



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

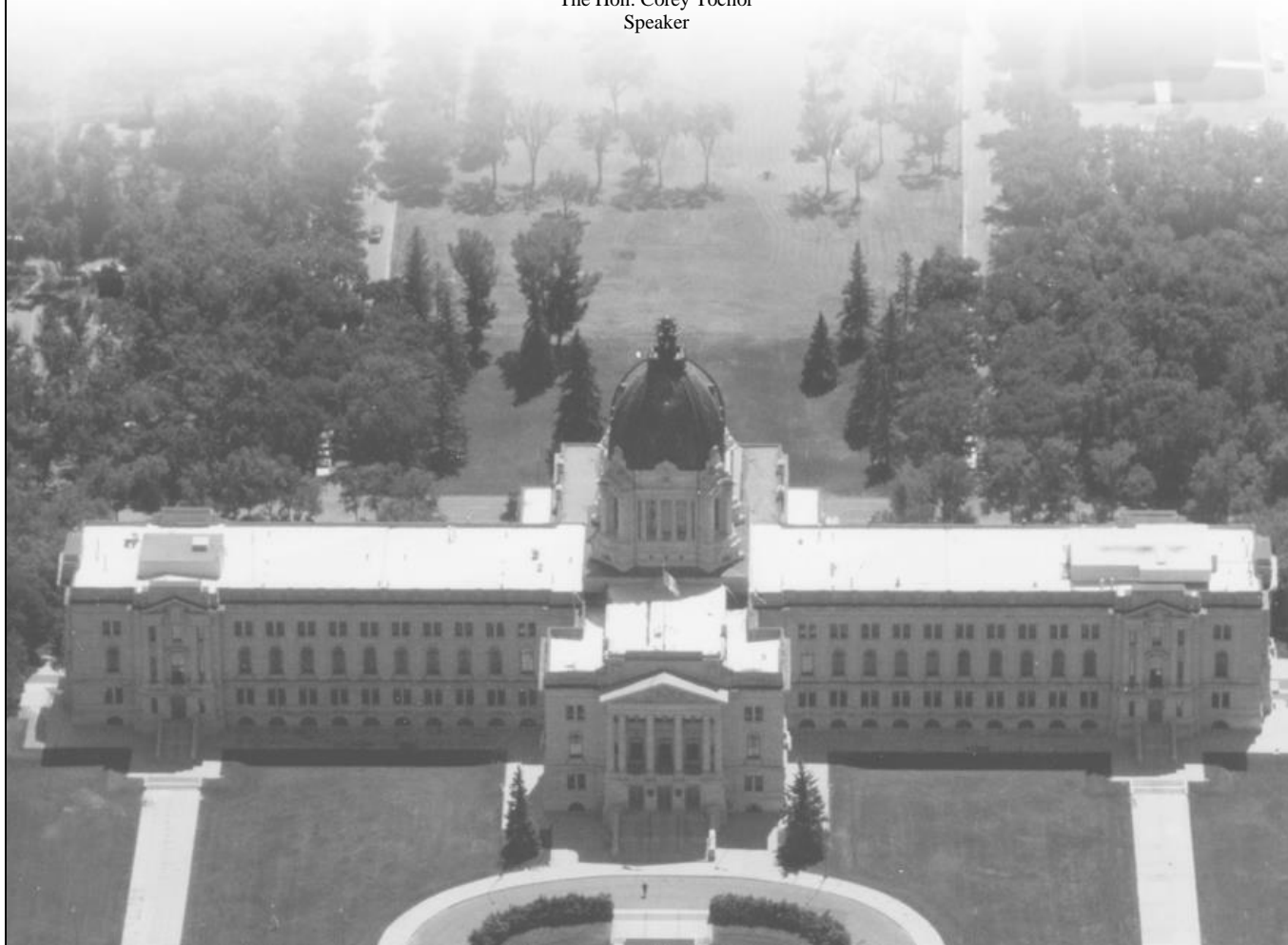
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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. I would request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to introduce a group that are on the floor of the Assembly. But just before I do that — I know they'll be introduced by a minister a little bit later on — but I see we have guests here from STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society], Mr. Speaker, and I would also want to welcome them.

They are led in your gallery by a former Finance minister for our government, Rod Gantefoer, who has served this province in a number of different capacities and also has been very essential to the establishment of STARS in the province which, we're going to find out a little bit later on, has quite literally saved lives since we were able to have it established in the province after 2007. So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming the group from STARS that's in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, you know it is a rite of spring in this place that we would honour those that are really best among us. They are exemplary of everything that is good about Saskatchewan, and I'm speaking, of course, of the recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, in the presence of and awarded by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, medals were presented to 10 deserving individuals from Regina, Debden, Yorkton, Osler, Lumsden, Prince Albert, Denare Beach, and Saskatoon. It was a real representative group of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we should all be very humbled today by their presence, because these are public servants in every sense of the word. May I also suggest that they're our heroes in Saskatchewan. They're passionate about any number of issues: about ensuring those most vulnerable among us are taken care of; ensuring that we have a vibrant arts community or cultural community; that we remember what needs to be remembered, Mr. Speaker; that young people are fully engaged, even if perhaps they couldn't afford it otherwise, or their parents could, in sports or culture or arts, Mr. Speaker. We also acknowledged this morning a couple who have spent a lifetime visiting people in prison, at the federal penitentiary in Prince Albert. And so these individuals, in many respects, are Saskatchewan heroes.

Mr. Speaker, their concern and empathy is not bounded by

borders either. Their efforts have touched people outside their respective communities, indeed outside the province and even around the world. It's been said that noble leadership "... answers not to the trumpet calls of self promotion, but to the hushed whispers of necessity." Mr. Speaker, these individuals have seen service to others as a necessity. May we all be so informed. May we all be so directed.

So, Mr. Speaker, in a moment they will be introduced individually by their respective members of the Legislative Assembly. But on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan, on behalf of a grateful province of Saskatchewan, I just want to say to each of them, thank you very much for what you have done. Have a wonderful rest of the day as recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that we would welcome these Saskatchewan heroes to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the Premier here today and first off to, as the Premier did, to welcome Mr. Rod Gantefoer to his Assembly. He's a friend to all in this Assembly. And it's a pleasure to have him here today and particularly nice to have him here with the delegation from STARS — those that serve many across Saskatchewan, provide peace of mind. And they respond at a time of crisis in the lives of many, at a time where minutes matter, and where you too serve in a selfless way, putting yourself at times at risk for the betterment of others. So I join with the Premier in welcoming Mr. Rod Gantefoer and the STARS delegation that's here today.

And I'm very pleased to join with the Premier, as we did this afternoon, to welcome the recipients of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medals. Helping our neighbours and working to build communities supporting the most vulnerable in our province — this is what we do in Saskatchewan. It's core values within Saskatchewan to volunteer. And you know, here today, we have shining examples of those who give so much to so many, you know. And that says a lot because, in Saskatchewan, we volunteer in numbers that are second to none: the highest proportion of volunteers in Canada, some say the world. So the fact that these volunteers have risen to the top for a level of distinction says an awful lot because we have so many within our province that give so much.

It's also worthy to note that I want to thank the families and friends of those that are here today, those recipients, that support that volunteerism, who support the sharing of their time, the dedication that they provide, and their commitment.

We have people on the floor of this Assembly that work to make Saskatchewan a more welcoming place, that work to ensure that everyone has the chance to grow and to thrive and to make sure that no one is left behind. They're really the embodiment of our province's motto, "from many peoples, strength." And they do so not looking for glory as they wake up each morning. They do it out of a selfless service to others and to their community, which is all the greater reason why an award ceremony like this and the Saskatchewan Volunteer

Medal is so important, why it's important for us to stand together and to celebrate these selfless acts, the volunteerism that strengthens our province.

And although it's hard to measure the exact impact of this group of volunteers or those that came before or the legions of others across Saskatchewan, know that you make a massive difference in the lives of many in our communities and in our province. And on behalf of a grateful opposition, a grateful province, we simply say thank you.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Colin Bachynski from the constituency of Regina University who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce Ms. Shelley Fraser from the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Ms. Lori Glauser from the constituency of Yorkton who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. and Mrs. Harry and Eva Martens from the constituency of Biggar-Sask Valley who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce to you Ms. Faeza Moolla from the constituency of Regina Wascana Plains who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Mr. Reggie Newkirk from the constituency of Lumsden-Morse who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Ms. Janis Chorney Olesko from the constituency of Batoche who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce

Ms. Mary Wright from the constituency of Cumberland who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to introduce Mr. Peter Zakreski from the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as was mentioned earlier by both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, we have a large contingent of people that were here for an event this morning honouring five years of STARS operating in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I was joined at that event by the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and by the Minister of the Crown Investments Corporation and by many caucus members as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to quickly go through the list of people who are in attendance. We have first of all what's referred to as VIPs [very important person], Mr. Speaker. They're not only very important people, but they're very important patients. These are patients that have been carried by STARS in the past, Mr. Speaker.

We have Carrie Derin from Regina, who incidentally is the very first patient that STARS has ever carried. We also have Garfield Beaudry from Raymore who's accompanied by son Edwin. We have Chad Rogers from Assiniboia, along with wife Sonja. We have Bonnie Fortin from Elrose who is accompanied by her father, George Myers; Fran Wakelin from Saskatoon; Garry Gallant from Watson along with his wife, Myrna; and Jan Hoffart from Midale who's accompanied by her fiancé, Darrel Druck, and her parents, Adolph Hoffart and Stella Hoffart.

We also have a number of STARS staff with us today as well, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery. We have Andrea Robertson who is the CEO [chief executive officer] of STARS. We have Ron Dufresne. We have Mike Lamacchia, Denise Belman, and also of course a couple people that the Premier introduced earlier and need no introduction in this House, Rod and Carole Gantfoer. We have Cindy Seidl. We have Mark Oddan, Megan Burns, Vanessa Headford, Fred Matiko, Darcy McKay, Greg Chorney, Denise Treleaven, Brenda Barootes, Beverley Douan, John Antal, Lyle Aspinall, Michael Nelson, Reagan Gardiner, and Jason Prokopetz.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to hear more about STARS during the members' statements in just a few minutes. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to ask all my colleagues to join with me in welcoming the contingent from STARS to their

Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming the delegation here today from STARS. Mr. Gantefer, it's very good to see you here today. As everybody else, the very important patients, I'm very glad to see you here today and that your outcome, thanks to STARS and our health care teams here in Saskatchewan, that you're here today to celebrate five years of STARS.

A big thank you, of course, to the paramedics, the nurses, and of course the flight staff who provide compassionate and professional care on what is often people's worst day. So thank you for all that you do to make sure people have the care that they need in a timely fashion. So thank you and congratulations on your five years. With that, I'd like to ask my colleagues to also join in welcoming these folks to their legislature.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming a group up in your west gallery. They're from Campbell Collegiate, Mr. Speaker, grade 11 and 12 students from a history 30 class. They're accompanied by Ms. Jill Labas and Mrs. Amanda Ebbett.

It's a great day for you to be here to see one of your school's alumni be recognized, as well as a teacher, and the Bachynski family are also up in the west gallery, who are alumni. I'd like to have all members join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. I'm looking forward to talking to you shortly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I was remiss earlier on in not introducing another fairly famous individual that's joined us in the west gallery. The guitarist for League of Wolves, Aspen Beveridge, is here in support of one of the volunteer medal recipients. And I had a chance to visit with Aspen; I think they're going into the studio here shortly in Toronto. This is a great band; another, well, another of the many great bands we have coming from the province of Saskatchewan. But League of Wolves is certainly finding some well-deserved success, and I just want to welcome him to his Assembly and wish them all the best in the studio.

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

[13:45]

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, in fact we do have some real star power in this Chamber here today, and certainly it's a pleasure to join and welcome the member from League of Wolves that's here as well.

But I also see a friend to many in this Assembly and a leader within our community and someone who's recognized on the

national and international scene, that being Ms. Zarqa Nawaz, the creator of *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, someone who's a voice of clarity within the community, often at difficult times and dealing with sometimes difficult circumstances, and a powerful voice in our province as a province of many faiths, of many peoples, and someone that I have certainly grown to admire greatly within our community. So it's my pleasure to welcome Ms. Zarqa Nawaz to her Assembly.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I'd like to introduce two very special guests in your gallery today. Larry Kowalchuk, no stranger to many of us; his commitment to social justice and human rights is well known. Today he brings his son on his birthday, Micah Kowalchuk. I guess he's a little older than typically we would think father and son relationships, but we think on his birthday Larry thought it would be great to bring his son to this legislature. Micah is also a serving, a practising lawyer in Saskatoon. So I would ask all members to welcome Larry and Micah to their legislature. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the members opposite in welcoming Mr. Kowalchuk and his son to the legislature today. I don't know what family dynamic would possess somebody to take their son to the legislature as a birthday present. I'll leave that between them, but would ask all members to join in welcoming them.

## 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 to sell off the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They would like us all to know that STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] provides a vital service to many seniors, workers, and families throughout the province; and that by scrapping STC out of the blue and without asking permission of the owners, the Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party is sending a clear sign about how little it cares about protecting our Crowns like SaskTel; and that STC helps to drive the economy with the parcel services that serve 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 to sell off Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation services 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 Kelvington-Wadena.

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Hendon, Wadena, Fosston, Porcupine Plain, Carragana. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition opposing the Sask Party's cuts to spiritual care. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners believe that this government didn't know the role that spiritual care providers provide in our health care system, nor do the petitioners think the government fully understands the impact of these cuts. They point out that this budget unilaterally eliminates spiritual care within our health region facilities. They point out that spiritual care helps patients and residents and their families towards achieving holistic wellness, and that Saskatchewan will be the only province within Canada to not fund this support for its citizens.

They point out that the Sask Party did not tell people of Saskatchewan prior to the 2016 election about their plan to cut funding for spiritual care in our health region facilities. The petitioners also point out that spiritual care provides a compassionate listening presence in times of crisis and the ability to respond to the spiritual and emotional needs of patients and residents. They point out that spiritual care supports families and patients and residents in making those difficult decisions that come with health care sometimes. They point out that spiritual care meets the needs of traditional First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people. And finally they point out, Mr. Speaker, that professional non-denominational, non-faith-specific spiritual care practitioners facilitate patient and residents in obtaining comfort and support from within their own faith traditions.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly immediately stop the cuts to spiritual care programs in this province's health region facilities.

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

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as directed and ordered by the member from Prince Albert, I'm hereby standing in my spot today to present a petition on behalf of the member from Prince Albert area, and as instructed by the

member from Prince Albert Northcote.

And this petition, as it relates to increased funding to the Prince Albert mobile crisis, Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its doors during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resources of people in distress. The daytime closure of the 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 quality counselling and intervention services to clients.

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

Call on the Saskatchewan Party government to increase funding to the Prince Albert mobile crisis unit so that they may once again offer 24-hour emergency crisis service.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition to support the Prince Albert mobile crisis unit are from Regina, from Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition that's opposed to Bill 40 and the potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. The people who have signed these petitions today want to bring to our attention the following: 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 of the people of Saskatchewan who own that corporation, Mr. Speaker. In '15-16 alone, Crown corporations returned about \$300 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals, and we know over the last 10 years it's been around \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker. We know those dividends should go to the people of Saskatchewan and not private investors.

Our Crown corporations employ thousands of people across the province. 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 their shares are held by a government or province. So there's only 10 per cent to play with there, Mr. Speaker. This bill would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized. So we know that this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to 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 signing the petition today are from Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon. 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 this province wanted to bring to your 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, the 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 rise today to provide a petition that was presented to me from seniors in the community of Prince Albert that were concerned about some of the budget cuts that affect them. So there was a group of seniors and service providers that met at a seniors' summit in Prince Albert that was organized by the Prince Albert Seniors' Advocacy Centre. And the undersigned individuals, they met for a whole afternoon to discuss services and lack of services within Prince Albert and area, and many presented and expressed great concerns about the most recent provincial budget. I'll read the prayer:

The undersigned hereby petition the Saskatchewan Government to reverse all budget decisions that specifically affect seniors adversely, such as the pending closure and shutdown of STC, the curtailing of library services around the province, the elimination of chaplaincy services in various health regions including Prince Albert, and the pending increase in fees in long-term care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed these petitions come from the community of Prince Albert. 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 to reverse cuts to the Lighthouse program. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: in April of 2014 the minister of Social Services said that the Lighthouse in Saskatoon would "... take pressure off of existing detox facilities, hospitals, and police cells while keeping people safe, especially in our brutally cold winters." That same day the minister of Health said, "We want to ensure that individuals with mental health and addictions issues have a safe place to stay," Mr. Speaker.

This government has repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospital emergency rooms and jail cells. The estimated savings for the government, announced in September, is under \$1 million but the subsequent ER [emergency room] costs alone could be several million dollars.

In 2015 the Provincial Auditor called upon the Ministry of Social Services to provide the correct amount of assistance, not to revoke this essential service and thereby put the most vulnerable at extreme risk. These ministers are now trying to place the responsibility for repairing budget deficits on those experiencing addictions, unemployment, and poverty, and who are working from day to day without proper services.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the very dubious distinction, Mr. Speaker, of having the highest rate of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces.

And one in three Canadian workers have been impacted by domestic violence, and for many of them the violence will follow them to their workplace. Victims of domestic abuse should not be further victimized at work. And, Mr. Speaker, employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence. Manitoba has already enacted 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 violence in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing the pages of petition today come from Saskatoon. I do so submit.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary institutions. The cuts to these institutions of \$36.8 million from post-secondary education, 6.4 million from technical institutions, and cuts of \$8.2 million to funding for scholarships and student aid mean that Saskatchewan students, who already pay among the highest tuition in the country, are going to see greater costs for their education. It's costly for students; it's costly for families, and it's costly for the whole province as we undermine this important economic driver.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

The individuals signing these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Dundurn, Prince Albert, and Saskatoon. I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Organ and Tissue Donation in Saskatchewan

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, this is national organ and tissue donor awareness week. The demand for tissue and organs for transplants continues to outweigh the accessible supply, especially here in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan has one of the lowest donation rates among the provinces, at 9.9 donors per million compared to the national average of 15 per million. This disparity between supply and need has a profound human cost as well as an economic cost to health care and our province as a whole.

This past year my colleague from Prince Albert and I had the privilege of taking part in the Human Services Committee's inquiry on organ and tissue donation rates. This committee was given a mandate by the government to make recommendations to improve rates here. It was heartening to hear from devoted stakeholders working to improve our organ and tissue donation system and from individuals who have been impacted by donations who shared their lived experiences.

It was from this testimony and additional literature that the committee made its 10 recommendations. The final report also includes a dissenting opinion put forward by my colleague and I that offered an additional eight recommendations that we believe, based on the evidence we heard, could dramatically change our current system for the better.

Unfortunately the government thus far has chosen not to act on any of the recommendations, not even on those of their own members. But it's not too late, Mr. Speaker. This government can still build on the meaningful consultation that took place and start implementing recommendations now. People's lives depend on it.

I ask all my colleagues to join me in marking this week by thanking all those who took the time to share their expertise and their passion on organ and tissue donation with the committee, and committing to implement the recommendations of the final report. Thank you.

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

#### Yom HaShoah

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is Yom HaShoah, the Holocaust Memorial Day marked around the world to commemorate the six million Jewish lives lost during the Holocaust. These men, women, and children were friends and neighbours, shopkeepers and hard-working tradespeople not much different from any of us here today in this Chamber. Their lives were ripped from this Earth as they all marched to their deaths for one reason — because they were Jews.

This, then, is a moment to remember these lives lost and honour their memory. In this moment we also honour courage and bravery in the face of death, in the face of unspeakable evil. This is also the legacy of the Holocaust. This is the solemn lesson we must never forget, Mr. Speaker: never again; that we can also look to the light of those who were courageous enough to fight no matter the odds, to have hope no matter the darkness of the circumstances.

It is with hope then that we may look at the diverse people that make up our great province and take heart that each time we choose to accept people to our province, our home, is a step away from the kind of darkness that brought the Holocaust and toward a stronger, brighter future.

I ask that this House now observe a moment of silence for the victims of the Holocaust.

[The Assembly observed a moment of silence.]

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you.

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

#### World Book and Copyright Day

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of April



23rd as World Book Day, a yearly event organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to promote reading, publishing, and copyright.

Mr. Speaker, World Book Day was celebrated for the first time on April the 23rd, 1995. In 1995 UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] decided that the World Book and Copyright Day would be celebrated on the 23rd of April as the date is also the anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare as well as the birth or death of several prominent authors. On this occasion, publishing houses, bookstores, libraries, cultural institutions, and associations of authors mobilize across the world to promote reading, publishing, and the protection of intellectual property.

Mr. Speaker, this year the focus will be on the blind and the visually impaired for whom there is difficulty accessing books and other printed materials, which constitutes an obstacle to their full and effective participation in society.

Mr. Speaker, New Democrats recognize the power of literacy and education, and although the Sask Party is a little late to the game, Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that they have corrected their terrible library cuts.

I ask all members to join with me in recognizing this important day, and would also like to recognize the people of Saskatchewan for standing up to this government when it comes to libraries.

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

#### **Expansion of Yorkton Oat Mill**

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to making sure that Saskatchewan is one of the best places to work and invest. I'm extremely pleased to stand in the Assembly today to be able to announce that Grain Millers, one of the largest oat buyers in Western Canada, has announced a \$100 million expansion of its plant in Yorkton, which is expected to be operational late 2018.

This project will add 80,000 tonnes of production capacity to its mill where it manufactures a range of conventional and organic oat products. The Grain Millers expansion will create 25 new and permanent jobs as well as 110 jobs during the construction phase.

Mr. Speaker, my friend Terry Tyson, the director of grain procurement at GMCC [Grain Millers Canada Corp.] had this to say about the expansion:

We've operated in Saskatchewan for 20 years. Yorkton is in the heart of oat country and, with its skilled workforce we have here, it is a great location for us to continue growing our milling business.

I couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker. A bigger oat mill means that Yorkton already is home to two major canola crush plants, and now an even bigger destination for prairie grains and oilseeds. I ask all members to join me in welcoming the announcement and thanking Grain Millers for the plant expansion in Yorkton and investing in our province. Thank you,

Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Habitat for Humanity Key Presentation in Duck Lake**

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and inform members about a Habitat for Humanity key presentation that I attended in Duck Lake on April 21st.

Two families achieved a very special dream — the dream of homeownership. This home is a joint effort between Habitat for Humanity, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, Correctional Service Canada, Willow Cree Healing Lodge, RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] Foundation, the town of Duck Lake, and other community partners and volunteers.

Habitat provides an incredible service for helping families leave their housing challenges in the past. Our government recognized their critical work and remains committed to supporting this remarkable organization.

With another valued partner, the Government of Canada, we are pleased to have contributed close to \$56,000 to build this home through the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement and Social Infrastructure Fund Agreement. Mr. Speaker, our government also contributed 65,000 toward a second Habitat home in Duck Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to acknowledge the students of Stobart Community School who helped renovate one of the homes, showing tremendous teamwork and community spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to thank our project partners and congratulate the new homeowners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Air Ambulance Service Celebrates Fifth Anniversary**

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to stand today to recognize the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society, better-wise known as STARS, as they celebrate their fifth anniversary of saving lives here in Saskatchewan.

Today, to celebrate their anniversary, the STARS held an event at their Regina hangar and their Mobile Education Unit is parked outside of the Legislative Building. I hope all members had an opportunity to visit and learn more about their program, and experience the state-of-the-art medical equipment used to train first responders and medical personnel right across our province.

Mr. Speaker, the men and women of STARS have served Saskatchewan well, working to provide safe and reliable emergency care and transportation services. Since 2012 STARS has transported or provided care for more than 4,000 patients in more than 500 locations in Saskatchewan. Operating 24/7, they've served our province very well.

Their life-saving care and support service play an incredibly valuable role in the province's emergency medical services. Mr. Speaker, our government has been a proud partner of STARS over the past half-decade.

The Minister of Health and Minister Responsible for Crown Investments Corporation announced that our government will be providing \$20.5 million in funding to STARS in the '17-18 budget year. Even in a challenging year, our government knows how important STARS is to the people of Saskatchewan. We look forward to seeing STARS flying in our province for many years to come. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the STARS Saskatchewan team on their fifth anniversary. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

### **Construction Begins on Overpasses in Warman and Martensville**

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday I, along with the Minister of Highways, had the honour of attending the groundbreaking for the new overpasses in both Warman and Martensville. This is a great news story for my constituency. On average, 14,000 cars drive on Highway 11 and 15,000 cars drive on Highway 12 every day. The priority of this project is to address safety concerns, but it will also alleviate commuter traffic and improve driving conditions for the people of these communities and surrounding area.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the general contractor looking after construction of these overpasses, Peter Kiewit Sons. Kiewit has been involved in Saskatchewan projects for over 50 years. His bid had the highest concentration of Saskatchewan partners of the three firms vying for this contract and is currently in negotiations with several other Saskatchewan-based contractors and suppliers. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada who is providing funding for this project.

Mr. Speaker, this project is another example of how our government is working hard to make Saskatchewan the best place in the country to work, live, and invest. And we will continue to fix the infrastructure deficit left us by the members opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Details of Land Transactions**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, every day I rise in this House and ask about the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. And whether it's in this House or in the rotunda with the media or across the province, no matter who is asking, the Sask Party says, just trust them. Always they hide information and fail to answer basic questions.

Well the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] has uncovered another scandalous secret. It's clear the Sask Party haven't been protecting CP [Canadian Pacific] Rail's image.

They're trying to salvage their own.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party may . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And they're laughing here, which is outrageous. Boy, you know a government's worn out their welcome, Mr. Speaker, when they laugh after millions of dollars has been given away and wasted. You know, the Sask Party of course made Saskatchewan people pay for it through SaskPower spending \$25 million for land that they're still not using, just in time to of course make sure that two supporters made millions on the land scandal. Meanwhile they gave away 300 acres, twice as much land for free to CP Rail.

Mr. Speaker, they might try to justify this now, but it's all more lines and more spin. How can the Premier justify making Saskatchewan people pick up the tab for yet another Sask Party corporate handout?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, maybe there was some laughter at the member's preamble to his question because some of it — frankly, the premise of it — is laughable. And here's what I mean by that. He wants to ascribe all of this deal, especially the CP land transaction, to this side of the House, to this government.

Mr. Speaker, as we heard from last week, this is the big . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member is heckling, who is the Deputy Leader of that party. He was the Highways minister for the NDP [New Democratic Party] on July 18th, 2007 when his note said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "In April, the province approved \$33 million invested in the project." The note talks about the fact that we want to work with the city of Regina and move the rail to the GTH. At that time it was called the Regina intermodal facility.

Mr. Speaker, in March of 2013, the former NDP minister, John Nilson, said in this House ". . . when the New Democrats were still government, there were initial amounts set aside that would allow this project to go ahead . . ." Mr. Speaker, these were the remarks of the NDP.

I've got a whole bunch of other quotes from members opposite who claim credit for this particular deal, Mr. Speaker. There's articles that were covered, and there's a CBC article from February, 2007 that highlights that Saskatchewan NDP and city of Regina politicians were going to Ottawa to create support for the GTH. We know from that member's, we know from that member's, the Deputy Leader's own briefing note when he was the minister responsible that (a) they wanted to respect the privacy of the transaction, and (b) that they set aside \$33 million to give to CP or to allocate for the land acquisition for CP's relocation to the hub.

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

[14:15]

#### **Closing of Saskatchewan Transportation Company**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's just not believable. The excuses and the lines are piling up day after day, but so are

the scandals, Mr. Speaker. Carpe Diem, a company known a bit around this building, has recently talked about wanting to take over STC. The Sask Party says they're not breaking the Crown protection Act, so maybe Carpe Diem seized the day a little early with their announcement, Mr. Speaker. Last week they posted, "Currently hiring owner/operators for our new STC freight division."

Mr. Speaker, their STC. Maybe to the extent that we're all shareholders but, Mr. Speaker, that's not what they mean. Will the Premier today table any contracts to sell off STC equipment, routes, whatever to Carpe Diem and whoever else? All this, of course before his privatization bill, Bill 40, has even passed, but most importantly, instead of backroom deals with Carpe Diem or anyone else, will he scrap his damaging plan to sell off STC?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, there are no deals. There are no contracts for privatization. The company's not for sale. The company . . . And it's not hard to understand why it's not for sale. It hasn't made money since, I think, since 1979. So, Mr. Speaker, we're simply winding it down.

The subsidy . . . This is not an easy decision to make, but the per-passenger subsidy today for each of those passengers that ride STC is \$90 per passenger. Those members opposite, when they were the government, when they were the government of this province, they shut down routes when the per-passenger subsidy was \$25. For the NDP, they thought that's too much to subsidize a passenger — \$25 — and so they shut down routes. Well, Mr. Speaker, now the per-passenger subsidy is \$90 per passenger, so we are making the difficult decision. With thanks to those who have been working at that company for a long time, we are going to wind it down.

The answer to the member's question is there are no contracts, no deals. There's nothing to be sold here. If others are going to operate a bus company in the province of Saskatchewan, they'll apply to the Highway Traffic Board for those operating rights, just as companies do today, Mr. Speaker, on lines, some of them that the NDP shut down.

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

### *The Education Amendment Act and Operation of School Boards*

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — It's sort of strange, Mr. Speaker, to square the Premier's comments with the fact that Carpe Diem has a posting to hire owner/operators for the STC freight division, Mr. Speaker. And this is the government that wants to take over education, take away control from our local school boards, put it in their own cabinet. So you have to understand why people are angry about their coup, their bill, Bill 63, to do just that. You know, and I'll remind them, of course you know, certainly Carpe Diem is clear about what they're doing, Mr. Speaker, with the STC freight division.

And with the CP scandal finally coming out, and everything else that they're hiding with their GTH scandal and, Mr. Speaker, with all the controversy that's apparent with conflicts of interest over there, how does the Premier justify taking away

all the power from locally elected school trustees? His minister of course cites decisions of some of the school boards that he doesn't agree with. But, Mr. Speaker, 91 per cent of Saskatchewan people and 71 per cent of Sask Party supporters don't agree with their massive cuts in our classrooms.

So can the Premier at least admit that our kids' schools are obviously in better hands with their local school boards than with the Sask Party, who's just cutting deeper and deeper?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I do thank the member for this question. I want to thank the member for this question because this is an opportunity to have an important debate that will contrast perhaps views on either side of the House.

There was a ruling, a court ruling last week, Mr. Speaker, that could prove to be very damaging for students in this province, for the separate school division and frankly for the public school division. It's the Yorkton court ruling I'm referring to, Mr. Speaker, and it's the product of a lawsuit between two school boards, two Saskatchewan school boards, one separate and one public. And they have spent millions of dollars on legal fees suing each other, Mr. Speaker. Not in the interests of students, I would argue, in this particular case. Not in the interests of families of those students. But, Mr. Speaker, they've decided to have a bit of a turf war and they have used millions of taxpayers' dollars to fight this out. And now we have a court ruling.

What's left, Mr. Speaker, for the rest of us, is a court ruling that is incredibly serious and potentially damaging to the system. I want the House to know, I want the people of the province to know that I've asked the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Education to explore every avenue of remedy we may have to not have this ruling, frankly, pose the damage that it does to our school system.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is why we need legislation like Bill 63. Mr. Speaker, this is why we need to be able to have the Minister of Education, the duly elected government of the province, making sure that boards don't sue each other, making sure that boards don't have two directors at the same time because they had fired and they rehired, making sure that dollars that we have for education go to the classroom and support teachers, Mr. Speaker. That's where that money belongs.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, they are silencing local voices and taking all control and power for themselves, period. That minister walked away from his signature and commitment to our kids' teachers. That minister raised the taxes that Saskatchewan families pay for schools, but still cut even more from our kids' classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, because of that minister and that Sask Party, the government is investing \$121 million less to educate our children. And now he wants even more control because he is concerned that some trustees made some bad decisions. Mr.

Speaker, I don't even know where to start with that. That minister backed down on one terrible decision today, so there's hope. Will he now withdraw Bill 63?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the answer is no, absolutely not. Bill 63 is the tool that is going to prevent bad decisions from being made, bad decisions from being implemented, having school divisions that are paying for two directors because they fired, hired, and rehired. Mr. Speaker, those are decisions that we are not going to stand by and let happen in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have made an enormous investment in our province in education. We have spent over \$2 billion a year on education, on capital, on operating grants and, Mr. Speaker, those are things that we want to do to support our children. We are not going to have divisions make bad decisions. We will work with them to make sure they make good decisions but, Mr. Speaker, Bill 63 will go ahead.

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

#### Funding for Education

**Ms. Beck:** — So much talk of bad decisions, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that Sask Party cuts are hurting our kids, and Living Sky is just one school division scrambling to figure out how to deal with the cuts to their funding. The Sask Party handed them a \$6 million deficit. The division's education director said that the cuts "came as a shock." And they're taking all they can from their reserves, but they say they have no choice but to make deep cuts to the classroom, laying off 20 educational assistants and 15 teachers. The director said that it's the most difficult challenge that he has faced in his entire career.

Mr. Speaker, these cuts don't make any sense, and the minister can't even justify them, except to say that they needed to cut because they ran out of money. Mr. Speaker, had they just made CP pay for the land that they gave them, that would have saved our schools. Mr. Speaker, how can the minister expect the people of Saskatchewan to have any faith in his judgment when it comes to the education of our children?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the operating grant in our province has gone from \$1.41 billion to \$1.86 billion under our government. Mr. Speaker, the school division of Chinook has moved 25 people out of administration into the classroom. Mr. Speaker, we're asking other divisions to look carefully at doing that because, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you where the resources should be: the resources should be spent in the classroom, not in the boardroom, not in the courtroom, but in the classroom where they're benefiting children and are benefiting the families of our province. That's what the members of this side of the House stand on, not what the members on that side of the House stand for.

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

#### Supports for Post-Secondary Educational Institutions

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, everywhere we look, this budget is taking money out of the pockets of families. We already know that the Sask Party has allowed tuition fees to rise to among the highest in the country. Now the Sask Party is making things even more expensive with cuts to tax rebates for tuition and textbooks. Students and families will be out thousands of dollars. It's no secret that this government is looking to find money, but to take it from students, from their education, from textbooks, it's a pretty obvious step in the wrong direction.

Students are working hard to put themselves through school. Their families are making sacrifices to ensure a good future for their children, and for the province. When will the Minister of Advanced Education actually advance education and work to keep post-secondary training affordable and accessible?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite will know, tuition across Canada is not an apples-to-apples proposition because Stats Canada averages all universities in a province. The University of Saskatchewan itself has said, "When considered program by program with our comparator institutions in the U15, the U of S's tuition is at or below that of our peers." It also stated that Stats Canada's report on tuition is "misleading and inaccurately represents Saskatchewan compared to other provinces."

Universities are autonomous institutions, Mr. Speaker. They set their own tuition fees, but when you compare first-year arts and science tuition fees in our two universities compared to those in comparable institutions across the country, we actually rank in the lower third to lower half, Mr. Speaker. And to support students, we also fund the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship which is universal, part of the 137 million being invested in student supports this year, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Staff Numbers at Saskatchewan Polytechnic

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I still didn't hear any rationale for eliminating those tax rebates to tuition and textbooks. This budget, it not only hurts students, but it hurts people working across the post-secondary sector. This minister's job is to defend education, but how can she stand there and defend these cuts?

Mr. Speaker, when faculty brought concerns to her attention, when she was told she'd have trouble recruiting and retaining post-secondary instructors, she said, and I quote, "Well perhaps we should take our chances." Well, Mr. Speaker, what this minister failed to say is that the cuts were so deep, we don't even have to wait and take our chances. The job losses are already happening. Sask Polytechnic has been forced to lay off 23 employees on top of the vacant positions they aren't filling, on top of the 43 employees who took voluntary separation agreements.

How can this minister flippantly joke about jobs in this sector? Does she not understand that we need quality educators for quality education?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of questions in that question, but on the Sask Poly situation, of course any time there are layoffs, Mr. Speaker, it's cause for concern. Certainly we sympathize with those affected by the staffing changes.

On an annual basis, Saskatchewan Polytechnic makes adjustments to the complement of faculty that reflects their program offerings for the coming year, Mr. Speaker. That includes allocating resources to provide student-centred and industry-driven programming that responds to labour market needs. I understand that part of that complement of faculty receiving layoff notices includes voluntary separations. The layoff process is of course defined in Sask Polytechnic's collective agreements, and their process will align with such provisions, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Deficit Reduction Measures and Public Sector Compensation**

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, these job losses in post-secondary are only the tip of the iceberg. For regional colleges and Sask Polytechnic, the minister said that this will be another \$6.5 million cut from salaries, and no one seems to have a clue how they will get there. In the education sector, the minister initially said the 3.5 per cent would be found through cuts. He was contradicted in the letter from his ministry and eventually contradicted himself, but still no clarification.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts, people's jobs, but no one over there seems to have a clue how they're going to do it. Will the minister admit he has no actual plan to plug this \$250 million hole in his budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I won't admit that, to the hon. member, because the fact of the matter remains, Mr. Speaker, we identified \$250 million in compensation — it's right in the budget documents — over this year and the ensuing three years after this, Mr. Speaker, with respect to finding that kind of compensation savings across the entire public sector here in the province.

We have said to our employer groups, Mr. Speaker, some 41 employer groups in this province, to get to the negotiating table. There are, I think, 15 to 17 collective agreements open right now, another dozen or so coming open by the end of this year, Mr. Speaker. We have said to these employer groups, here's the fiscal situation we are faced with in this province: a \$1.3 billion deficit last year. We're asking the public sector across this province to contribute \$250 million, Mr. Speaker, or 3.5 per

cent of that \$1.3 billion deficit. Those employer groups are going to get to the table and negotiate this with the employees, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, we have heard that bluster before. What we're asking for is details. The Minister of Advanced Education claimed to be able to peg down how much and from where they were finding these savings, but admitted they had no way to enforce these cuts. And the Education minister is making it up as he goes along.

How could the Minister of Finance just plunk a \$250 million hole in the budget? Doesn't he even understand the impacts of all these cuts they've made, cuts in our classrooms, in our communities, in our health care, all the way to funerals, Mr. Speaker. And everything, from a night out to car insurance, is getting more expensive. With all of this, how can he possibly justify the gifts to the wealthy and the well-connected? How can he justify the \$60 million tax gift to corporations?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Either the members opposite are in agreement with the collective bargaining process, Mr. Speaker, or they're not. The Finance critic should stand in her place and say whether she agrees with the collective bargaining process or not because that's where these arrangements are going to be had, Mr. Speaker, is at the bargaining table, Mr. Speaker. These employer groups sit down with the employee groups and are going to negotiate this kind of compensation . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, to recognize this 3.5 per cent of a \$1.3 billion deficit, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I sit here every day and I listen to the Education critic, and now the Advanced Education critic, and certainly the Leader of the Opposition get up every single day, Mr. Speaker, every single day, and demand more money in these respective areas that they're critics for. Every single day they stand up, Mr. Speaker, and want more money for their particular areas of critics.

Then they stand up and they say, you know what, we don't like the revenue package you put together. We don't like the revenue package you put together. And then the Leader of the Opposition will stand up and say, you know what, Mr. Speaker, we don't like deficits in this province and we have more running deficits in this province and building up debt to pay for these operations of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This is NDP doublespeak. 2004-05, Mr. Speaker, what happened in this Chamber? What happened in this Chamber

under an NDP government? They tabled a budget, Mr. Speaker, in 2004-05, that fired 500 civil servants in this province. Mr. Speaker, they reduced spending in 12 different departments in this government, Mr. Speaker. And then they raised the PST [provincial sales tax] from 6 per cent to 7 per cent and ran an \$844 million surplus that year, Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of doublespeak we're getting from the NDP.

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

### Financial Situation of Municipalities

**Ms. Rancourt:** — The public sector is left reeling from this budget, forced to pay for the Sask Party mismanagement, scandal, and waste. They aren't alone. This morning municipal leaders gathered to speak out against that minister's comments last week. When asked why the Sask Party was taking away the ability for our cities, towns, and villages to challenge the Sask Party in court, she said, "Because they were going to." They know they aren't playing by the rules, so they're changing them.

Really, Mr. Speaker, they know they will likely get sued with the overreaching law they're ramming through, so they are changing the laws even more. Mr. Speaker, doesn't the minister understand that that's not how things work in a democracy?

**The Speaker:** — The members will respectfully listen to the question, and let's respectfully listen to the answer. I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've said a number of times, this was a difficult budget. And we looked at all areas in which to find savings and efficiencies, and our municipal sector were not immune to that exercise.

Mr. Speaker, the municipal leader said that they were adamant that they wanted revenue sharing kept, and I'm sure that they appreciate it because it is over 100 per cent increase in revenue sharing. In our bigger cities, it's two and a half times what it used to be under the NDP. They like the predictability of it because under the NDP they didn't know from one year to the next what they were going to get.

But, Mr. Speaker, the second thing they wanted was infrastructure money, and in my budget the infrastructure budget has increased. Mr. Speaker, I think that the reductions that we've asked for, after year over year over year of increases, is reasonable. It's two and a half per cent of the shortfall that we're looking for in our budget, Mr. Speaker, and we're asking our municipal sector to help with that.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — If this move had been done in good faith, they would have done it in the open and they would have been clear, Mr. Speaker. But all of these cuts have been anything but clear. And it's not just our municipal partners who are frustrated with this government; 86.3 per cent of Saskatchewan people surveyed this month said they did not support the Sask Party's funding cuts to municipalities. And that doesn't even count

their bill to strip cities, towns, and villages across the province of their access to legal recourse. Will the minister put the brakes on this reckless approach and get back to the table with our municipal leaders?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — And again I will say that it is two and a half per cent that we are asking from our municipal governments. In the big cities it is only 1 per cent of their budget that we're asking for them to find within their budgets. They do have reserves, Mr. Speaker, that they can look to, as well as they can look across their programming, such as we have ours.

This was a very inequitable program that we have targeted. It is not available even to . . . I'm not even too sure if it was given to a third of the municipalities. I believe it was even less than that. All of the cities did not receive it. The majority of the small towns didn't receive it, Mr. Speaker. It has a lot of history to it, to be sure.

But we have a new landscape now, and I think we need to look at this program. We need to look for fairness. We need to look for equity. And we need to look for transparency because nobody seems to understand this program whatsoever.

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

### Reporting of Political Donations

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cuts to families are harsh contrasts to the gifts to the corporations and the wealthy and the well-connected. And the questions are growing about conflict of interests for those ministers. Mr. Speaker, there is an easy way to get rid of these questions. They just need to show support for our bill to get big money out of politics.

They will want to rant about decades gone by, but let's live in the now. *Carpe diem*, Mr. Speaker. We can all put this in the past, behind us. They can put the questions to rest. All they have to do is help us pass the bill. So will they bring Saskatchewan out of the dark ages in election financing laws? Will they support our bill to get big money out of politics?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, all registered parties publicly report their donations and the expenses. They do it so that the process is transparent. It's not new. It's online. It's public. We file this information in our annual report. We file it with Elections Saskatchewan. In the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received nearly \$30 million, the majority of which is from in this province. Only about 10 per cent comes from outside.

Some corporations donate money. Some individuals donate. The average individual donation, \$176; the average corporate donation, \$1,233, Mr. Speaker. Nothing surprising there, Mr. Speaker. We will comply with the law as it is, and we'll make sure that if people have questions, that the questions get

answered. Mr. Speaker, the problem with the NDP is they just don't have an issue to go on right now.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Mr. Speaker, the member from Meewasin used a quote that the Minister of Advanced Education said, and I'm wondering if he could table that quote, please.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly document the quote provided by the member. And I wonder if they'd take the same opportunity to settle some outstanding business in terms of a quote that that Minister of Advanced Education used days ago in this Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I would ask both sides to table documents that they quoted from, and with that we'll carry on to ministerial statements.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 68 — *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of amendments to *The Fuel Tax Act, 2000*. These amendments will implement the 2017-18 budget initiative to reduce the fuel tax exemption on bulk purchases of farm-use diesel from 100 per cent to 80 per cent, effective April 1, 2017. To implement this change, specific amendments to *The Fuel Tax Act, 2000* include:

Section 6 is amended to allow farmers and primary producers with a valid fuel tax exemption permit to purchase tax-reduced marked diesel fuel or tax-exempt propane for use in farming or primary production activities.

Section 6.1 is added to require fuel sellers to collect tax on marked diesel fuel at 20 per cent of the full tax rate on sales to exempt permit holders and to sell propane tax-exempt to exempt permit holders or for heating use.

Section 12.1 is added to allow marked diesel fuel for heating use to be sold tax-exempt when delivered into a tank used exclusively for heating or sold to a permit holder entitled to purchase exempt heating fuel.

And section 17 amends subsection (2) and repeals subsection (4), requiring farmers and primary producers to report importations of marked diesel and exempt propane and pay the applicable fuel tax.

Mr. Speaker, section 22 is amended to add a reference to the new section 12.1 so the various offence provisions listed also

apply to heating fuel.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of amendments to *The Fuel Tax Act, 2000*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved second reading of the Bill No. 68, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in my place to give the initial response, as I've done on numerous occasions on numerous bills, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to give a quick summary of what Bill 68 is all about for those that may be a bit confused as to why the government is taxing every sector of our province that they possibly can.

And, Mr. Speaker, what Bill 68 does, it really, it removes the total tax fuel exemption for farmers, for trappers, for loggers, and fishers who . . . Now the government, the Saskatchewan Party government require them to pay 20 per cent of fuel tax for diesel.

Mr. Speaker, obviously this is something that's going to hurt all these different sectors. We've had various farm groups that have come forward to complain about this action. And, Mr. Speaker, we also know that the effect on trappers, on loggers, and fishers as well is going to be profound.

Now there's no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, as we look at some of the actions of the Saskatchewan Party government as it relates to taxation overall . . . This year, Mr. Speaker, \$1 billion tax grab by the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker — everything from children's clothing to PST on food, as you order food in various restaurants, and now they're hitting the farmers. Now they're hitting the loggers. They're hitting the trappers and they're hitting the fishers, Mr. Speaker, with this particular bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that all the people that are paying all the extra taxes, whether it is property taxes in the cities, whether it is fuel tax as identified in this bill, whether it's children's clothing taxes, those bills, those taxes are compliments of the Saskatchewan Party mismanagement and waste, Mr. Speaker.

And you sprinkle a lot of scandal over that particular party, Mr. Speaker. People can quickly see that this billion-dollar tax grab by this minister through bills of this sort certainly proves our theory over here that this minister does not know what he's doing when it comes to the finances of our province. And the opposition also collectively say that the entire Saskatchewan Party caucus do not know what they are doing when it comes to managing the finances and the hope in the province and the promise that our province has in its future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the actions lately as indicated by the proper management of our finances overall for Saskatchewan, and I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it's not only the official opposition that doesn't have confidence in the current Minister of Finance as a result of taxation measures of this sort. I think it is the city mayors as well, and the towns and

villages mayors that have seen the increase or will see the increase in property tax. Because why? Because this Minister of Finance and the Saskatchewan Party government took away grants-in-lieu, Mr. Speaker. They took away the grants-in-lieu. And what happens now is the cities are scrambling, after they have designed their budget, to try and find the millions of dollars that they have to find in their budgets.

[14:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, yes, there are tough decisions to be made at the municipal level whether it's closing services or programs, Mr. Speaker, but it's also taxing the local citizens. And I want to tell every person in the province of Saskatchewan that live in our towns and our villages and our cities that, as you see the property tax increases come your way, you can thank your local Saskatchewan Party MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. You can thank the Saskatchewan Party caucus. You can thank the Minister of Finance for bringing bills of this sort, bills of this sort, Bill 68, because, Mr. Speaker, they have mismanaged the opportunity that they had during the years that Saskatchewan enjoyed record revenue, a booming economy, and a growing population.

In short, Mr. Speaker, they have squandered the bright future we had at one time and now we are in a situation where we have deficit, we have huge debt, and people are beginning to lose confidence and faith, not only in the Saskatchewan Party government but throughout our province, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing a lot of people very angry about that.

But there is hope, Mr. Speaker. There is hope because obviously the message is getting out to the very backbench of the Saskatchewan Party, where they have finally found their backbone and argued against the library cuts, Mr. Speaker. Today now we hear that the library cuts are going to be reversed. We've had some capitulation around the grants-in-lieu, Mr. Speaker. So we're sitting here saying, well who is in charge over there? Is it the Minister of Finance or is it a few backbenchers?

All we see now, we're seeing that the Minister of Finance's budget is in tatters, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there's somebody doing something wrong over there because there isn't the coordination that one would expect from a government that has been preaching doom and gloom for the last few months, and all of a sudden the Minister of Finance brings down a budget and his own backbenchers are fighting against that budget.

And that's why I tell people, when it comes to fighting back against our government on taxation such as described as Bill 68, Mr. Speaker, the fight has to continue, to keep fighting back on these taxation bills, back on things like STC as well, to encourage the people in Saskatchewan to know this, that there is promise in your action, that there is ways that you can continue fighting back.

And yes, the library funding cut reversal was a small victory for the many fights that are out there, but nonetheless a great victory for those that fought hard to go against this minister's willingness, the Minister of Finance's willingness to cut the library program. And, Mr. Speaker, obviously there's kickback from a few backbenchers over there and from a lot of people

throughout the province that thought this cut to the libraries was bad and that they wouldn't stand for it. The people rose up; they stood up. The opposition supported that effort, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to support those fights.

The problem you have, Mr. Speaker, is that, as you begin to unveil this budget and they begin to capitulate at every second turn, then the question comes from the people of Saskatchewan, the professional people, they say, well who is in charge over there? Who is in charge over there? Is the Minister of Finance presenting his budget . . . They voted on his budget. They all passed the budget, and in a few short weeks they begin to change the budget.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly our position in opposition, that we think they do not know what they do when it comes to managing the finances or the future of our province. And that's why it's important to pay attention to every single bill that this minister and that government brings forward that has any financial implications to the province of Saskatchewan, to her future, and certainly to her current operations.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is with a great amount of concern that we stand in the Assembly and we begin to dissect what is wrong with the Saskatchewan Party, what they have done horribly wrong when it comes to the decisions they've made.

And, Mr. Speaker, those decisions, those decisions are a direct result of mismanagement, scandal, and waste. Because why, Mr. Speaker? They had a decade of record revenue. They had a decade of record revenue, a booming economy, and a growing population. So how is it that after a decade of such largesse in terms of financial support, in terms of business opportunity, and the support of all the optimism throughout the province, why is it today that we're now facing a deficit of \$1.3 billion? Why is it after this government's done their term — and I pray and hope it's their last term — by the year 2021, I think our debt's going to be somewhere around \$23 billion, Mr. Speaker? How could you take it from the pinnacle of success in Saskatchewan to the depths of despair when it comes to our financial management?

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is because they do not know what they're doing. And secondly, Mr. Speaker, it is because of scandal, mismanagement, and waste. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, when you're going to have a financial plan, Mr. Speaker, you have got to have the ability to plan it out first of all.

And I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I don't have any confidence in that Minister of Finance's ability to build a bright future for our province. And that's the reason why, that is the reason why every opportunity that we have in the opposition to stand up and tell the people of Saskatchewan exactly what they're doing, we must remind the people of Saskatchewan where they come from.

The Saskatchewan Party inherited a booming economy, a growing population, and record revenue, and they enjoyed a decade of that prosperity, Mr. Speaker. And today, Mr. Speaker, our debt is forecasted to be 23 billion by the end of 2021. Today we're dealing with a \$1.3 billion deficit. Don't forget, deficit and debts are different, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of people



understand the difference. And they're having a tough time trying to figure out where they go from here because every second day, as we know in the Assembly, through the media, and the rest of the people of Saskatchewan know, they change their mind on some spending plan that they put through their budget. So obviously, Mr. Speaker, someone does not know what they're doing over there. And I would suggest it's the entire cabinet, Mr. Speaker, and especially the Minister of Finance, because obviously you change your mind every second day.

There's something wrong fundamentally within the system that they've created in which you're able to not only begin to tax the heck out of people, but begin to change your mind on some of the issues that we're seeing evidence of, Mr. Speaker. So I think on this note, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot, a lot to say on any financial bill coming our way.

The people of Saskatchewan now have felt the full betrayal of the Saskatchewan Party when it comes to the whole notion of taxation, Mr. Speaker. This is a party, the Saskatchewan Party, and I'll say it again for the fourth time, that had such opportunity for a decade. For 10 years they had record revenue. They had a booming population. They had a growing economy, Mr. Speaker. They had all that promise, and where are we today? A \$1.3 billion deficit for this year alone. We're going towards a \$23 billion debt by 2021. We don't even incorporate, Mr. Speaker, we haven't even incorporated what the P3s [public-private partnership] would cost us for building some of the projects throughout our province, Mr. Speaker.

So let it be known from our perspective, as we've always maintained, the Conservatives, the Saskatchewan Party, and the right-leaning parties of this province have never managed the economy of our province well. Every time they've assumed government, they have left our economy in tatters. They have left our books in the red and, Mr. Speaker, they have left Saskatchewan with no hope.

And once again, Mr. Speaker, we see that trend continuing. And I'm telling the people of Saskatchewan, this is a fine example of how conservatives, or the Saskatchewan Party, have now taken a billion dollars from your pockets. From buying a piece of pizza, Mr. Speaker, from buying a child's pants, Mr. Speaker, from fuel tax rebates for loggers, for trappers, from fuel tax rebates for the farm community, Mr. Speaker, and for the people paying property taxes in our communities, the bill is building.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to say this, but the people of Saskatchewan are the ones that are paying and will be paying for years to come as a result of the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste, Mr. Speaker. We understand that. We understand that in the opposition, Mr. Speaker. And I think those across the way, especially those in that backbench that have sat idly by and had this blind faith that things would work out, Mr. Speaker, they're beginning to hear that the people of Saskatchewan just about had enough of this. They've just about had enough of this.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing through Bill 68 more tax grabs and more job-killing tax grabs that'll hurt the future of this province. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe this government

is done yet. They're targeting our Crowns, which generate revenues and, Mr. Speaker, that is the sad reality, is every opportunity that this province has to rebuild after the Sask Party is gone, Mr. Speaker, they're trying to shut the door on that. And one of those opportunities includes our Crowns.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't have confidence in this Minister of Finance. I don't have confidence in the Sask Party government. I don't have confidence that they'll do the right thing on any front. And we're seeing evidence of that in spades day after day here as we sit in the Assembly.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I give my full support to the member from Saskatoon Nutana, our Finance critic, as she is going to come forward on a continual basis, Mr. Speaker, to tell people why these taxes are hurting our families, our Saskatchewan families, and why only the select few, and the select few rich people, get the benefit of the benefits of Saskatchewan's economy, of Saskatchewan's resource base, and of our future, Mr. Speaker.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, I want to offer our initial comments on this particular bill. We will have a lot more to say about what we think is the doctrine within the Saskatchewan Party caucus, is that we continue to deny the mismanagement, the waste, and the scandals, Mr. Speaker, and all we'll do is continue taxing the people and dressing it up as a necessary option for Saskatchewan, when it wasn't a necessary option, Mr. Speaker.

So again I will point out to the people of Saskatchewan, those are my initial few comments on Bill 68, and I move that we adjourn debate on this bill.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has adjourned debate on Bill No. 68, *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

#### **Bill No. 69 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017*.

This legislation implements various income tax initiatives that were announced on March 22, 2017 as part of the 2017-18 provincial budget. These initiatives support Saskatchewan's growth agenda by reducing corporation and personal income tax rates.

This legislation also modernizes and simplifies many aspects of the provincial tax system, including elimination or reduction of a small number of personal income tax credits, while ensuring that Saskatchewan's taxes remain fair to all residents and businesses, and competitive with neighbouring jurisdictions.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation reduces taxes for every

Saskatchewan income tax payer at every level of income by reducing Saskatchewan's three personal income tax rates by a half point effective this July 1st, 2017 and by another half point effective July 1, 2019. These reductions will help foster greater productivity and investment within the provincial economy.

Other personal income tax changes covered by this legislation include the elimination of the education and tuition tax credits effective July 1, 2017. Unused amounts carried forward from previous taxation years will remain available to be claimed, but new credits cannot be earned after June 30th, 2017.

This legislation also temporarily suspends the annual indexation of the personal income tax system starting with the 2018 taxation year. Mr. Speaker, this legislation makes Saskatchewan's business taxes more competitive with our neighbouring provinces by reducing the Saskatchewan general corporation rate by a half point effective July 1, 2017 and by another half point effective July 1, 2019.

When fully implemented, the general tax rate will have declined from 12 per cent to 11 per cent, the lowest rate in Canada. The tax rate reduction will be pro-rated for corporate taxation years that straddle the effective dates. In conjunction with this change, the manufacturing and processing profits tax reduction, which lowers the general corporate income tax by up to 2 percentage points for eligible M & P [manufacturing and processing] income, is being maintained. This means Saskatchewan's effective corporate income tax rate on eligible M & P income can be as low as 9 per cent, the lowest tax rate on manufacturing and processing in the entire country.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, also increases the refundable manufacturing and processing investment tax credit on both new and used equipment from 5 per cent to 6 per cent for corporations making qualifying expenditures.

[15:00]

The M & P income tax credit will continue to encourage capital investment by manufacturing and processing companies in Saskatchewan.

In addition, the dividend tax credit for . . . sorry, Mr. Speaker. The dividend tax credit rate for eligible dividends will be reduced for each of the 2017 through 2020 taxation years to reflect the reduction in the general corporate income tax rate. These changes will reduce the effective dividend tax credit rate for eligible dividends from the current 11 per cent to 10 per cent by 2020, thereby maintain the current degree of integration between the provincial corporate and personal income tax systems for eligible dividend income.

This legislation also provides for phasing out, over four years beginning in 2017, a special tax reduction which currently allows credit unions to pay tax at the small-business rate on income above the small-business threshold. Credit unions will continue to be exempt from the provincial capital tax.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also introduces the administrative provisions that will allow corporations to claim a Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive tax rebate. The Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive is the first-of-its-kind patent

box tax incentive in North America. Separate legislation setting out the eligibility criteria for this incentive has been previously introduced by the Minister of the Economy. That legislation will allow the Minister of the Economy to issue eligibility certificates to eligible corporations.

*The Income Tax Act, 2000* is being amended to allow eligible corporations to use their eligibility certificates to claim a rebate of corporate income taxes already paid. This tax rebate will effectively reduce the Saskatchewan corporate income tax rate to 6 per cent on taxable income earned from the commercialization of qualifying intellectual property in the province for a period of 10 years. Companies will be able to extend the benefit period to 15 years if the qualifying intellectual property is substantially developed in the province of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive is designed to complement Saskatchewan's existing competitive advantages and encourage firms to establish new operations in the province.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation also reforms the research and development tax credit to better target smaller and medium-sized Saskatchewan innovation companies. A new refundable 10 per cent R & D [research and development] tax credit is now available effective April 1, 2017 for the first \$1 million in annual qualifying expenditures incurred in Saskatchewan by Canadian-controlled private corporations.

Qualifying expenditures in excess of this annual limit, as well as qualifying expenditures incurred by other corporations, will remain eligible for the existing 10 per cent non-refundable R & D tax credit. The total of the refundable and non-refundable R & D tax credits that may be claimed by a corporation is being capped at \$1 million per year.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the impact of provincial sales tax changes introduced in separate legislation is mitigated for lower income residents, this legislation enhances the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit effective July 1, 2017. The enhancement will increase the maximum basic adult component and the spousal equivalent component by \$100, from \$246 to \$346; increase the child component by \$40 per child, from 96 to 136, to a maximum of \$272 per family; and increase the benefit clawback rate from 2 per cent to 2.75 per cent.

Individuals with annual income up to \$32,643 will receive the maximum benefit of \$346, while those with incomes between 32,643 and 45,225 will receive a partial benefit based on their level of income.

A number of technical amendments are also required to various sections of the Act in order to properly legislate the personal and corporate income tax reductions announced in the 2017-18 budget and to update the M & P exporter tax incentives and primary steel production rebate.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved second reading of Bill No. 69, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well, here we go again, Mr. Speaker. And as much as the minister may be pleased to move some of the amendments through the Bill 69, the people of Saskatchewan are not pleased to begin paying almost a billion dollars this year more in PST that the minister certainly unveiled on budget day, Mr. Speaker.

What is happening as a result of this bill, as we look at some of the changes being proposed in Bill 69, Mr. Speaker, the matter of fact is that the Saskatchewan Party is cutting taxes for the wealthy and for corporations while they're making families pay nearly \$1 billion more in PST.

Mr. Speaker, some of the tax hikes that were identified in the minister's bill just a few seconds ago will cost the average family \$442 more each and every year, Mr. Speaker. And that is a crying shame because as we all know, many families find it very difficult and they struggle each and every day, Mr. Speaker, to make ends meet. And now the government is reaching in their pocket and pulling out an additional \$442 in all these little tax increases that they have planned through Bill 69.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I had the dubious pleasure of going to buy pizza from one of the pizza stores, and as I paid my \$5, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman behind the pizza said, you need another 30 cents, he said to me. And I said, what's the 30 cents for? And he said, oh, we're charging PST now on pizza, he said. Oh. I had to dig in my pocket and pull out another 30 cents for that piece of pizza, Mr. Speaker. And I was wondering, I wonder if this is the Sask Party's strategy to slay the deficit of \$1.3 billion, one pizza slice at a time, Mr. Speaker. And I was thinking, how many pieces of pizza does a guy have to buy to cover the deficit of \$1.3 billion deficit for this year alone?

And I thought maybe I should ask the Minister of Finance, what would be your guesstimate as to how many pieces of pizza I'd have to eat to cover your deficit? But, Mr. Speaker, I didn't ask him because I don't trust his numbers. So I'm still trying to figure that out. And this is the reason why more learned people than I will have greater detail and greater arguments around what they're planning on doing to recover from this deficit and, Mr. Speaker, more so the debt.

And a lot of people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, know that there is a huge difference between deficit and debt. And as a result of last year, we're \$1.3 billion less in revenues than we had in expenses, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sorry, but the bottom line is that when we hear the Saskatchewan Party tell people, oh well, the resource revenue goes down. Well yes, you should have anticipated that. And we would find it funny over here if it wasn't such a serious issue.

But then we find out, well what's your plan? What is your strategy? And as I said at the outset, all of the entire Sask Party caucus collectively crossing their fingers and their toes, hoping each and every day that the commodity prices will rebound . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, that ain't much of a plan. That ain't a plan at all.

And I'm sorry, but the Minister of Finance during one of the committee sessions, I believe, indicated that his projections on the resource prices in the province of Saskatchewan were bang on. He said they were bang on. So which leads me to point out

to the people of Saskatchewan, well if the Minister of Finance's projections were bang on, why didn't he tell the people of Saskatchewan prior to the last election that they were facing a \$1.3 billion deficit? Why didn't he tell them that he was going to reach in their pockets to help cover for their mismanagement, scandal, and waste, one pizza slice at a time, or one paycheque at a time, or one purchase of a child's clothing at a time? Why didn't he tell them that, Mr. Speaker?

And why didn't he tell them that he was going to have all these corporate giveaways, Mr. Speaker, while families continue to struggle through higher power bills? But wait a minute, the higher power bills came as a result of their carbon capture tax, when they put in the carbon capture plant through SaskPower. That cost 1.5 billion. Or how about the \$2 billion project around the bypass?

And, Mr. Speaker, it goes on to show that our argument from the opposition on every bill they bring forward has to point out to the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Party do not know what they're doing. And that's why we lack confidence in their ability to even begin to address the whole notion around this past budget when they were talking about trying to achieve a balanced budget within three years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what kind of calculator that the Minister of Finance is using, but we don't have any confidence that within a three-year time frame that the Saskatchewan Party's going to have the deficit figured out, Mr. Speaker, because based on their track record thus far, they have capitulated left, right, and centre, Mr. Speaker. They do not know what it takes to ensure that there's a sound financial plan in place.

And, Mr. Speaker, more importantly is that they simply do not lack, Mr. Speaker, they do not lack a team discipline to make some of the tough decisions to make sure that Saskatchewan stays on track financially. They didn't lack it . . . They didn't have it 10 years ago, Mr. Speaker. They never had it five years ago and they certainly don't have it today.

So I think it's important for the people of Saskatchewan to know what is in these bills, as Bill 69, what impacts it's going to have on their family. Who is going to be hurt by this particular bill? And, Mr. Speaker, the net effect, the net effect, Mr. Speaker, is that absolutely everyone in the province of Saskatchewan, everyone I know is going to be impacted by the taxation regime of the Saskatchewan Party government as a result of their scandal, mismanagement, and waste, Mr. Speaker.

And as you look at the impacts to families, on this particular bill itself, \$442 more. Now if we incorporate the extra property taxes that they're going to have to pay . . . They're going to have to pay higher power bills, Mr. Speaker. They're going to have to pay other costs that the Sask Party is now taxing.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister sits there and says, well we're actually giving some reductions by one-quarter per cent on some of the tax brackets over the next three, four years. So it's like me going back to the pizza place and saying here's my five bucks for the piece of pizza and here's 30 cents. But can you explain to me why I'm paying 30 cents? And if that pizza guy is

like the Sask Party, he'll say well we put a bit of pepperoni on that pizza. But you're taxing the pepperoni so I'm paying more on that. Well we're actually heating it for you. But you're paying more on your power bill because of their carbon capture tax plan.

So everywhere you go, Mr. Speaker, everywhere you go, you're paying taxes and more taxes and more taxes because the Sask Party can't figure out their financial game plan. Mr. Speaker, we have faced deficit after deficit after deficit under the Saskatchewan Party government and once again they're here with their voodoo math to try and tell the people of Saskatchewan that they're on the right track.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the Assembly, we do not believe them for one bit. We know that they do not know what they're doing. We know that half the caucus across the way lack the confidence in the Minister of Finance because he's capitulated so many times the last few weeks. We know that they will not slay the deficit in three years.

But, Mr. Speaker, what's more important is that we know that . . . It's my belief that more than half of them will head out of Dodge here fairly soon because obviously, Mr. Speaker, as the province grapples with more debt and more deficit, some very, very tough decisions will have to be made in the future. Based on what they're saying, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that they're going to have any ability to deal with the deficit over a short three years, never mind the debt.

So I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but on this side of the Assembly, we do not buy for one instant that the Saskatchewan Party government has this figured out. And the people of Saskatchewan, like myself, we will pay those taxes because we enjoy living in this great province. We will pay the taxes and the PST on that pizza I purchase, on the children's clothing that my daughter purchases, on the property tax we pay back home, Mr. Speaker. These are some of the things that many of our people will be getting to pay. And the people throughout the entire province, right from Canora to Yorkton, Mr. Speaker, to Cannington, to Meadow Lake, they'll be paying more taxes as a result of the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

And after all is said and done and the debt balloons to 23 billion, which we will owe as a province — and I would speculate even more by the time the Sask Party is done — then who is going to pick up the pieces? Because I assure you that half of them across the way will either be gone on their own voluntary exit, Mr. Speaker, and they'll be going on to greener pastures while somebody else here has to clean up the mess. But I'll say this today, that every single one of their names will be read into the record of those that sat by in these tough times, in these tough times, to be part of a government that destroyed Saskatchewan's future by taxing the people ad nauseam, by selling off the Crowns, by putting us further into debt to P3s, and really killing the opportunity for Saskatchewan's future.

[15:15]

Their names will be remembered, Mr. Speaker, and this Minister of Finance will also be remembered for his inability to balance our books, to build on the hopes and dreams, especially from a time and place when they had a decade-long opportunity

with record revenues . . . Let's not forget that. They had record revenues. They had a booming economy and they had a growing population. Let us not forget that. They had all that opportunity. And where are we a short 10, 11 years later, Mr. Speaker? We're going to be aiming for a \$23 billion debt by 2021. We're \$1.3 billion in debt this year alone, Mr. Speaker, and yet we're seeing a billion-dollar tax grab by the Saskatchewan Party government.

And it's no wonder that the people are saying, enough of this act; it's time to get rid of the Saskatchewan Party and bring in a party that is able to build our future from a compassionate, balanced perspective, Mr. Speaker. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, on our rebound, on our effort to rebuild our party, we are obviously meeting with a lot of high-quality people that have some good history and great academic ability on the financial front. And we see evidence of that on the medical front; we're seeing evidence of that on the educational front, that as we're building our team, we know we're building hope for the people of Saskatchewan. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, we tell the people of Saskatchewan to have patience, to continue fighting until the day we get rid of the Saskatchewan Party, because rest assured that the values that we have as a party is the same values that we hear echoed throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is time for a change. It is time for a change because Bill 69 brings more taxation, more burden, and more doom and gloom in the future of Saskatchewan simply and primarily because the Sask Party can't figure it out. And it's because of their mismanagement. It's because of their scandals. It is because of their waste. And now you will see, Mr. Speaker, a lot of them will be heading out of Dodge because all of a sudden the tough times are coming to Saskatchewan. That's generally when the Saskatchewan Party and conservatives head out of town for greener pastures, when someone else, namely the people of Saskatchewan, have to clean up the mess.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say on Bill 69. And I move that we adjourn debate on this bill.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 69, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by this Assembly to do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. The Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:18.]



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