travel by \$100,000 with the use of technology? And how did the arrangement between another college and a local tribal council, which buses students in to classes in the morning and back in the evening, get started? And how can other colleges arrange something similar? Practical, Mr. Speaker — limiting process for the sake of process wherever possible, and focusing on students.

And we’re seeing practical transformational change in the student loan reforms we’ve brought forward, Mr. Speaker. To harmonize with changes the federal government is making, we’re introducing a new \$1,000 upfront grant for students who apply for loans, which will make funding more predictable and targeted to those who need it the most. Lower income students in a typical eight-month program will receive about \$4,000 in combined federal-provincial grants, and combined with the Sask Advantage Scholarship, 4,500.

The great upside is that students will know where they’re at, exactly what funding is available, so they and their parents can make informed decisions in advance and plan for the costs of post-secondary education — an important reform.

We’re also seeing transformational change in the North, Mr. Speaker. We’re redirecting funding from NORTEP [northern teacher education program] Council to Northlands College so that there is only one institution in La Ronge running teacher education and other university programming there and across the North, and actually expanding it and branching into new areas. Some very exciting developments that will be announced over the coming weeks and months: a stable board, good

governance, and equitable access for all students who wish to attend.

Let’s let this process work now, Mr. Speaker, in the best interest of northern students, students who I met when I visited La Ronge. One told me — a mature student who had returned to school and was working through his grade 4 — that he wanted to be a plumber, which is wonderful. And a Northlands nursing student whose intention was to work hard and get her degree, she told me, so she could go back to her small community and help her people. Inspiring stories, and we’re so proud of them, as we take heart in one particularly inspiring statistic that since 2007-2008, 48 per cent, almost 10,000 more First Nations and Métis graduates have a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree in this province. Let’s build on that, Mr. Speaker.

And let’s build on the reforming changes in this budget which, when all is said and done, still leave us with the lowest PST rate of any province with a provincial sales tax, the lowest corporate tax rate, the lowest taxes on manufacturing and processing, nation-leading research and development incentives, and no carbon tax of any kind.

People I talk to say they don’t like everything in the budget but they think it’s fair, strong, and principled. And okay, he might be biased, but one friend told me he gets down on his knees every day and thanks this government for not raising his income taxes, which federally have gone up 4 per cent, deficit and debt still counting.

We can never forget what we have, Mr. Speaker, what we’ve built on, and what’s still ahead. I came across this lovely quote by settler George M. Grant from 1879 in one of the dusty parliamentary publications that come across our desks:

[14:45]

We looked out and beheld a sea of green sprinkled with yellow, red, lilac, and white, extending all round to the horizon. None of us had ever seen a prairie before, and, behold, the half had not been told us! As you cannot know what the ocean is without seeing it, neither can you in imagination picture the prairie. The vast fertile beautiful expanse suggests inexhaustible . . . [natural] wealth. Our uppermost thought might be expressed in the words, “thank God, the great North-west is a reality.”

Let’s also not forget the words of our Premier last April 4, Mr. Speaker: “The best days for this province are still ahead.” And that is why, and for the soundness and stability and forward thinking contained in it, I will be supporting the budget put forward by the Minister of Finance and not supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege to rise in this Assembly and enter into the debate on our 2017-18 budget.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying thank you to the voters of my constituency of Lloydminster. It is because of their confidence and trust in me to represent them that I am able to

stand here before you in this Assembly. I am humbled and honoured by their support. When I won the by-election in 2014, I assured them that they would always be my boss and that I would always listen and work to address their concerns within the government however I could, and hopefully get the job done right.

I want to also say a thank you to my constituency assistant, Tracy Patterson. She is an amazing person and I am so proud to work with her. She is organized, efficient, hard working, always eager to learn, but above all I hear from my constituents that she is a caring and compassionate person who takes the time to listen, directs them to the right resources, and always does a follow-up with them to see if their needs and concerns have been met. Tracy, you are a gem.

Mr. Speaker, my husband, Kim, of 36 years of marriage, is my best friend and support. He keeps himself busy with his own work while I'm here in Regina, but understands and supports the time I also need to spend in my constituency when I'm back home. He is always there for me and helps out in any way he can. Thank you, my love.

I also want to thank my eight children whose love, support, and encouragement gives me the energy and guidance to do this job to the best of my ability. As much as my children are grown and out of the house, their lives continually intertwine with mine and keep me interested and proud of the careers and lives they have created for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt this was a very challenging budget to prepare and deliver. I would like to first thank our Minister of Finance, along with my fellow colleagues on treasury board, all of the staff in the Ministry of Finance, and the ministers and their staff who worked together to create a plan that supports the critical services of our province, continues to provide supports to the people of this province, and works towards balancing the budget within a comfortable time frame.

Finding the right balance between ensuring essential services to the people of the province are met and showing fiscal responsibility by trying to balance a budget was not an easy task this time around. And as we've heard, our resource revenues have declined by more than a billion dollars and have stayed low for nearly three years, depleting reserves and the rainy day fund. As well, non-resource revenues dropped off by 400 million and we've spent 250 million so far on crop insurance claims.

Mr. Speaker, despite lower revenues from the resource sector, I believe the Saskatchewan Party government's budget that was presented on March 22nd sets out a plan to meet the challenge and keep Saskatchewan strong, ensuring that we are able to continue providing the best possible services to the citizens of this province at the lowest cost to the taxpayer, along with getting us back to balance in three years.

This budget ensures critical services such as health, education, and social services remain a priority while still remaining fiscally responsible, accountable to our taxpayers, and deals with a \$1.2 billion deficit. Our plan will make the economy less reliant on up-and-down resources and commodities and make it

more sustainable in the long run, so that future generations see a stable and balanced sharing of both expenses and revenue contributions.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't just luck that our population has grown in the last 10 years by 163,000 people. It isn't just luck that we have seen our GDP [gross domestic product] grow by 25 per cent since this government took over, this being the second-highest GDP growth among all provinces. It isn't just luck that this year alone our capital investments will reach 14.5 billion, an increase of 76 per cent since 2007. Between 2007 and 2016, we've invested 143 billion into Saskatchewan's economy.

Mr. Speaker, it isn't just luck that our exports have grown by 62 per cent since 2007. It isn't just luck that people are able to keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets, with average weekly earnings increasing to \$1,010.37 which, according to Stats Canada, is the first time in the history of this province that this has ever happened. It isn't just luck that Saskatchewan's retail trade has grown by 61 per cent since we became government. It isn't just luck that manufacturing sales have grown 44 per cent, the highest growth by far among the provinces, including our food manufacturing subsection, which has seen rapid growth with an increase of 84 per cent. It isn't just luck that wholesale trade has grown by 90 per cent since we became government, leading the provinces in growth. And it isn't just luck that agriculture exports have grown by 186 per cent over the last decade, reaching an astounding 14 billion, the second-largest record of exports to 147 countries.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our Saskatchewan farmers and the work they do to ensure our economy stays strong and provides food to the world. Saskatchewan exported 1.5 billion worth of canola alone in 2016, whereas we know that under the NDP, export sales had only reached 244 million. In 2016, 13 countries were the recipients of more than 200 million in Saskatchewan agri-food exports, making us the most diversified market of any industry sector in the Canadian economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, it isn't just luck that private investment in our province has grown significantly since we took office. The Saskatchewan mining industry has spent close to 30 billion over the last decade. Even the Fraser Institute could not help recognize this in the 2016 annual global survey of mining executives who ranked Saskatchewan as the most attractive place in the world for mining companies to invest. Luck, you may think? I think not. Competitive tax regimes, efficient procedures, and certainty surrounding environmental regulations and land claims by this government were the main reasons for the province's top rating. I call that strategic, and a significant plan for growth. Even with ups and downs in previous years in the oil and potash sectors, investors still made commitments to Saskatchewan's economy, with uranium mining investing 4.8 billion, existing potash producers investing 13.5 billion, K+S investing 4.1 billion, BHP Billiton investing 3.8 billion, and the oil and natural gas sector investing 4.4 billion in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, none of these investments and improvements in our economy and population is because of luck. They happened because when this government took office in 2007, they had a plan: a plan to grow the economy, a plan to grow the population



of this province, and a plan to make life better for all the people of this province — something the NDP never believed was possible.

We used our revenues to lower taxes, pay down operating debt left to us by the NDP, and built highways, schools, hospitals, and long-term care facilities. We used the revenues to hire more teachers, nurses, doctors, to reduce surgical wait times, and to encourage new investment and new jobs through lower small-business taxes and new growth incentives. These are just some of the very worthwhile investments that we chose to make with the revenue resources we had.

Some examples, Mr. Speaker, are two new schools in my constituency: École St. Thomas Elementary School, with an investment of 5.7 million; College Park Elementary School, with an investment of 7.5 million; and a \$6 million gym replacement to Hillmond Central School. Investments made by this government. Mr. Speaker, preventative maintenance renewal for school divisions was created by the Saskatchewan Party government and has been a huge benefit to school divisions across this province in assisting them in maintaining their buildings.

The city of Lloydminster has seen revenue sharing go from 713,000 in 2007 to just over 2.2 billion in 2017. That's a 211 per cent increase. In my constituency, we have also seen an investment of 6.6 million in highway repaving. Health and social services in my region have also seen budget increases year over year to deal with the growing needs of communities. Particularly now with the downturn in the oil sector, social services, along with the men's shelter, Bea Fisher Centre, and the Interval Home, have received supportive funding.

Well, Mr. Speaker, just like our plan in 2007, we once again, a decade later in 2017, have a plan for the future of this great province. Nothing will be left to luck. And our plan definitely is not to continue running billion-dollar deficits year after year like our neighbouring NDP to the west. The economy is stronger than it ever was before, and we do not want to harm that as much as we can. Mr. Speaker, it takes a forward-thinking, strong-willed, conscientious, passionate, and caring leader like our Premier to tackle this deficit and, Mr. Speaker, I also hope the support of this entire Assembly as his backup, not just this side.

Mr. Speaker, we do have a \$1.2 billion deficit. And we have to take action on the deficit today, not tomorrow, and not at some undetermined point in the future, because we've seen other governments in Canada choose to kick the can down the road for years, or indefinitely, which only postpones the day of reckoning and is being left for future generations to deal with. Perhaps they believe that somehow deficits will magically take care of themselves. We know better and are taking responsibility for our deficit.

That's why we have a plan. We have to begin by controlling and reducing spending. Rebalancing our spending and our revenues must reflect the new reality. We must restructure the tax base and expand it to reduce our reliance on resource revenues. Yes, we have shifted to other forms of taxes, including raising the PST by one point, and we have removed certain exemptions to help make up the shortfall in our

revenues. But on the flip side, we are lowering the personal and corporate income taxes which will allow more people to keep money they earn in their pockets. We want people and businesses in this province to be productive, successful, and keep their hard-earned money. We will let them choose where they spend it and on what.

Mr. Speaker, this government has returned investment to this province over the last 10 years by supporting increases to health care, social services, education, agriculture; creating opportunities; making changes to our tax system; and above all, investing in the infrastructure of this province, which was left in horrible disarray and condition by the NDP. In order to this, we have a plan, a plan that moves away from our reliance on the up and downs of our resource sector and towards consumption taxes. When this budget is implemented, Saskatchewan will be the only province in Canada with no carbon tax of any kind.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I just want to share a quick story about why a carbon tax is harmful to an economy. Fuel retailers on the Alberta side in the city of Lloydminster were hit with the Alberta NDP's carbon tax on January the 1st of this year. This created an uneven playing field between fuel retailers as residents can drive two blocks into Saskatchewan and get cheaper fuel. With the border city's unique biprovincial sitting, the implementation of the carbon tax tilted the scales considerably.

But with much lobbying from the chamber of commerce and mayor, Premier Notley and her NDP government had a change of heart and put in place a grant program which will begin April 1st and cover eligible fuel sales retroactive to January the 1st.

Mr. Speaker, the measures we are taking now, as set out in our 2017-18 budget and in the next few years to come, will not only bring us back to balance but will provide for a stable revenue base in the future and continue our strong Saskatchewan advantage.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, the budget tabled in this House clearly shows we once again have a plan to continue meeting the challenge and keeping Saskatchewan strong. I hope the people of Saskatchewan will see this too and believe in the Saskatchewan advantage.

Mr. Speaker, I do support the 2017-18 budget submitted in this Assembly by the Minister of Finance, and I do not support the amendment put forward by the opposition.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As ever, proud to take my place in this Assembly and say a few words on the issues of the day, in this case the budget 2017, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's always interesting to see what they're going to pick as the slogan for different things, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I've been around here long enough to have been through budgets when they declared it this year country. I've been around when they talked about being, you know, ready for

growth. You know, they're not quite ready for growth. But different slogans over the years, Mr. Speaker, that sort of ring through my mind as I listen to the defence that has been rendered of this budget.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, you know, it was interesting to be joined today in the gallery by Ken Krawetz, and of course I think when the current Minister of Finance announced the changes to de-index the tax brackets from inflation, I thought I could hear a shout all the way from Invermay, Mr. Speaker, about, my goodness gracious, the bracket creeps are back.

And, Mr. Speaker, on front after front there are different things that are here in this budget that if you've followed the record of the Sask Party over the years, you'll see that, you know, they've become in so many ways, Mr. Speaker, the things that they've criticized all these years. And so I think it was quite fitting that, you know, Mr. Krawetz was here to observe the proceedings because Lord knows they've come a long way in the short time since that member's been absent from this House.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words of thanks off the top. I want to say thank you to my family. I want to say thank you to my friends and neighbours, and I want to say thank you very much to the people that I work with in terms of the service for the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

It's an amazing constituency, Mr. Speaker. Incredibly diverse people from all different walks of life, from all corners of the globe in that constituency, Mr. Speaker. And it's an endlessly interesting place to live and to be from, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I'm also reminded of in this budget, and speaking of family, is the way that libraries have come in for a cut, a cruel cut on the part of this government. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, when my father and my mother had yet to be married, were engaged, were still, you know, courting, and my father had bought the first house for them to start their life as a married couple at 1363 Robinson Street, Mr. Speaker, my mother was then in Ontario, and they corresponded back and forth.

And certainly these are letters that my father looks to now in his 83rd year and of course with my mother having passed on, that he looks at them with great interest. But one letter in particular is when he has written to her about buying this house on 1300 block Robinson and describing to her that it's across the street from Albert School. It's just down the block from Albert Library. And my mother wrote back and she said, it's like a dream come true. You know, we're just . . . to be that close to a library, Mr. Speaker, because my mother was a passionate reader, and she passed that on to us McCall kids, every one, and passed along, you know, the love of a well-used and well-cherished library card, Mr. Speaker. So I guess in this speech, Mr. Speaker, I think about my mom and I think about all those families in Regina Elphinstone-Centre and the different ways that this budget impacts their life.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the good things that are in this budget — because you know, maybe it's like the old saying that even a broken watch can be right at least twice a day, Mr. Speaker — in this budget there are some good things done, to be certain. And in terms of impacts in the riding of Regina

Elphinstone-Centre, I want to draw attention and salute the fact that Sacred Heart will soon, the rebuilt Sacred Heart is well on its way to be reopened. That Mâdawêyatitân Centre, which incorporates the old Albert Library, which is 100 years-plus old, Mr. Speaker, along with the revitalized Scott Collegiate, along with community space, that is well on its way to being opened this fall. And I'm sure that we'll see members from the government come to congratulate themselves for what role they played in it, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm sure you won't hear anything about the fact that they announced it in the 2008 budget, back when Mr. Krawetz was the Education minister, and then of course we've had about a half-dozen Education ministers in between, Mr. Speaker. But here it is a decade later finally getting ready to open and we're thankful for it, Mr. Speaker, in the constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre in my home community of north central Regina.

And in terms of the impact that that first-class high school can make in the lives of young people, many of them First Nations and Métis, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to that impact that is already there in Scott Collegiate, but can only be improved with a first-class facility at last, Mr. Speaker. So we're thankful for those things.

We're thankful for the fact that there is some monies in this budget that will be going towards the ongoing crisis that is there in wait times in emergency rooms throughout this province, Mr. Speaker, but particularly at a place like Pasqua Hospital where we've seen this government go from talking about eliminating wait times altogether to moving targets to, you know, they had a newser yesterday and there's some good work being done, but that still doesn't take away from the fact that when I meet with seniors last Thursday at Davis Mews, Mr. Speaker, that the seniors are lined up to tell me about the unacceptable treatment that they've had in the wait rooms of our emergencies. And they don't blame the nurses. They don't blame the doctors. They don't blame the health care professionals, Mr. Speaker. But they kind of wonder about the government, and they kind of wonder about the different things that this government has seen fit to put money towards over the years, in terms of the bad choices that this government has made in too many circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see that there's more money for the Cancer Agency. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, cancer is a plague in our society that has touched far too many families. And, Mr. Speaker, that's an expenditure that I think should only be natural for a government to be making.

I look forward to seeing how the crime reduction committee is treated in terms of the million dollars that was earmarked for responses to that work, Mr. Speaker. I have a lot of respect for the member from Battlefords, and I think he brought a thoughtful hand to that process. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll be interested to see what impact the recommendations coming forward from that committee have and how they stack up alongside the other decisions that have been made throughout the broader justice system, Mr. Speaker.

And you don't have to look too far in the city, Mr. Speaker, to find places where the situation around crime and the causes of

crime are serving far too horrible a price on too many lives, Mr. Speaker. When I think about the inquest that's going on right now as we stand here, Mr. Speaker, into the death of Nadine Machiskinic, and may her family get some justice and some peace out of that process, Mr. Speaker. And I think of the far too many young lives that are impacted by gangs, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what's happening not just in our inner cities anymore, Mr. Speaker, but throughout the province, and the way that lives are ruined by the gangs, by involvement with addictions, Mr. Speaker.

And I think about the way that we've had different responses, different game plans, put forward over the years to try and make some progress on that. But, Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that there will be some kind of action in terms of a more cohesive approach on the part of this government when it comes to helping young people exit from the clutches of the gangs, Mr. Speaker, and the life-and-death matter that that is for far too many families, Mr. Speaker, far too many communities. So I'm hopeful for those things, Mr. Speaker.

But this of course is against the backdrop of a budget where it's hard to know where to start in terms of the critique, Mr. Speaker. It's currently the 29th of March. It would have been what, five days to go to the election day last year, and of course the government, you know, was out there with the slogan of Keep Saskatchewan Strong. And, Mr. Speaker, you know it wasn't days after the election, which they won handily, and you know if you want to see some back-patting going on, Mr. Speaker, just ask them about it. If you want to see some world-class coattails, Mr. Speaker, just check out the ones on the member from Swift Current.

In terms of what happened in that election though, Mr. Speaker, it was absent something that was critical to the process. It's a budget, Mr. Speaker. And they said, well you know, we can't have the budget. And then of course the budget finally comes out and we start to get a closer picture of what's happened with the finances in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we see, you know, where it's gone with one number for the estimated deficit. And it wasn't, you know, it wasn't too long before we worked our way through the year, and they of course, Mr. Speaker, couldn't provide the people of Saskatchewan with the quarterly report that are the people's due, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the people's money. They couldn't provide that information, Mr. Speaker, and said no, wait for March 22nd. And apparently that was to get all the bad news out at once, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how else that operation ran because certainly there were other government institutions that were quite capable of getting a third quarter report out to the public domain. And the minister said, well you know, I'm busy consulting . . . I don't know what, my magic eight ball or what the heck was going on with that, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of where we're at, of course they were just shy of \$1.3 billion for the deficit from last year. And you'll forgive me, Mr. Speaker, if when members opposite, in what can only be some kind of alternate reality, Mr. Speaker, where they go on about the great things in this budget, you'll get an occasional dipping into the question of yes, there were some tough decisions made. But for the most part, Mr. Speaker, the chorus that's going on over there in terms of, you know . . . The

emperor's new clothes comes to mind in terms of what a beautiful suit of new clothes the emperor has got and how lovely they are and on and on, Mr. Speaker, with the self-congratulations and the incredible display of just how out of touch this government is from reality.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of where we're at with the deficit, of course it's at \$1.3 billion. So when they talk about their three-year plan to take on the deficit, Mr. Speaker, and you know, we'll see where we're at in three years. Well I say, like you know, where are we at right now? What's the result of the 10-year plan? Because certainly we've heard a lot from this government before about cutting up the big orange credit card, I think was one. They had a billboard campaign at one time, Mr. Speaker, bragging about the debt that they were paying off on the general revenue side on the one hand, but of course on the Crown side they were racking it up faster than you could count, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we've seen different approaches on the part of this government. We've seen them when they'd come to power, had \$2 billion-plus cash on hand, Mr. Speaker, and it was . . . How did they describe the finances at that point? I think they tried to, you know . . . It was an expectation-setting exercise, Mr. Speaker, where they tried to say that the finances were stark; the cupboard was bare. You know, like, you can't make this stuff up, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the track record of this government.

So again when it comes, you know . . . They run the election without providing the people with a budget. They run the election without coming forward with all these different things that, you know, were in the works. And now, Mr. Speaker, we're at the, you know, one of the days of reckoning for all the way that they ran that campaign. Here we are, Mr. Speaker, and they want to . . . They would have us believe, Mr. Speaker, that there's some very tough choices to have been made and that they've got a three-year plan to tackle the deficit.

[15:15]

Well again, Mr. Speaker, as the Premier is often wont to say, the best predictor of future behaviour, Mr. Speaker, is past behaviour, and I guess, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that, you know, we've seen the past behaviour of the Devine '80s and the way that, you know, far too many people in that government were associated with the work of that government. Mr. Speaker, the way that, you know . . . It's been a decade of this government and now they'd have us believe with a straight face that we're going to finally take on the debt and deficit.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll be interested to see how that works out because certainly the debt load . . . And despite the talk about cutting up the big orange credit card and all that sort of guff, Mr. Speaker, they've gone from \$10.5 billion in 2008, total debt, and they're projecting in 2021, \$22.8 billion total debt, Mr. Speaker. And again, Mr. Speaker, they're doing that against a backdrop of some terrible choices that they're visiting upon the people of Saskatchewan, making people pay the price of this government's bad choices.

Other of my colleagues have spoken eloquently about what's going on with the completely disrespectful approach to

partnership that this government has got on display with the municipalities, Mr. Speaker. Dr. Gordon Barnhart has been driven to say that this government has disrespected the partnership and that the province is forcing the municipalities to do the province's dirty work.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Gordon Barnhart is about as diplomatic and as neutral a force in this province as it gets, but where he's a ferocious defender of things, Mr. Speaker, is when it comes to the interests of democracy and fair play and being good for your word, Mr. Speaker. So while it's not surprising that he would respond to this government's actions in this manner, Mr. Speaker, it's not a surprise.

When you look at what's happened with the winding down of STC, and again, Mr. Speaker, this is part of an approach to the Crowns where I'd refer you to my speech in the Bill 40 debate. But again, Mr. Speaker, they ran on one thing before the election and then suddenly, you know, after the election, like things have changed dramatically. And of course, you know, STC went from being an essential service before the election and something that was definitely nowhere near the chopping block, Mr. Speaker, to the callous cut that we saw from this government on STC, and the 224 people that will lose their jobs and the over 1,600 passes that were bought last year so people could get to medical appointments, like the young man who's here today. And again, Mr. Speaker, that's not what they were running on in the campaign.

We see cuts to classrooms, and this is a longer fuse on that, Mr. Speaker. But that bad news is going to continue to roll so that even in the case of something like Scott Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, we're going to see what kind of pressures that the Regina Public School Board has to deal with in putting the appropriate complement of teachers in front of those classes, Mr. Speaker, so that our students might be served.

I see the cuts to the libraries, Mr. Speaker. Again we'll all remember the campaign of this government and the way that they went to the people and said, you know, we've finally got to take some action and cut the funding to libraries in half, Mr. Speaker. We've got to close libraries. You know, and of course, Mr. Speaker, I'm joking, although I wish I wasn't because this is a sad thing.

The cuts to municipalities around grants-in-lieu, Mr. Speaker, the cuts to community rinks, the cuts to Meewasin. Again, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of knocking on a great number of doors out in Meewasin, and again I'm glad to see the member from Meewasin here and doing good work for the people of Meewasin. But again, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't a year ago. That was a month ago. That was a month ago, Mr. Speaker. And you didn't hear a darn thing from this government about, well, you know, that's going to be it for half of Meewasin's funding and then maybe next year it'll be zero. You didn't hear about the takeover for Wascana Centre Authority's board, Mr. Speaker. You didn't hear that from this government.

You didn't hear about the cuts to the hearing aid plan, Mr. Speaker. You didn't hear about the cuts to podiatry services in a province where diabetes is epidemic, Mr. Speaker. To cut the podiatry services to those who can least afford it, Mr. Speaker, is kind of mind-blowing, and the kind of pain that's going to

visit on far too many families. The cuts to pastoral care. You know, who does that, Mr. Speaker? This government, that's who.

Then we see their disrespectful approach to the public service, and again, Mr. Speaker, coming forward and saying that, you know, after the election, well guess what, we're going to . . . You know, you've been through the four years of 4 per cent reductions and now you're going to be up for 3.5 per cent reduction on your overall pay, and maybe it's through unpaid leave, or I think "furlough" was the word that the Premier was trying to fly around on that one, Mr. Speaker. Again, they didn't run on that, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the cuts to advanced education, you know, it's like, what's going to happen? And again the minister who just spoke talked about how the students were very important. And again, Mr. Speaker, I've seen from the students both at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina crying out for that minister to make sure to involve them in discussions about accessibility, Mr. Speaker, because guess what's going to happen after this budget works its way through those two institutions. Tuition is going to go up, sure as the sun rises in the east, Mr. Speaker. And the aid that has been on offer previously has been cut into the bargain by this government as well.

Mr. Speaker, one of the last things I want to touch on, and again I'd refer you to the great speeches that have been made by my colleagues on many of these subjects, and if there are things that I'm not getting to, I know that they have addressed them in a thoughtful manner, Mr. Speaker.

But one thing that I just shake my head, Mr. Speaker: this is a government that likes to take, you know, one month of good job news, throw themselves a big celebration, while at the same time nearly 40,000 individuals are still looking for work, you know, double what it was when these members took power. And again, Mr. Speaker, in the face of that circumstance, they come forward with the cuts at STC to those mortgage-paying jobs. You know, I don't know if there is anyone harder working than a bus driver. Well maybe it's the cleaners, Mr. Speaker, the way that this government has come forward and cut 220 cleaners, thrown them out of their job. And there's no certainty for those individuals what's to come.

I look at the way that this government has bragged about the record amounts that they're spending on social services. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's because there are a record number of people on the caseloads. You know, it's not because, it's not because they're increasing the benefit and helping people out of poverty, Mr. Speaker. It's because there are a record number of people on social assistance.

And, Mr. Speaker, far from increasing the basic assistance amounts, Mr. Speaker, they've actually cut the transitional employment allowance by \$20 a month, Mr. Speaker. And again I know that's, you know, chump change for some of the members over there. But that \$20 is of huge significance to the people, to too many of the people that I have the privilege of representing, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to see that translate into longer lines at the food bank and on. And they'll continue to make a mockery of what happened with the anti-poverty

committee, Mr. Speaker.

Last thing I want to say is this, Mr. Speaker: in a time . . . And we're reminded again of the good work of Justice Murray Sinclair, now Senator Murray Sinclair, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mr. Speaker. In a time when we should be bringing people together, this government is either missing in action or making cuts or letting the moment pass, Mr. Speaker. And it's an opportunity we cannot afford to take up on, Mr. Speaker. Reconciliation is something that we all need to work for. And it's time that this government, you know, come to it with a willing heart, Mr. Speaker, because the cost of not doing so, there are too many tragic ways that too many people in this province pay as it is, Mr. Speaker. And we didn't see what needed to be there in this budget around Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the calls to action.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of different things that I could carry on in terms of talking about and the cuts that were made in this government, the billion-dollar tax cut, Mr. Speaker. They put the tax on restaurant meals, Mr. Speaker. You've been here long enough, Mr. Speaker, to realize when that would have been, you know, sort of a mind-blowing proposition, but here we are. They put PST on restaurant meals, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, did so with this straight face. Again, swallowing themselves whole like that can't be easy, Mr. Speaker. You know, becoming all the things that they've criticized over the years, it can't be easy.

But the hype show that continues in here, Mr. Speaker, the alternate reality that seems to be in effect over there, Mr. Speaker, that's not what you get when you talk to people out across the land. It's not what you get when you talk to people in Elphinstone. It's not what you get in downtown Regina. It's not what you get out in coffee row at Wolseley, I would submit, Mr. Speaker.

So in far too many ways, this budget, instead of meeting the challenge, makes the challenge all the harder for too many Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker. I will not be supporting the budget, but I'll certainly be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I first want to begin by acknowledging a number of people before I get into my remarks on the budget. Mr. Speaker, I do want to welcome the member from Saskatoon Meewasin to the Chamber, in joining his place here in the Legislative Assembly. I've had an opportunity to work with him on a number of occasions and had a number of meetings with him in a previous role. We maybe always didn't come to the same decision point, but I certainly appreciated the way that he presented his causes and his concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those that I have the pleasure of working with each and every day, and not just my colleagues, but the people that work in my office upstairs, Elaine, Graham, Dustin, and Amanda. Mr. Speaker, they do such a great job working in the ministerial office. I want to thank the members of the Ministry of the Economy, the officials that I get a chance

to work with, Mr. Speaker. This has really been a real privilege for me to serve as the Minister of Energy and Resources. And I want to thank my constituency assistant, Marcie, who does such a great job for the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency, and for me, for a number of years now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say a big thank you to my family. And I know that members opposite have said, you know, there shouldn't be any bragging in this budget, but I'm going to brag a little bit, mainly about my family, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at home maybe watching this — although I think it's probably nap time, hopefully, for one or two of them, or maybe three of them — my wife, Amanda, and our sons Jack and Ephram. Mr. Speaker, Jack is nearly two, nearly three — oh, I almost said two — nearly three years old, Mr. Speaker, and his younger brother, Ephram, is just a little over two weeks old now.

Mr. Speaker, Ephram, so the name Ephram comes from the name Ephraim from Genesis, the second son of Joseph, which in some translations means twice fruitful or doubly blessed. And so we certainly thought the name was appropriate for us. With our two boys at home, we certainly have been doubly blessed in our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go on a little bit about our . . . It sounds kind of weird: my boys, our boys. I'm not quite used to it. I'm not sure I will get used to it any time soon. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know they're going to grow up to be handsome young men but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are beautiful boys. They get that from their mother.

Jack at two and a half years old is already, you know, playing hockey in the living room and golfing and playing baseball and running like he's a sprinter around the living room. He even gets down in the crouch, you know: on your mark, set, go. So he's an athlete. He gets that from his mother as well. He's a really sweet, sweet, genuine boy, Mr. Speaker. He gets that sweetness from his mother as well.

Mr. Speaker, I know I'm in there somewhere. We haven't quite, we haven't quite found out, Mr. Speaker, but I want to, I want to thank them for all their support, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Finance minister and members of treasury board and caucus and the cabinet for all the work that goes into building the budget, especially in this year where a lot of, a lot of difficult decisions were made and a lot of challenges need to be overcome over the next number of years, Mr. Speaker, as we're grappling with a significant reduction in resource revenue for the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, obviously the budget does include some difficult measures, and we're the first to acknowledge that, but it's really because of the path that we're trying to put the province on. Others have really deferred hard decisions. You don't have to look very far outside of the province of Saskatchewan to see others have really deferred hard decisions, hoping that higher oil prices or better days will return budgets back to the black. But the Finance minister has put forward a plan to bring us back into balance at the end of three years.

And as I have said a number of times, it requires difficult choices. We acknowledge that. We acknowledge that many people will be affected by those choices, particularly those, who through no fault of their own, will no longer be in the employ of the Government of Saskatchewan. And so I want to talk about some of those decisions in a few moments, but first, I never really know in terms of setting up a response to, whether it's a Throne Speech or a budget speech, kind of the theme that I'll talk about. But more often than not, it might be something that I hear from the other side that kind of forms the basis of my remarks and my reply.

And so the other night I was sitting here in the Chamber, listening to the member from Riversdale. And she framed her comments around a quote by Hubert Humphrey who was an American vice-president, a Democrat, who said, and I quote: it was once . . . And now this was the quote that she used to kind of frame her remarks:

It was once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

So I'm going to concede a couple of points. One, there is never enough money to satisfy every single need that comes before a government. And oftentimes . . . And Rod Gantfoer was the first person I think I heard say this, that often in building budgets, it's not between good and bad ideas, it's between good and other good ideas. And so I think we can acknowledge that even during times of record revenue — and I'm going to get back to that point in a few minutes — but even in times of record revenue, there still really is more calls for the government to spend money than there is available.

I just think back to a couple of years ago. It wasn't that long ago when this government did have record revenues. And the members opposite still voted against the budget, and each and every day in question period they still asked for more spending. And so it really . . . So let's concede the point. There's never going to be enough money in the best of years, even in the best of years.

And, Mr. Speaker, my second point is that I probably, for myself, would not — and I don't know if I've ever done this; I hope not — but I probably wouldn't frame a discussion around things like a budget, when you're trying to do what's best for the taxpayers with the resources that you have available, through a moral lens, through a moral test. Mr. Speaker, I think this is really problematic because who determines the parameters for that moral test?

What happens if I'm a moral . . . I believe in moral subjectivity and the person opposite is a moral relativist, Mr. Speaker? Our frames are going to be different. And so when we try to apply a moral test around something like a budget, I think it really runs into some problems. And that's probably as far as I'm going to go. That's probably as far as my philosophy classes in university took me, but I think members get the point. When you try to apply a moral test, whose lens are you looking through?

But, Mr. Speaker, the member from Riversdale brought that into the debate, so I'm going to try to walk through the budget through that lens and maybe reflect a little bit on the path through that same lens as I go along.

Mr. Speaker, so let's look at that through those that are at the dawn of life, those in the twilight of life, and those in the shadows of life. So I'll start with those in the shadow of life, and I think she was referring to "the sick, the needy, the handicapped" is the quote. So the sick in this budget. A \$5.2 billion health budget, the largest in the province's history, even despite the fact that I think everybody recognizes that revenues are challenged for the Government of Saskatchewan because of low commodity prices, not just in oil but in potash and uranium and in other sectors of the economy. And the economy is still fairly strong. We're seeing improvements in terms of job numbers and job growth, but that doesn't always reflect back on the Government of Saskatchewan. So for those that she termed the shadows of life, \$12 million to help with emergency room visits and trying to reduce the wait times for emergency rooms.

\$250,000 for the CNIB [Canadian National Institute for the Blind] to advance some really good programs in a change . . . in a different model that the CNIB has been really pressuring this government for a number of years. Mr. Speaker, a \$3.3 million increase for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency that brings it up to \$170 million. I think when the government changed, the budget of the Cancer Agency was less than half of it than it is today, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to focus on two changes with respect to this. So, Mr. Speaker, we did make a decision that for long-term care fees, that 50 per cent in terms of the fees that are changing, and how that calculation is made. So, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that the minimum today going forward is \$1,086 a month. So those that I think would be considered the most vulnerable of our seniors that are in care, knowing that a small proportion of our seniors are actually in care — the member opposite referred to, the member from Riversdale — are the most vulnerable, for 50 per cent of residents, they will still remain at the minimum, the 1,086. The previous high is going to move up from 2,065 to \$2,689 per month.

But it really does show, Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, that the government will still pay. It's not going to be 84 per cent of the cost of long-term care, but it's going to drop down to 83 per cent of the long-term care.

And I think the question that I would have, Mr. Speaker, is, if 2,689 for the higher income seniors that are in care, if that is not appropriate, based on what we know in terms of people's level of income, then what is that number? Should nobody ever pay more than \$2,000 for long-term care regardless of their income? If they have 5,000 monthly income or 10,000 of monthly income, is \$2,000 too much to ask in terms of that very small percentage, of the very small percentage of seniors that are in care, to pay, Mr. Speaker? So that's certainly a test for this government, Mr. Speaker.

But I would note that in 2000, the members opposite increased the maximum range at a time when they had record revenue. The budget of the day for the province of Saskatchewan was \$6.3 billion in revenue. That was the highest it ever was. And

yet at that time they felt it was necessary to raise the income range in terms of what seniors would pay.

And we know what they tried to do in 2002, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when people . . . If the plan that they had proposed at a time when the government had record revenue, because in 2002 we had record revenue at that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the plan they brought in place would have been put in place, what would be considered high-income-earning seniors in long-term care would have been paying \$1,200 more a month than they would under the new maximum today, Mr. Speaker. So when somebody wants to make the argument through a moral lens, they ought to be careful in terms of what the history is of the positions of their party.

I will briefly just talk about pastoral care because I know it's been brought up a number of times, Mr. Speaker. So I will openly say I'm a person of faith. This is something that's very important in my life, Mr. Speaker, and I can imagine that for somebody that is receiving health care — whether they are in the twilight of their life, whether they've been given a difficult diagnosis — it is up to everybody. Some people may have a lifelong faith and they want to be comforted in that faith, perhaps in the twilight of their life. For other people, maybe had a faith as a younger person in their life and maybe walked away from that, and as they approach the twilight of their life, Mr. Deputy Speaker, may want to return to that. And for some people it may not even be a part of their life, Mr. Speaker, but certainly I can imagine that in the final hours of a person's life, there may be a lot of questions going through their mind.

So I believe that this is very important. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe it is a core service. But I don't believe it's a core service of the government, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a core service of the faith community that you see in every other community across the province, Mr. Speaker. And so I would say this is a challenge, Mr. Speaker, for the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I would say that this is, you know, I would say that this is a bit of a challenge. For sure it is, Mr. Speaker. But in the city of Regina alone, in just the Christian faith — not talking about the Muslim faith, I'm not talking about the Jewish faith — I just look at the Christian faith, there are, I believe, 146 Christian churches in this city alone, Mr. Speaker. I don't think attaching somebody to a spiritual advisor, whether it's at the twilight of their life or whether it's during a difficult medical diagnosis, I don't think that that is the role of the government. I think that is the role of the faith community in this province.

You would almost think by listening to the members opposite that spiritual care would not be available without the government, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the spiritual, the faith community has been providing this long before there ever were governments in this province or in anywhere else, and I think it will continue going forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the needy and the handicapped, as referenced by the member from Riversdale, a \$1.125 billion social services budget, the largest budget ever: 13.4 million child and family budget increase, a \$2.3 million increase in disability, a 13 per cent increase in income assistance, a \$15.9 million increase in the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program, Mr. Speaker. And that is at a time, a very

difficult budget for this province and for this government, Mr. Speaker, a time that people are talking about austerity.

Mr. Speaker, in 2000 and 2001, at a time of record revenue, I look back, the budget of 2000-2001 was the highest ever up to that point. So the members opposite like to talk about record revenue, well 2000-2001 was a time of record revenues for the Government of Saskatchewan, and yet the social services budget was cut by the members opposite.

In 2003-2004, another year of record revenue for the government, and what happened to the social services budget? Mr. Speaker, it was cut. And one other, in terms of the member from Riversdale talks about those in the shadows of life. Mr. Speaker, well I'll get to that. I'll get to that. Just wait a second. Grab a coffee. I'll be at that in about 5 minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$155 million to continue construction on the mental health hospital of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Where was the NDP on this? To those in the shadows of life, Mr. Speaker, and I would challenge members, I don't know if the member from Riversdale has ever been to the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. I've been there a couple of times. I don't think there's many hospitals in this province that had to wait till they were nearly 100 years old to be replaced, except for the mental hospital in this province.

And I think that's a shame on the record of this entire, the history of this province, Mr. Speaker, regardless of political stripe, regardless of party. It should not have taken 100 years. But at a time of difficult budget choices, \$155 million, Mr. Speaker.

Now there was time of record revenue in 2004-2005, \$6.59 billion was the budget, and it jumped to nearly \$7 billion in revenue, Mr. Speaker, record revenue for a number of years in a row from the members opposite. And yet there was no money for the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, for those truly in the shadows of life, to use the member from Riversdale for her moral test on a budget, Mr. Speaker. No money for that project from the members opposite.

But I'll tell you what. So in 2004-2005 we did have record revenue of 6.59, the members opposite had record revenue of \$6.59 billion. They had no money for the mental health hospital in North Battleford. At that time it was like 95 years old, Mr. Speaker. No money for it. But they did, as a strategic priority, have \$50 million per year for something called Investment Saskatchewan. Now I know the member from Prince Albert across the way gave a speech a couple of weeks ago that said we need more Crown corporations, so she'll love this. The members opposite had no money in a year of record revenue, no money for the mental health hospital in North Battleford, but they had \$50 million per year for Investment Saskatchewan for, “. . . commercial . . . opportunities with significant wealth and employment growth potential.” Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we call that the private sector.

[15:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, for the member from Riversdale on her moral test, the largest social services budget, the largest health budget, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford project

continuing, she would have to agree on that moral test that she brought up, the NDP would have failed in the past where this budget does pass that test.

Mr. Speaker, I think I'm running a little short on . . . I'm really running short on time. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go quickly to another area, Mr. Speaker. And I'll find what area that is, Mr. Speaker. So I'll talk about two of the three. I won't be able to touch on all of them.

So, Mr. Speaker, those, Mr. Speaker, in the shadows of life and those at the dawn of life, which for me is the most important — \$15.5 million in capital to continue the children's hospital of Saskatchewan, 8 million just in the IT [information technology] of the building alone and 4 million in operating capital. And each and every year in the last number of years, we've put additional dollars in operating for when the day comes, not for to set aside for when the facility opens, but to staff up in terms of the specialists, pediatric specialists that will be able to serve that facility, Mr. Speaker.

Again in years of record revenue from 2004 all the way to 2007-08, each and every year the members opposite had record revenues. And in fact prior to 2000 they sold, sorry, privatized \$365 million in Cameco shares that were owned by the people of Saskatchewan. And yet they didn't have any dollars for something like a children's hospital in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

\$119 million for K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools, including 48 million for 18 new elementary schools, Mr. Speaker, and I'm very pleased to say \$2.1 million in planning for Rosthern and a new school in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker; in fact \$3.7 billion in capital in this budget alone.

And I went back and looked and here's a line from March 23rd, 2005 from the Finance minister of the day, "And with a significant capital budget of almost \$327 million, we're literally building for future generations, for the next 100 years." Mr. Speaker, a \$3.7 billion capital budget on this side; \$327 million that was what they considered building for the next 100 years. Mr. Speaker, that's building on this side of the House for the next six weeks.

So, Mr. Speaker, in a very difficult budget year: new schools; the children's hospital; more money in the pockets of parents in all income brackets compared to when the members opposite, when the social democrats, Mr. Speaker, were the government of the day. And yet people paid more taxes, even under the changes that we've made, people paid more taxes, lower-income people paid more taxes. For whatever reason they thought they knew better what to do with people's money. We believe the families know what to do better with their money, Mr. Speaker.

On that, I believe the members opposite, the member from Riversdale would have to conclude that they failed on that moral test; that this government, this budget, passes on that moral test compared to the previous government's, Mr. Speaker.

And the member opposite from Cumberland, I think he talked about debt. Mr. Speaker. Well this is what I have to say about

that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when you look at it, in fact most of it is in capital assets so there is something that is going to be left behind in terms of a capital asset for a long term, Mr. Speaker. We're going to have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the country even after the next number of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and still a 15 per cent reduction in the overall debt, Mr. Speaker.

It just leaves me with one question. I found it interesting that in a comparison of provincial budgets a premier in another province that they might know well, said in terms of this budget what would she do differently? And she said, "Well I'd do everything differently."

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the budget of the province of Alberta, if they can't vote for this budget and if debt is a concern like the member from Cumberland brought up, Mr. Speaker, one question I have: would they be able to vote for the Alberta budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker? If they can't vote for this one, would they be able to stand and vote in favour of that budget? I'm not so sure. I'm not so sure.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, using the frame in which the member from Riversdale brought to this budget debate — and that was Hubert Humphrey, Hubert Humphrey's moral test — in challenging times, I believe that this government has certainly passed that test for those at the dawn of life, for those in the twilight of life, and those in the shadows, and in light, especially in light of how NDP governments approach these very same questions, including in times of record revenues. Yes, it is a difficult budget but I believe on that account, it is a passing budget.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I will be . . . Mr. Speaker, before I get to that, Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member from Riversdale did raise Hubert Humphrey and quoted him to begin her speech because it actually reminded me of another Hubert Humphrey quote when he said, "The right to be heard does not automatically include the right to be taken seriously." I'll be voting against the amendment and for the budget.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — [Inaudible] . . . comments about the budget. And you know, I want to start out with thanking of course my family, the people back home who give support to me. To my CA [constituency assistant], I just want to say thank you for the great work you do, especially these days with what's coming out by this government turning their back on the most vulnerable and many northern people. Many people in this province throughout the North, the South, the rural, urban will be suffering by this budget. But I want to thank my CA for the good work he does and those that help out in the office to do casework and try to help people. Because I'll tell you, the story for some of these families who come in are truly heartbreaking, the challenges that people are facing.

So we have a government here who wants to talk about the bad days. They want to go back to the NDP, the bad old days, and use all the . . . and that's fine. However they want to present it, they can do that. But in today's reality, what people and families are facing, seniors are facing in this province, this



government should be ashamed of themselves what they've done. They raised tax after tax on the most vulnerable, the poorest people who are trying to do their part.

But you know, they'll deny it. They'll deny it. They're raising a billion dollars, a billion dollars more when we've had record revenue year after year. And you know, then they make out like, all of a sudden, news flash, it just started this year that our resources have gone down, that the dollars coming in are going down. Well you know what? That's been going on for quite a while. But you know what? They didn't say a word. There was an election. There was a by-election. Not a word until after the budget. Not a word about how bad things were going to be. Not a word about it. They went door knocking, saying it's all great. Saskatchewan's strong. This is what they went out and sold to the people of this province, the good people, and the people believed them.

I've had many people tell me they're angry. They're upset. And whether it's municipal leaders, libraries, the list goes on. My colleagues have talked about the list of people that are being impacted that are speaking out. And you know, they're not scared. And you can be the bullies that you are because you've done that. People speak out and say they're not happy. Instead of consulting them, what do you do? You attack them. And you say you don't; well that's fine. You have it your way. At the end of the day, we see the letters coming in. We see the frustration.

I know my colleagues have talked about the backbenchers. Get up and speak for the people that you're supposed to be representing. Don't be blind to what's going on. Call those ministers in that cabinet to task on what they're doing. You know, it's our grandkids, it's the children that will pay the price, will pay the price in the end. They will pay a price, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're going to pay a price. You could say it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well then get it right.

You know, they talk about you guys want more spending, more spending. Well let's be clear. Let's be clear to those members. You had the priority. You had the choices, your choices — 11 million on a land deal. You know, who made money there? Those were not priorities. We said use those dollars to help the most vulnerable. Use the dollars in the Regina bypass. You know, you look at the cost of it.

Everything we talk about in here that you question this government about in this budget, these are the things that have impacted Saskatchewan, and will. We look at the debt. We look at the choices they made. They sat around the table. Some of them maybe had said something, but I don't think many of the backbenchers said anything. They allowed this to happen. They allowed our province . . .

You know, you look at our Crowns. You look at those individuals and families that are going to lose their jobs, good-paying jobs, good-paying jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Why? Nobody could solve it. They don't talk to anybody. They go out, make their plan, and then later look about the consequences, then maybe change their mind. I'm hoping that this government will do the right thing when it comes to STC. I hope you will do the right thing. Do the right thing and correct your mistake. It's nothing wrong to say you've made a mistake.

We've erred.

This is a public service. We need to keep it in the province. We look at, you know, all the different areas. Governments support other public services, and we know that they don't have to make money. STC doesn't have to make money. The people are saying that. We're seeing rallies everywhere, petitions, letters. It's from everywhere, whether it's municipal leaders calling out on this, it's other leaders. They're coming out; they're saying, no, this is wrong. It's wrong. It doesn't have to . . . It's a public service. The people are willing . . . Go to a referendum. Ask the people, are you prepared to pay a little bit to keep this public service for everyone, to go to their medical appointments, to visit families, for an education? Many people rely on that.

We've heard the stories. We've had individuals come here today asking the government, do the right thing. You have so much money, so much money that you can. You can find different ways. There are ways to do it.

And you know, they talk about the revenue down. Well in the days when you had record revenue, you could have put some away. You could have saved a little bit. As my grandfather would have said, you don't spend everything; the hard times will come. You have to put a little bit away for the hard times. And they could have done that. But instead they spent the way they want to spend — on their priorities. Did they consult? No.

And they heckle about, oh, what, you guys want more spending, more spending, more spending. Well your priorities, you spent the way you wanted; now you're going to have to suffer the consequences. But unfortunately you're making Saskatchewan families, the most vulnerable, pay a price, and you should be ashamed of yourselves. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, talking to some of the families and people that will be impacted, as you're meeting those individuals they're saying, we can't make ends meet. Our power bills . . . affordability, if you look at the cost of power, utilities going up. Well why are the cost of utilities going up? They keep saying, oh, it's Saskatchewan strong, and that was their motto in the election. People are struggling. Families are struggling. Show some compassion. Try to reach out to people. Do the right thing.

Yes, it's about government. They've given you the power. I respect that. This Chamber, we all do. Is it easy sometimes? No. We go back and forth with the banter and I understand that, the heckling. And I know that it's frustration sometimes, and sometimes it's because you have compassion about what you believe in and what your constituents are telling you. And you're seeing people having issues and struggles with those, so you share them here on this floor, and that's what we're supposed to do.

But I'm telling you, there's so many people are going to struggle, and they haven't seen yet the fallout. We haven't seen what's going to happen as this budget rolls out, the impact, CBOs [community-based organization] and all the different agencies that will be impacted, and families. There's so many of them are going to be impacted. Tough times are coming, and they say, well you've got to share in . . . But you made your choices. You had such opportunity. As a government you could

have put some money away for the tough times. But you know, you spent everything on your priorities, that you thought were your priorities. Who did you consult with? You know, who did you consult?

And they talk about schools. Well let's see, you know, I just think about the schools, and I want to talk a little bit about that. You see what they're doing with the school divisions. I think about some of the school divisions. I think about Creighton in my constituency. They're faced with some serious challenges with the budget. Is it something they asked for? They didn't have any part in it. All they've tried to do is educate the kids back home, make sure that the kids got a good education, those maybe, you know, that struggle with disabilities, those that have other challenges. They've tried to do their part to make sure that young men and women graduate, become good citizens, and do their part in this province. That's what they're trying to do.

They didn't spend the money with you. They didn't have a choice. They took what you gave them and they tried to do their best. And you know, whether I look at Northern Lights School, I look at some of these . . . You know, 1.284 million that'll be cut this year on their budget. So who do you think's going to pay for that? It's in the classrooms. It's going to be the teachers. And you think about the cuts that you've asked. You want everyone to take a cut. Well you know what — and you want everyone to face the hard times — I'm hoping at the end of the day, at the end of the day, this government and the good people I hope will see the government for what it is. When it comes time for the election they will not forget. They will not forget what this government did to many programs, whether it's the library services, whether STC, whether families, the most vulnerable on social services that are feeling the cuts.

And they'll say, oh, no, no, it's been a record; we've spent so much money. They keep bragging about it, bragging about it, bragging about it, and that's fine. They can say all they want about it, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be so many people impacted with this budget, with the government's lack . . . And it isn't because those individuals out there that will be impacted got to have a say in how the years of the record revenue would help them or not help them. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what's going to happen? They're going to feel the crunch now, and the pain. And everyone's made that very clear.

[16:00]

The wealthy and some of their good friends, and the wealthy people, you know, the ones that are making good money, will be okay. I think there's about 38, \$36 million that they're going to have tax cuts. So they're going to be okay, but the most vulnerable, you know, those that need the help the most . . . And I think about the North has been impacted by so many suicides. I think a government who sits there . . . And I'm hoping, and I heard leaders, and I've heard us from this side of the House, many, talk about the challenges. You've got to do something. You've got to help. Here's a government that could have done that.

You want to talk about spending some money? Use some of the 11 million that so-called good supporters, they made profits. And why didn't you use that to help some of our northern communities with mental health and with the suicides and the

challenges that we're facing? It could have been done.

So there are some choices and priorities the government made, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They made those choices. There's many things that we've talked about where government . . . We don't agree on how they've spent the money and where they've spent. And there's many areas over the last 10 years that they have not spent the dollars the way they should have. And we've heckled; we've commented to them.

But at the end of the day, at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that as this budget rolls out to impact so many Saskatchewan people, I hope that the letters, and I hope that they contact their MLAs. Whether you're backbenchers or whatever, I hope your constituents contact you to tell you exactly what . . . You know, we mentioned to them about it and they say, oh, nobody's contacting us. Nobody tells us. It's all good. Well you know, I know in my office and I know in my colleagues', it's not good. And the places I go, people are serious concerned. They're worried, and they should be worried. The challenges that are facing them isn't because of their doing. It's because of the government who has taken such an opportunity.

I think about NORTEP and the mean . . . You know, and I think about that, what was done to NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College]. And the government made a little plan. I don't know who made the plan. I have my ideas who made the plan. Maybe it was a minister before. And they came up with that and unfortunately another minister had to carry out that terrible plan.

But it's pretty sad, you know, if you're looking for savings on the back of NORTEP, a program that for 40 years has done nothing but good for northern people. You talk about role models in their community. When we were having mental health challenges and we had the suicides, young people rely on those. Those community members are mentors; they come back. So NORTEP has done amazing things and this government, looking for savings, go after it. You know, they'll have to answer for that, and I know there's many people frustrated.

There's so much, like I said, in this budget that will impact people. And you know, I could go on. I know I've been told that in light of the day, I know others have comments. But I just want to end with this. At the end of the day, you know, governments can say what they want, pat themselves on the back, and say what a great job they're doing, and just . . . You can keep doing that. But at the end of the day, it's the Saskatchewan people who will pay the price, whether you've done the right thing or not. It doesn't matter about what goes on here.

It's going to matter what goes on back home, what goes back in Saskatchewan families, our seniors. So many of the most vulnerable, so many will be impacted. Those that are losing their jobs, their families will lose their benefits. But people have said it. They cannot believe how heartless and mean spirited this government's budget has been to them. And that is so sad.

So I say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting . . . And the

reason why I'm supporting the amendment and I won't be supporting the budget is for the simple reason, so many people will be impacted in the later days. And it will come and you will get the messages from the people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've long believed that whether we are on a municipal council or whether we're in the legislature here, or even in the House of Commons in Ottawa, we have to keep our eye on today. But we have to have a vision for three years, for five years, for 10 years, even for 30 years from now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The decisions we make in this Assembly today, and especially with this budget, will affect our children, our grandchildren, and many generations to come. Our decisions will affect the job opportunities, the quality of life, and almost every aspect of the future generations. It is for those reasons that I am pleased and proud to stand up in support of the Government of Saskatchewan's 2017-18 budget.

I do want to begin today by thanking many people, people who have a great influence on making me who and what I am today. Some people would say they would blame those people, but so be it.

I do want to particularly thank my wife, April, who for me makes all things possible. April is far more than my rock or my support. She is in so many ways my inspiration. She's a beautiful, intelligent lady. She is employed at Arctic Cat in Melfort. Plus she is a city councillor, and she is on the Wapati Regional Library board. Believe me, this past weekend when I arrived home, it was a far different discussion than the usual honey-I'm-home discussion. And my new room's very nice. Thank you very much. And I just made that up. But I do though, that April makes me a better person and a better MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] because of that. And I hope I do the same for her.

**An Hon. Member:** — Probably not.

**Mr. Phillips:** — Probably not.

Two other important ladies that help me in my MLA duties are Peggy Gordon and Debbie Perkins, my constituency assistants. They are dedicated, but not only dedicated to the office, but dedicated to the people who come in looking for help and that's very important. They are kind. They are efficient, and they allow me to do my job both in Regina and around the constituency, knowing that the office in Melfort is in good hands.

I'm very proud to represent the people of the Melfort constituency. And I want to thank them for their graciousness and the hospitality as I travel around the constituency. It means a lot to me when I go into LeRoy and Quill Lake and all the communities, and now after five years, and actually after one year, visit with friends.

Mr. Speaker, I like to think that the Melfort constituency is a

model constituency, one that believes in the new Saskatchewan, and we're strong enough to develop in spite of 16 years of oppressive and non-business policies in the former government.

The Melfort constituency has some of the very best farm land in the world in there and the very best farmers to farm it. We have ranchers. We have local-grown, farm-to-retail producers. We have an orchard. We have thriving communities filled with friendly, caring people. We have two First Nation reserves whose chiefs are working hard to better the lives of their people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we have industry, industries that Saskatchewan people have built from the ground up, not with government handouts or massive programs, but with their own ingenuity, their own skills, and the help of hard-working Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, these industries were started by local people who have risked everything to start their business, and in most cases have risked everything again to grow those businesses. Large and small, from one or two people to world leaders in Bourgault Industries and BHP Billiton, all in the Melfort constituency. Mr. Speaker, the Melfort constituency to me is very special. However in so many ways, it's a microcosm of what's happening right across this wonderful province.

And I do want to tell a story because I like telling stories. I wanted to talk about Failure Prevention Services, FPS, and I wanted to talk . . . It's a company based out of Watson, and it has about 25 employees. It varies depending on workload. But it's a world-class stainless steel filtration products that are sold right around the world, about 2 per cent of them sold in Saskatchewan, the rest sold in nuclear plants, industrial equipment, right around the world. They work hard on making their plant right. They're ISO-9001 [International Organization for Standardization] approved, 2015 level, the latest. Environmentally, they're ISO-14001.

But I wanted to talk about their Christmas party. That's strange, isn't it? I wanted to talk about their Christmas party because it was unique and yet so typical of Saskatchewan. They heard that the Salvation Army in Saskatoon, and about an hour and a half away, were having trouble filling all their baskets. They needed 800 food hampers and they were having trouble getting it done.

So what FPS did in their Christmas party, they took the staff, about 20 people total staff and some employees, some people who could make it. They took a bus into Saskatoon. And instead of walking in and just saying, here we are, we're going to help out, they walked in and they said, okay, let's have a look and decide how we can do this. So they had a look and, within about three and a half, four hours, they packed 400 hampers. The average day was about 40 that they had packed before that — 400 hampers on their Christmas party. Then they went for supper, had a drive through the Enchanted Forest.

Before I leave that, I do want to talk about Caitlin who was nine months pregnant. They kept saying, Caitlin, go sit down, relax. She said no, I'm not going to do that, and she stayed working the full time. Had her baby a week later. That's pretty much Saskatchewan tough.

I also believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we should learn from

our mistakes. And hard to believe I know, but I may have made a few myself.

**An Hon. Member:** — Really? No. Say it ain't so.

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you very much. One of the ones I had early in life as a young adult was I got a credit card. I wasn't making a whole lot of money at that time and I got my very own credit card. And it had a credit limit I believe of \$1,200. And that was free money. You know, I'd spend \$50, and I'd send in \$6. And then I'd spend \$50 and I would send in \$6, and life was good. And then I hit the limit. So I was not really money wise, but I was pretty good at figuring, and I figured what my problem was, was I needed a higher limit. So I went out and got a higher limit. And this went on a couple or three times until I finally figured out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have to pay this back. And then I had to do without things that I thought at that time I needed to pay it back.

And I see this happening right across the country. I see people running deficits in government. And what do they do? They get a higher limit. They add another 10 billion on; they add another 28.5 billion on to my debt to make it happen. We can't do that. We have to lay a solid foundation to help our people in the future.

So I said to my son, I bought you an elephant and I put it in the room, your room. He said, thank you. I said, don't mention it. That is funny, that is. I like that. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to mention it. I am going to talk about the elephant in the room.

Saskatchewan has a future that is so bright when we look ahead 3, 5, 10 years. We have food. We have fuel. We have fertilizer. And you have those three. You look at what the world needs — food, fuel, and fertilizer. And maybe across . . . All they have is fertilizer. We have manufacturing. We have other things. But look what has happened in the last three years: in our fertilizer prices, our potash is down; in our fuel prices, uranium is down; and in our oil and gas, it's down across the world, not in Saskatchewan, but across the world it's down.

So we have food. Last year we had the second highest crop, largest crop in the history of Saskatchewan. We had one snowfall on October 3rd. It cost us \$300 million. So that's an example of government versus economy. We have a good economy but the government revenues get hit by food, fuel, and fertilizer.

[16:15]

Now I want to take a couple of minutes and . . . What is a couple of minutes? I wanted to take a couple of minutes to talk a little bit about the government in 2000 and how they handled the deficit, the government before us. And they went into office and they were loaded with debt, and that is the truth. They were loaded with debt. It's how you react to that. You react to building the tax base up by increasing taxes 21 times in 16 years. You may have harmed the education system by closing 176 schools. That probably wasn't good for the education. Fifty-two hospitals closed but they protected . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — That's a plan.

**Mr. Phillips:** — Yes, that's . . . You know, but I think the biggest thing was — and they say hindsight is 20/20 — I think the biggest thing was, was they never built an economy. You know, in spite of that, they had revenue or expenses and they drove down expenses by closing or not maintaining everything. They had revenue that . . . they put it up. That should work. But there's so much more to revenue. There's so many more places like the economy that you can get revenue from, and they forgot about that.

And, Mr. Speaker, I wrote this a couple days ago, and I want to apologize for maybe my last comment that they didn't build an economy, because they did. They did build an economy. They built an economy in Vienna where they lost \$2 million. They built one in Chicago where they lost \$16 million. And it goes on: Newfoundland, Atlanta, Nashville. And then they had this wonderful idea that, we will go out and we will pay farmers to grow potatoes. You grow potatoes. Bring it in. We will pay you money for your potatoes. We're going to take the potatoes, put them in the warehouse, and let them rot. And that's building an economy.

We do have trouble on this side looking back. I just want to make one more comment and then I think I'll wrap up. Oh, I've got lots. I want to make a comment about corporations. And we talk about the corporate income tax, and the look on their face when they're talking. And they think corporations are the Royal Bank and the Potash Corp and these ones. They don't know . . . And I hope the people of Saskatchewan do know at home. But they don't know that almost every business in every small town is incorporated, because you incorporate in order that you don't lose all your money. You don't lose your house. You don't lose everything else. Are any of you incorporated? Anybody over . . . Yes, most of us are probably over here. But that's it. When we're talking a corporate income tax, we're talking about almost every business in Saskatchewan.

And they get wide-eyed and it doesn't . . . but okay, if we talk . . . [inaudible] . . . but if we talk about where the money goes in a corporation, so you have a corporation and you get taxed a little lower, but you cannot take the money out of that corporation without doing something with it. You can build your business. You can hire more people. You can do that type of thing, but you can't just take that money out because when you take the money out you've got to pay income tax like everybody else does. So the biggest reason why people incorporate is so that they don't lose everything that they have personally and risk it into their business.

**An Hon. Member:** — They wouldn't understand that, Kevin.

**Mr. Phillips:** — I know. There's just no understanding of that, and unfortunately it's going to take more time. But I want you to know that I will be supporting this budget motion and I will not be supporting the opposition's amendment. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to give my response to the budget. And I want to preface my comments by saying I've really struggled

with this response and I've tried to put a lot of thought into it. And it's been difficult, because I've had a lot of people phoning wanting to talk, wanting to tell me how this budget is going to impact them. And I really did try to prioritize the time between budget day and now, with listening to some of those concerns and really hearing from people and just how this budget is going to impact them.

So I'm going to speak, some from my notes and hopefully a lot from my heart, Mr. Speaker, and just talk about some of my thoughts and the thoughts of my constituents and people that I represent, over the last week.

Following suit from colleagues on both sides, I'm going to talk a little bit about those who brought me here. I wouldn't want my family to feel left out, and I do think it's important. And I want to talk about, first and foremost, my husband, Guy. Of course as I've mentioned before, we've got three children. And doing this, you know, when we're sitting late and we're out having meetings and going around the province, there's a lot that could get let slip by if you didn't have someone at home who was supportive and who was making sure, you know, that the heritage fair projects were getting done and kids were getting fed and sometimes laundry was getting done. So he's a pretty good guy.

We've been together for almost, gosh, over 25 years I think. I know I don't look that old, Mr. Speaker. And he has been a rock all of that time, someone who is passionate about his beliefs and unwavering, and is a pretty good guy to go home to and to chew over things political. So I want to say, although I don't always say it perhaps the way that I should, that I do appreciate him and his work and his passion for the work that he does.

And my kids, you know, I've been able to introduce them in here, but I'm pretty proud of them. And they put up with a lot too. I'm not always in the best of moods when I get home. And gosh, I just . . . All I want to say is, I'm proud of them. They motivate me. And I hope some day they understand.

And my constituency assistant, Chris, I mean we're just almost a year into this new adventure together. We've learned a lot of things. And she keeps me organized. If you can imagine, I have coffee spilled all over my papers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Too bad she can't organize me here, but she's someone that I've come to rely on and I certainly respect the work that she does, and I want to thank her for it.

And I'll take some advice from the member from Estevan, and just this once perhaps, but she noted that you're never too old to thank your parents, and I agree. I think I want to spend a little bit of time thanking my parents. They too have had the opportunity to come into this Assembly. I don't know if they're watching right now. I know that they often do, particularly my mom. But my parents, Ray and Judy, who taught me to have a love, a deep love really of this place that we all call home, to appreciate the land, to appreciate the water, the wildlife, and that which grows here, both that which is cultivated and that which is native to our province, Mr. Speaker. This was deeply instilled. I remember hours in the truck going spotting with my dad, and he could spot a deer 20 miles away. We lived about in the flattest part of the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and really

taught a love of place.

But moreover, Mr. Speaker, they instilled a great love and respect for the people of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, regardless of where they lived, city or country, north or south, regardless of skin colour, regardless of religion, regardless of their means — a deep respect for all people that live here. And they also taught us that there's nothing more important than looking out for each other and giving back. And they didn't only teach us this, myself and my brothers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they lived it. And they live it every day. They taught that respect doesn't only extend to you and those who think just like you or who look just you. And that is a lesson that has informed my whole life — my choice of partner, how I parent my kids. It informs my career and it informs my politics, both big and small P, Mr. Speaker.

And I will follow the lead from the member from Martensville just this once, and thank the public servants who prepared this budget, the people who work hard in the ministries, and I know there's a lot of pressure there. And I just want to say how much I respect the work that is done there, that work that is done every day behind the scenes often not appreciated, perhaps not always listened to, Mr. Speaker. But it is very important work and I want to thank them.

And of course that all leads me to the budget. And as I noted, I've had about a week to absorb what was in that budget and to hear feedback from my constituents. And I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the decisions made by ministers in this budget were short sighted at best, and in too many cases downright mean spirited, and will hurt people — many, to be sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and some very much more than others.

And I want to say that I've really struggled with the tone on this response because I cannot express how frustrated and angry I am on behalf of people that have been impacted by this budget. And I want to stand up and reflect that anger and that concern that I'm hearing from my constituents. But I've also listened to the responses here by members opposite who have in many cases failed to hold cabinet to account for their choices and who have pointed the finger at governments from years ago, even decades ago, who've let their own anger so consume them, their bitterness so erode their judgment that they can't see what is plainly before them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Cabinet ministers made decisions that will hurt people today and in the long run. And I don't want to be sitting here in 10 years or in 20 years holding on to that kind of bitterness and anger because I don't think we get good decision making and good public policy out of that, Mr. Speaker. We come here to govern for the whole of this province, to make decisions that impact all people. And of course there are going to be people that are going to have to, you know, share. We do have a downturn in resource prices. I won't disagree with that. But to let your bitterness and your anger so cloud your judgment that we have this budget before us, Mr. Speaker, I simply choose not to live my life that way.

Mr. Speaker, there are actions here in this budget that our kids will pay for. When this government came to power, they were about \$10 billion overall in debt. And at the end of this three-year magical plan, we'll be looking at \$22.8 billion.

That's more than double, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that all of our kids, be they from rural Saskatchewan or urban Saskatchewan, will have to deal with.

And it will also fall to our children to deal with the impacts of climate change: increased drought, increased flooding, and unpredictability of weather. That will be left to our children as well. And this government has taken little interest in meeting any of these challenges in any meaningful or responsible way. I understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that some policies and some governance, some grown-up decisions don't get you Twitter likes. They don't perhaps get you followers or, you know, trolls from Alberta on your page. But they have to be done. It is the grown-up and responsible thing to do.

When my kids were little and they would say to me, but she did it first, but he did it first, I didn't put up with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that is a morally irresponsible argument. We are here today with some very real challenges in this province. We have challenges for today and challenges for tomorrow. And we can't act like we didn't just come through a decade of record revenue — billions, tens of billions of additional dollars to the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker, and we have racked up debt that our kids will pay for. We have failed to make decisions and our kids will pay for those decisions . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I hear infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that brought me to this space was being around those tables, around the decisions that were made for the P3 [public-private partnership] schools. And, Mr. Speaker, those were decisions made, and of course people want schools — I'm not disagreeing with that — but these are schools that we will pay for, for the next 30 years, schools that, upon opening, we will owe \$9 million in interest and maintenance charges for, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was no problem with the traditional build. They were built on time and on budget.

[16:30]

What we have introduced here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a profit motive into the infrastructure building in this province. We have introduced schools — a failed model everywhere else in this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker — schools that cost more money, that erode local autonomy. But we doubled down on them and our kids will pay for the next 30 years.

So we brag about the number of schools that we have opened, but we don't have the staff. We don't have the funding in education to be able to staff the schools properly. Mr. Speaker, I can barely keep up with all of the news in education. We saw in this budget a \$54 million cut in the next school year for funding to education, for K to 12 education. Despite the fact that 21 new schools are opening, we have cut funding to education by \$54 million. And if that weren't enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have also increased property taxes to education by \$67 million.

I don't even know what to say, so I'll let Saskatoon Public Schools do a little bit of talking. In a news release dated today, "This represents an \$11 million shortfall for Saskatoon Public Schools alone." They have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the members want to chirp, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but these are not my words. This is Saskatoon Public Schools' words. This is in the Minister of Education's, the old school board that he used

to be Chair of, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What this budget represents is a \$460 decrease in funding per student. It also does not compensate at all for the \$1 million increase in funding costs to Saskatoon Public Schools and the additional new schools.

Mr. Speaker, we had daycare workers, directors in here today, and they were talking about the inclusion funding, which is very troubling to them, represents potentially a huge decrease. But they were also talking about the larger picture in child care funding in this province. We've actually seen a decrease per space in this budget. We've heard a lot about the 889 additional spaces, but the budget actually represents a decrease per space. They're telling me that it's going to be very difficult to staff these child care centres because there is no long-term plan. The funding has been stalled, subsidy funding has been stalled since 1984, Mr. Speaker.

We had an opportunity, and I think that's what makes me most frustrated, is we had an opportunity. We had an opportunity to invest in early learning in this province, an investment that the government's own numbers show investment in quality early learning will return between 4 and \$9 for every dollar invested.

We talked about a universal kindergarten and pre-K program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something that, when invested properly, returns \$2 for every invested within eight years. We could have already been there, and guess what? Our kids would have been receiving better early learning and child care supports.

So I try not to despair about the opportunities that have left us by, Mr. Speaker, but they are very real. And all of the anger about what the NDP did in 1993 or 1944 doesn't change that fact. We blew an opportunity here.

And now I've lost my notes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think some of this . . . Like, I don't doubt that members opposite care about their kids and their grandkids. We all do. That is a human . . . That is universal. We all care about them. I think we have to not care just about our own families but all children in this province. And this, frankly, is a budget that is going to hurt children disproportionately, Mr. Speaker, be it in child care, be it in education.

Some of the things that brought me to this place: I mentioned education; domestic violence, that was work that I've done for most of my life. Some unintended consequences, and I am sure, I am sure that they are unintended, but they are real. And this is what happens when you don't get out and talk to people about how decisions in their budget are going to impact.

I think of the STC cut and I think of all of the women that we brought to our shelter by STC bus. That's how they got out of relationships where they were in danger and they were being abused. We could anonymously make sure that they got a ticket at their local depot, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's something that I'm not sure how that is going to work now. And I know that there's no plan for how that's going to work over there.

I think of the pastoral care, the spiritual care departments at hospitals. I was lucky enough when I worked as a medical social worker to be part of the perinatal loss team. And, Mr.

Speaker, this is not a team that most people know about and those who do, though, hold it quite dearly. And what was essential to that was the spiritual care team. So along with my colleagues we were part of that committee. We won a Saskatchewan Health Excellence Award for our work there. But really, you know, I want to think of Mary at RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] within spiritual care and Dorian who worked in the office there. The work that they did, comforting families when they were losing babies before or shortly after birth, was so impactful for those families. It was so impactful to go to the memorial service every year, Mr. Speaker.

And that's the kind of thing that I don't know what the plan is for in this budget. And I'm not sure that there is one but I want to talk a little bit about that. Saskatchewan will become the only province in Canada that does not pay for spiritual care in health facilities. And without addressing those needs . . . and these are not my words. These are Philip Weaver, the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care: "Without addressing those kinds of spiritual needs around connection and meaning, the physical body may heal but the spirit remains damaged."

I know my colleague from Prince Albert has mentioned this frequently, but the need when trauma, when something traumatic like losing a child happens, the care that you receive around that trauma is not only comforting and essential at the time, it has long-term impacts for both your mental and physical health. This is something that is the right thing to do at the right time, and guess what? Like many, many good, well-thought-out social policies and services, it actually saves money in the long run, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I bet that that was not known and was not intended in this budget. I will give the benefit of the doubt, but that doesn't make the impact any less real.

There's so much I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Other ways, women leaving violence, public libraries, that was another way that women were able to connect with services in the community, to get in touch from remote communities. Often their abusers would be checking their computer or they wouldn't have access to the computer, so they would attend a local library and be able to access websites to make arrangements to leave their abusive situation. Again not an intended consequence, I am sure, of those cuts to libraries, but it doesn't make it any more real.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to read a couple of quotes because I have been talking a lot with my constituents, and they are very wise and they're very informed and they have big hearts.

And it was one person in particular this morning that cautioned me about my tone, who said, you know, I know you're angry. I know there's lots to be angry about, but don't fall into that trap. Don't fall into that trap of letting your bitterness and your anger cloud your judgment. People don't want to hear that. People don't want . . . This was the quote: I want a Premier who looks to evidence when faced with budget crises, not like this, not one who gets into spitting matches with Premiers from other provinces, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They want ideas. They want to know that we are going to be grown-ups and look at what's in front of us and make choices with all of the evidence before us, govern for the whole

province, not to pit neighbour against neighbour. That weakens all of us in the long run, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I want to read this: if we are kind, if we value diversity, if we welcome different thinking, we stand up for the guy who isn't being represented fairly. It is our responsibility to give our children every advantage and every opportunity to make it, to thrive, but it is also our responsibility to teach our children to use their position in life, whatever it may be, to advocate for those who have not been afforded the same opportunities now, tomorrow, and forever, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are wise words.

That's the vision of this province that I was taught to believe in. That's what we could be here if we would stop with this pettiness and this short-sightedness and actually invest in the people of this province — all people — and understand the consequences of our actions.

I think my time is up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will be voting in favour of the amendment and not in favour of this budget. Thank you very much.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the House to make comments regarding the budget. I will of course be supporting this budget. Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by thanking some of the people that are very important to me: the great office staff that I have here; my constituency staff in Saskatoon; my 95-year-old mother who may be watching TV right now and, mom, I promise I'm not going to say anything unpleasant. And I've got a great mother-in-law who is 92, still bakes butter tarts and sends them in. And I want to thank everybody that supports all of their MLAs, both sides of the House.

Mr. Speaker, this, for our government, has been a difficult budget. Our resource revenue is down well over a billion dollars. We made difficult and challenging decisions and, Mr. Speaker, we've looked to our partners in the education system and elsewhere to help them find economies. And we're not going to make apologies for wanting to look for efficiencies and save the taxpayers of this province money, and to try and do things to make sure resources and services are delivered where they should be, to the front-line people.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to our Education budget we are opening 21 schools this year. Eighteen joint-use schools, six in Regina: Harbour Landing, Greens on Gardiner, and Rosewood Park. Two in Warman, two in Martensville, and eight in Saskatoon: Stonebridge, Hampton Village, Evergreen, and Rosewood. \$650 million investment in education infrastructure, the largest ever in the province's history.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen a lot of challenges with space that was available from the legacy that was left by the people opposite that I hope never ever get back into government because we never want to go back to that kind of a deficiency.

These are P3 schools, Mr. Speaker. They will be guaranteed so that they will be in as good, or new condition 30 years from

now. Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the joint-use partners because those schools are on target, on time, and on budget so that the students will be running around those schools, getting an education, come September of this year. Mr. Speaker, those P3 contracts saved \$100 million on time and they will be finished in less than 100 days.

Mr. Speaker, we also spent \$21 million to finish the other three schools that are opening this year, all of which are in Regina. Sacred Heart, which for the MLA for Regina Elphinstone stood in this House day after day talking about the need for a new gym in that school. We responded, not just with a new gym, but with an entire new school.

Second, Scott Collegiate . . . Well the members opposite are chirping on it. Mr. Speaker. They had a chance to do it before. They never did it. From them, nothing; from us, delivery. We will have kids in a school this fall. Mr. Speaker, Scott Collegiate, second high school built in Regina in 1924 after Central Collegiate. We made it the oldest surviving high school in the city. Replacement began in 2003, but what happened in 2003? Nothing but talk. When we formed government we took action and now that school is going to be done.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the biggest challenge for the critic on this is Connaught. The MLA for Lakeview opposed it; it's still on her website that she is opposing Connaught School. Mr. Speaker, come September she's going to have to go to the opening of Connaught School and she's going to have to stand up and say to her constituents that she opposed the building of that school.

Mr. Speaker, what's she going to say to those people? I'm here for the opening, but I don't like this? No, Mr. Speaker, she should stand up and say, I'm sorry I opposed it. I'm taking it down off my website. I support this school. It's a great school for the community of Regina and my constituency, and I'm behind it. That's what she should be doing, Mr. Speaker. She should be apologizing for the position that she took because, Mr. Speaker, that's what we do on this side of the House. We deliver things. What they do is they complain. They want to go backwards. That's not what's happening on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, our budget has got planning money for new facilities in Weyburn and Rosthern. We're going ahead because that's where the needs are in this province. We've spoken to the divisions out there; we've spoken to the MLAs. Those are good things that are happening for those communities, and we're not taking any advice from the members on the other side of the House because they have nothing to offer on this. They complain. They give misinformation, Mr. Speaker. What they ought to do is stand up and say these are good things. They may think it's a joke. It's not a joke, Mr. Speaker. These are the students of our province. We have an obligation to give them an education and, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we are going to do.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 the NDP budgeted \$18 million for capital, no emergent funding, no preventive maintenance. That was their entire budget for capital. This year we are spending \$119

million. Last year we spent \$390 million — more in one year than they spent in their entire last 10 years of government. Mr. Speaker, we are committed to students. We are committed to education, and we are going to go forward with that.

And we are going to take that record back to the electors and voters in the city of Regina and the rest of the province. And we're going to tell them what their record is and what was happening as they went through this process in the last while, Mr. Speaker, because these are things that are important to the citizens of Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, there was a bad legacy left by the people on that side of the House, and, Mr. Speaker, we're going to work hard to fix it and to finish it. And when they're wrong, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage them to stand in their place and say, we were wrong. We want to move forward with you on those things.

Mr. Speaker, we have one more member on this side of the House that wants to speak to the budget today, and, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to yield the floor to that member now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to start my response to the budget probably in a little bit more . . . a different note than my colleague. But I did so enjoy what my colleague had to say.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of days ago as I was looking at my response to the budget, I searched for a much deeper meaning to getting up and supporting this budget, by the way. And of course I will reject the amendment and, just in case I run out of time, I just want to make sure that's on the record.

My dad passed away on January 3rd of this year. My intention here today and my comments will be in response to the life I had with my dad. I am honoured to be here today. I'm honoured to represent the constituents of Regina Wascana Plains. And I am honoured to be his daughter. I am honoured to have learned what values are and to stay true to those very values.

To give a little history, Mr. Speaker, my dad took over a company a very long time ago. His grandfather and his father started a company that was really very much entrepreneurial. They took the cinders from the railway. My great-grandfather took the cinders from the railway and figured out a way to use these cinders that were sort of tossed aside by the railway at that particular point in time, over a hundred years ago, and used them to build what we now know today as cinder blocks or Cindercrete Products.

I watched, and as I grew up, I saw the hard work. There was no substitute for my grandfather. I didn't know my great-grandfather, but my grandfather and my dad. There was no substitute for that, and he truly instilled in me that in order to get anything done, you must work for it. There was nobody ever going to give you anything. And I've never expected anything, and I've worked according to those values that my dad and my mom instilled in me. Do the hard work, Christine, don't complain. Stick with something and be true to it. Not unlike



what we're doing here today and what we've done over the past week.

The budget that we have presented is tough. And it's tough for a reason, because we were not going to kick our deficit down the road to leave it for somebody else to do it. We're going to deal with it.

And I know my dad. My dad would have said, right on, because that's how he dealt with the trials and tribulations of running a company for a very, very long time. There were times that I knew, when I was growing up, that this company was on the brink of going under. I knew that. And I've been through those times with my family. And so the answer my dad did deploy in that particular point in time is: you deal with the issue. You don't spend money you don't have. You deal with it so that it will be better tomorrow.

That's exactly what's happening today. And if he were here, he would agree with how this government has handled this deficit, because he didn't spend money he didn't have. If he wasn't selling concrete, if he wasn't selling bricks, he would not have spent the money. And he did not. And I knew that.

I did not have everything handed to me because of that long-held belief that you don't just get everything just because. You're not entitled to anything. You work hard for it. And if you happen, because of your hard work and your ingenuity and your honesty and integrity, if you knew those things would carry you, and they did.

I had people come in before my dad passed away. He suffered for 12 long years with dementia, Alzheimer's. And what would happen and how my dad looked after other people, and not that he had a lot of money at the time, he would help people that were struggling, with a handshake, with a handshake. And those people, their sons, come to me now and say, did you know what your dad did? He helped keep my dad's company afloat.

That's what we're doing here with this budget, is that we're helping keep this economy afloat. I know exactly what he would have said to me in response to what we had to do. He would have been proud of Saskatchewan. He would have been proud of this government. And I know he was proud of me.

The greatest gifts my dad helped with, I suppose, in my life are of course my sister and my mom. And dad often told me that — and I was young then — that my very best friend in my life would be my mom. And guess what, everyone? She is. And for that, I am so eternally grateful.

But I'm also eternally grateful for those values that he instilled in me and that hopefully I have, in part, passed along to my children. And you know, his life is a celebration. And in celebrating his life, the only things I can do is be honest, be truthful, and to look at the challenges and deal with them. Pick up the rock and look underneath and see what you're having to deal with and not be afraid of it — much like our budget.

Sure we could have been afraid and said, oh no, there's too much backlash here. There's too much . . . No, no, no, we don't want to deal with it from a political standpoint. We did not because we have the guts and the integrity and the honesty to

deal perfectly clear with the people of Saskatchewan. We are being honest with the people of Saskatchewan.

And we're being honest with how we're going to deal with it. And none of us, none of us prefer to be in this place, in the place of a deficit that we had because of the low revenues from our resources. No one wanted to be here. But that doesn't mean we close our eyes and put our hands over our ears and say, we're not going to do anything. We're just going to continue on, try and pull the wool over Saskatchewan people's eyes. We weren't going to do that because we know that Saskatchewan people are smarter than that. And Saskatchewan people know what it takes to take a bad situation, deal with it, because tomorrow will be better, but not if we don't deal with it.

And so today my life, my legacy . . . my dad's legacy is through me, my mom, my brother and sister, and I'm proud of that legacy.

I would not have stood here today and said the things I've said if I didn't believe with all my heart and soul that this government is doing exactly what they needed to do. And we need to stand strong, and we are. We are standing strong, and we must. We must stand strong because we need to do the best for the people that put us all here.

I'm going to move away a little bit from this, and I'm going to quickly talk about something that is imperative. And I just want to say, my dad's businesses over the years have always been in southeast Regina. They used to be on the outskirts of Regina, but you know, they kept getting kicked out because the city of Regina kept growing. And that's a good problem. But anyway, they moved out east. That was the last move they made.

And so you know, and I'm watching the land that moves around the city of Regina from the east and the bypass, and I recall my father saying to me about this bypass that was, you know, being designed or put together by the members opposite. And I thought, oh okay, Dad. He says, yes, I think that will be, you know, a really good idea. My dad never criticized, but I always knew where he stood. This is a good idea. This is good for Regina. That is good for east of Regina. And but . . . waiting. He said, you know, Christine, they're saying they're going to put this bypass. Waiting. It never happened. The inaction of the members opposite, the government before us, we suffered many years of that inaction, compromising ease of traffic, but more importantly the safety of travellers, the safety of commercial vehicles.

This year's budget is of course the second highest in highways history. We're building the bypass. This is not just one roadway. This is a system, system interchanges. And we should as a province be proud of that. I know if my dad were here today, he'd celebrate what's happening with the Regina bypass and he would say, it's about time. And not only that, Mr. Speaker, what the bypass is doing is employing Saskatchewan companies. And I'm sure if he had been here today, perhaps he would have been involved in it. I don't know. He's not here anymore. But I know he would have been proud. He was a proud Saskatchewanian — as we all are — and was proud of the values and the ethics and the honesty and integrity of Saskatchewan people. And I am indeed proud of that also, Mr. Speaker.

I support the budget. I'm not going to get into anything else that I had . . . I have lots of paper. But I know that in tribute to my father, in tribute to my dad, that I agree and support the budget, the very difficult budget that this government made. And I will not support the amendment. Thank you, Dad.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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