



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

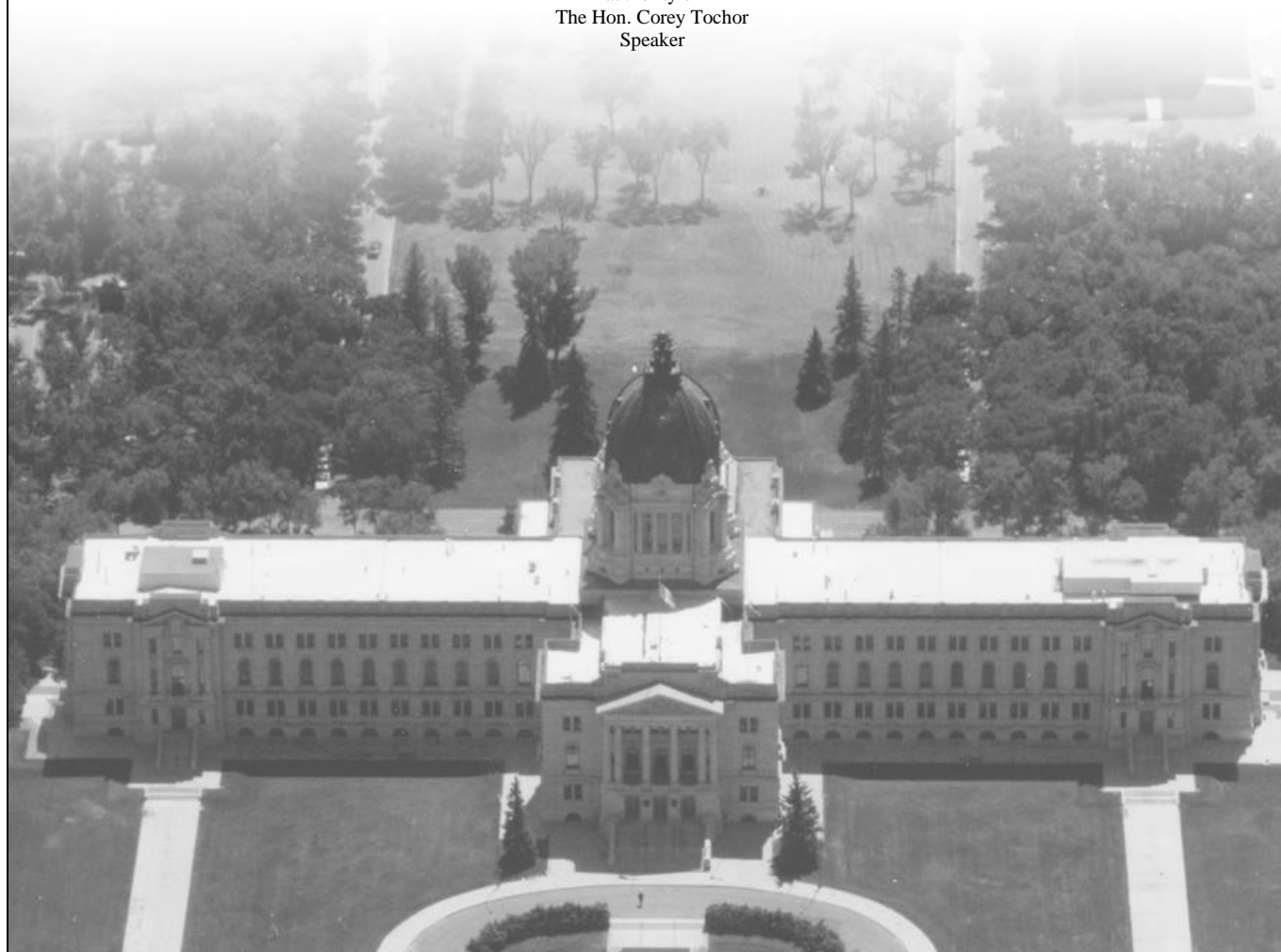
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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

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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 seek leave from the House 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. It's an honour today to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, some very distinguished guests who've joined us in your gallery. With us today, on his first official visit to the province of Saskatchewan, is Mr. Gunn Kim, the consul general of the Republic of Korea. He's based in Vancouver. And he's joined by Consul Kangjun Lee as well as Mr. Hyungshik Jung, the director general of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency.

Mr. Speaker, the consul general arrived in our province yesterday. He's going to spend a couple of days here in Regina and also later in Saskatoon as well, meeting with officials from government as well as our universities, with the representatives of our own Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership or STEP. And while he's here, the consul general will have a chance to meet with members of the province's growing Korean community, a community that has made this province a much better place, Mr. Speaker.

And the timing of this particular visit is fortuitous. It comes only months after Saskatchewan's first-ever trade mission to Korea, something I had the honour of leading, Mr. Speaker, just as I've mentioned, a few months ago.

Mr. Speaker, it also, this visit also comes just a few years after the signing of the Canada-South Korea free trade agreement, which I think is a very, very important instrument executed by the former federal government, supported by the current federal government as well. We have a tremendous opportunity to work with Korea, to strengthen an already strong relationship with a country that has been referenced as the miracle of our times, Mr. Speaker.

And it's easy to see why people would refer to Korea and its history as a miracle, as an economic miracle. In just 50 years, South Korea has seen its GDP [gross domestic product] double nine times and the value of its exports grow by more than 300,000 per cent. That's just in 50 years. The progress has been astonishing and is a credit to the economy and the people of South Korea.

The good news for our province is that over the last four years

our exports have, Mr. Speaker, increased by 200 per cent. Our exports to Korea, South Korea, have increased by 200 per cent. And so may I just say, on behalf of a grateful province, thank you. Mr. Speaker, we are very grateful for the relationship that sees Saskatchewan shipping potash and canola oil and wheat and malt for some very, very good Korean beer, and flaxseed to their country.

Mr. Speaker, on our trade mission we met with buyers for those products, as well as other customers on our mission, and food processors. And may I just say in the company of our delegation, we had the chance to meet with the CEO [chief executive officer] of Emart, which is sort of the Wal-Mart of Korea — their largest retailer, 160 stores. And they're keenly interested in what we might have to offer them from our province in the way of sustainable foods, Mr. Speaker, healthy alternatives from a food perspective, and shelf-ready products. And I know that relationship continues.

Korea has invested directly in our uranium industry as well, something we welcome. And there's also an interest in our enhanced oil recovery technology we have here, and carbon capture and sequestration, clean coal technology that we have as well. Mr. Speaker, we have 12 academic agreements with post-secondary institutions in Korea.

And there are other things that bind us, Mr. Speaker, powerful bonds indeed, like those that were forged at Kapyong, for example, from April 22 to 25, Mr. Speaker, of 1951. That battle was very, very important and that is where, Mr. Speaker, Allied forces, but Canadians and Koreans, stood shoulder to shoulder in the defence of liberty. Mr. Speaker, indeed our relationship is founded on the appreciation of those basic values as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to our delegation, I want to welcome them here to the Legislative Assembly. I want to thank them for coming on this mission. Mr. Speaker, we want to thank, through them, the people of Korea, with whom we have this dynamic partnership that's responsible for a lot of well-being on both sides of the trade relationship. And I would just ask all members of the House to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly a pleasure to join with the Premier and welcome this very important delegation from South Korea to the Saskatchewan legislature. Thank you so very much for your presence here today. I'd like to welcome Mr. Gunn Kim, consul general of the Republic of Korea in Vancouver; Mr. Kangjun Lee, consul of the Republic of Korea in Vancouver; and Mr. Hyungshik Jung, director general for Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency. It's a pleasure to have you in Saskatchewan.

As the Premier identified, we have a very strong and important relationship with South Korea, and certainly your presence here today strengthens that. That relationship exists on many fronts, from education through to democracy through to economic ties.

Certainly our exports to your country, from potash through to the world's finest agricultural exports, Mr. Speaker, is

something that we value. And certainly the trade agreement, the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement offers really so much opportunity for both our countries and certainly for Saskatchewan.

A relationship like this is one that you need to nourish and continue to grow, which is why I'm glad that you're here today. And it's important to note that Koreans, Canadian-Koreans have made enormous contributions to our province, to our country, and will continue to shape and build our province and our country.

And just noting the ties that bind, the deep ties that bind, it's just worthy to note that we're proud to stand together as allies for democracy, Mr. Speaker.

So on behalf of a grateful opposition, a grateful province, it's my pleasure to welcome the fine delegation from South Korea to the Saskatchewan Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce, Mr. Speaker, in your gallery, some guests from the MS [multiple sclerosis] Society. Mr. Speaker, we have Erin Kuan, who is president of Saskatchewan and Manitoba divisions — we just ask each delegate to give us a wave as they're introduced; Bonnie Gleim, who is Chair of the Saskatchewan board; and Eugene Paquin, who is Chair of the Saskatchewan government relations committee and member of the Saskatchewan board. We want to thank them for all the good work that they do, Mr. Speaker.

There's almost no one in this province who's been untouched by this insidious disease. Canada has the highest rates in the world, Mr. Speaker. And again, we want to thank them for all the good work they do.

Later today they're hosting a reception for members on both sides of the House. I know there'll be a very good turnout and I look forward to speaking with them there. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this legislature to please give them a warm welcome to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to join with the minister in welcoming the folks from the MS Society today. Bonnie Gleim, Erin Kuan, Eugene Paquin, it's always good to see you. I know that we'll have an opportunity to chat later, but I always appreciate the information they bring to us about research that's being done, about support that needs to happen.

I know a particular conversation this summer touched on an area of passion and interest for me, and that's supporting caregivers, Mr. Speaker. That's a very important part of the puzzle, and I really appreciated the opportunity to have that discussion with them this past summer, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I'd like to ask my colleagues to join in welcoming these folks to their legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I want to introduce a number of ovarian cancer survivors that have joined us here today, Mr. Speaker, and I'd just ask them to maybe give a little wave as I read their name. First of all we have Anne Chase; we have Coralee Found; we have Cindy Rottenbacher; we have Janice Lebell; Lynn Baumann; Rosann Schaeffer; Rita Grant; and Rosemarie Strother-Stewart, and she's joined by John Strother-Stewart.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals, these ovarian cancer survivors are here to join with us today as May 8 is World Ovarian Cancer Day, Mr. Speaker, and they're joining us to raise awareness for the early detection of ovarian cancer. And I understand that there will be a member's statement coming shortly, Mr. Speaker. But I ask all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in welcoming these very special people to their Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure again to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these guests, survivors, ovarian cancer survivors, here today on World Ovarian Cancer Day. I know it's an important day to talk about more research funding and improved access to treatment and early detection.

I know that in terms of relative funding, ovarian cancer actually falls a little further down in the queue than it probably should, Mr. Speaker, and that survival rates for women living with ovarian cancer haven't improved in 50 years, Mr. Speaker.

There's lots of work that we need to do in that regard, so with that I'd like to thank the women here today for your continued advocacy to make sure that your elected representatives have a good understanding of the issues, and I just want to mark World Ovarian Cancer Day today and welcome these guests to their legislature too.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always an honour each year to welcome the grade 12 students from the Humboldt Collegiate Institute, and they're accompanied — and it will be no surprise — by their teacher, Mr. David Millette, as well as a teacher, Mr. Tom Schwinghamer. It is truly something that this group comes each and every year to the legislature, and I enjoy meeting with them and answering their questions. And they're pretty creative, Mr. Speaker, on the questions they have to ask. So I want to ask everyone to please join me in welcoming these students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in the east gallery is a friend to many in this Assembly, and that's a young leader within our province, Nigel Detbrenner-Rempel, who serves as the president of the

Saskatchewan Young New Democrats, Mr. Speaker. He's an all-round good guy. He hails from Nipawin, although he's lived in different parts of the province. He's studying up at the University of Saskatchewan. He's a goaltender, a hockey player, and he's somebody that certainly I greatly value his involvement in the affairs of our province, Mr. Speaker. So to you and through you, I ask you to join with me in welcoming Nigel Detbrenner-Rempel to his Assembly.

And he's joined with somebody's who's been introduced here before, but that would be Zach Nelson from Prince Albert, again a brilliant, bright young person, an incredible baker and chef as well, Mr. Speaker. And it's having young people like this engaged in our province that gives me significant hope for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again today to present a petition opposing the Sask Party's cuts to spiritual care. Mr. Speaker, just a couple of short weeks ago the minister told me that there was some inequity, that spiritual care wasn't a program that was offered all throughout the province. So instead of enhancing this important program, Mr. Speaker, this government has chosen to cut it, completely eliminating spiritual care within Saskatchewan health facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that Saskatchewan will be the only province within Canada to not fund this support for patients, residents, and their families seeking wellness. The petitioners point out that the Sask Party hid their plan to scrap funding for spiritual care within health region facilities during last year's election. Not a word did they mention this in their platform, Mr. Speaker.

The petitioners point out that spiritual care responds to the spiritual and emotional needs of patients and residents and provides a compassionate listening presence in times of crisis. They point out that spiritual care supports families, patients, and residents in making difficult decisions and that spiritual care can provide support for all families, patients, and residents in obtaining comfort and support, regardless of faith or belief, 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 immediately reinstate the funding for spiritual care services in this province's health region facilities.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, today this petition is signed by citizens from Elbow, Strongfield, Loreburn, Saskatoon, Prince Albert. And I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens all across the province 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 the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to 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 of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners come from all across Saskatchewan. I'm pleased to present on their behalf.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I stand in my place to support the member from Prince Albert Northcote who's asking anybody in the Assembly, anybody at all, to help her in her fight for a second bridge for Prince Albert. So this petition is from the city of bridge, in which the people in Prince Albert and area know that the need for a second bridge for that region has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert and all the communities north of Prince Albert and the businesses that send people and products through this gateway to the North require a final solution.

And the prayer basically says to the Saskatchewan Party government that they have got to:

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

And the people that have signed this petition, as I do every day and every week and every month, Mr. Speaker, are from all throughout Saskatchewan. On this particular page they're primarily from Birch Hills and Prince Albert. And I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition concerning pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province would like to bring to our attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity, and that all women should be paid equitably, and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors

where the Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction, provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of the 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'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Due to funding cuts, Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its door during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress. The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile has put stress on Prince Albert Police Service, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide counselling and intervention services to clients. I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, individuals across the province are concerned that the third-largest city in our province does not have a crisis service available to the citizens at all times, but in particular, mobile crisis provides services to individuals outside of Prince Albert as well. And this particular petition was signed by individuals from Birch Hills and 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 in support of sexual abuse prevention curriculum in Saskatchewan. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: that Stats Canada data shows that 55 per cent of all victims of sexual offences were children under the age of 18; that child sexual abuse has lasting impacts throughout a child's lifetime, and these effects include mental health impacts such as PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], depression, anxiety, panic attacks, and low self-esteem; that impacts also include decreased school attendance and achievement and decreased productivity throughout the lifespan; that victims of childhood sexual abuse are four times more likely to commit suicide; and that there is currently no comprehensive elementary or secondary curriculum regarding the prevention and reporting of child sexual abuse in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan take immediate and concrete action to develop and implement Erin's law; and that such legislation would ensure that a comprehensive health education program be developed and implemented

in grades pre-K through 12, along with training for school staff on the prevention of sexual child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Regina. 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 rates of domestic violence amongst all provinces in Canada.

And one in three Canadian workers have experienced domestic violence, and for many of them the violence follows them to their workplace. 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 survivors of domestic violence in Saskatchewan.

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

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. With cuts of over 5 per cent to colleges and universities around the province, Mr. Speaker, this budget is resulting in layoffs and job losses at the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, and Sask Polytechnic. We're seeing increases in tuition at the University of Regina. And education is becoming less affordable in a context where we're also seeing the cuts to the tax rebate for tuition and books and cuts to student scholarships and other supports.

Mr. Speaker, 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 petition today is signed by individuals from Regina and Rouleau. I do so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

National Mining Week

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This week marks National Mining Week throughout Canada. It is a week to celebrate the important role that mining plays in the lives of Canadian people.

It's difficult to imagine a life without minerals or metals. We use them and rely on them every day from everything to mobile devices, computers, TVs, to musical instruments and vehicles. That's why the theme of this year's mining week is Highlighting Canada's Global Leadership in Exploration and Mining.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has long been recognized as a global mining leader. Our country produces some 60 minerals and metals, leading in the production of potash and ranking among the top five global producers for primary aluminium, cobalt, diamonds, uranium, gold, nickel, platinum group metals, tungsten, and the list goes on.

And, Mr. Speaker, our province holds the distinction and continues to hold the distinction of being the biggest mining leader within our country. According to the annual survey of mining companies, Saskatchewan has and is now the world's most attractive jurisdiction for the world of mining. Saskatchewan ranked number one out of more than 100 jurisdictions on the investment attraction index, up from second place in 2015. Our province is the world's largest producer and exporter of potash, and we're also the second-leading uranium producer in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me in recognizing National Mining Week and in celebrating our province's contribution to making our country a global leader in mining. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

World Ovarian Cancer Day

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 8th has been proclaimed as World Ovarian Cancer Day. An estimated 2,800 Canadian women will be newly diagnosed with ovarian cancer this year alone. Every day in Canada, approximately five women lose their battle with this terrible disease.

Ovarian cancer is the fifth most common cancer among women. It's also the deadliest, with a five-year survival rate of just 45 per cent. Mr. Speaker, ovarian cancer often goes undetected until it has progressed to an advanced stage, as early symptoms are subtle and often confused with less serious conditions. In some cases, symptoms only appear when it is too late. Unlike many other cancers, there's no effective screening test for the early detection of ovarian cancer.

We encourage women to be very proactive in your physical health and well-being. We must take care of those who we love the most — our sisters, our mothers, daughters, and friends — educating and raising awareness on the most serious of cancers. We are all affected by this devastating disease as it can take a loved one so quickly from our homes and our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in supporting those who have defeated ovarian cancer and encouraging all those who are currently fighting this awful disease. Thank you.

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

Launch Youth Performance Festival

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During the last week of April, I was pleased to attend the first-ever Launch Youth Performance Festival here in Regina.

Founded by the Globe Theatre, FadaDance, Saskatchewan Filmpool, and the Artesian Presents, Launch is a brand new festival that shares original new works created by and featuring youth artists in a local context. The festival creates opportunities for Saskatchewan's arts organizations to work with our youth and functions as a place where young artists can demonstrate their creative potential to their communities.

Mr. Speaker, my daughter, Hannah, was amongst the performers that participated in the festival. She's part of the Fada Youth Company, and they choreographed and performed *Lo-Fi/Hi-Fi*, Mr. Speaker.

I'm also pleased to note that one of our very own Pages had a starring role. Emma Walter performed the role of Diantha in the Globe youth company's production of *Folk-Lore*, a work that young artists of the Globe Theatre School constructed, created, and performed themselves, based on memorable childhood experiences and stories. And she did a great job, Mr. Speaker.

Launch not only demonstrates the impressive talent found in our province but also the hard work and dedication that young people are investing in the arts and in our communities. Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me today to congratulate the Launch Performance Festival and the young performers who worked so hard to create and perform their original works. And let's all make sure to send out special congratulations to our Page, the talented Emma Walter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Family First Radiothon Fundraiser

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past Thursday and Friday, 800 CHAB radio held their annual Family First Radiothon at the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital in Moose Jaw. Throughout the 36-hour period, I'm proud to announce that the 2017 radiothon raised a whopping \$159,383, exceeding their goal of \$150,000.

For a number of years, volunteers, families, and 800 CHAB staff have held the Family First Radiothon to raise money to help improve and save the lives of patients at Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital. The generous donations are used to purchase a variety of new equipment and tools for the intensive unit, surgical unit, and the emergency room.

Mr. Speaker, our current health care system requires a high degree of specialized professionals, technology, and innovation

to care for patients with a range of medical needs. Therefore in order for the city of Moose Jaw and surrounding communities to provide these crucial services for patients, donors and community support is needed.

[14:00]

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to send my sincere gratitude to the volunteers and donors of the 800 CHAB Family First Radiothon. With these big-hearted donations from people across the province, the staff of the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital have the resources to work towards improving existing medical technologies and delivering of care services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Sports Facility

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 28th I had the honour of attending the Merlis Belsher Place groundbreaking ceremony at the University of Saskatchewan along with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport; the Minister of Justice; and the member from Saskatoon Westview.

In 1930 the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Rutherford arena was officially opened. For over 80 years, Rutherford Rink has been home to the University of Saskatchewan Huskies hockey teams. The rink has also provided the university campus and community members with a facility to hold tournaments, skating lessons, public skating, and the annual campus rivalry between two U of S colleges, the Agros and the Engineers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that with numerous fundraising drives held by the university, Saskatoon citizens, and with the help of a generous \$12.25 million donation from U of S alumnus Merlis Belsher, Rutherford Rink will be replaced and renamed Merlis Belsher Place.

Construction on the new multi-use facility is set to begin sometime next week. This facility will provide Saskatoon Minor Hockey with 1,500 hours per year of ice time as well as two full-sized basketball courts.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the U of S and the city of Saskatoon for their incredible fundraising commitments and efforts. I would also like to extend my sincere thank you to Merlis Belsher and Ron and Jane Graham for their generous support and donations to help construct this state-of-the-art multi-purpose facility. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Work Progresses on Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday I along with the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford had the privilege to join with hundreds of people from the community, health professionals, and construction partners to celebrate that the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford is now 60 per cent

complete, is on time for completion, and is on budget.

Those of us from the North Battleford area have been seeing this amazing complex rise up over the last couple of years, and the progress has been astounding. This fast progress can be attributed to the contractors who have put in more than 535,000 hours of work to keep the new Sask Hospital North Battleford on time and on budget. I would also like to note that 20 per cent of the workers on site are indigenous, with 25 per cent of the companies involved so far are from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it was a fitting milestone that fell at the conclusion of Mental Health Week and shows how our government has been investing where it counts to make sure that Saskatchewan has world-class facilities. And it shows that our government is acting on the recommendations in the mental health and addictions action plan. There's increasingly an innovative approach to delivering mental health care and supports, which will ensure people get the help they need when they need it and in the best possible environment.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking all those who are working so hard to make this project happen, and thank the community of North Battleford which has rallied being this project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Census Shows Saskatchewan Has Highest Proportion of Young People

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to announce that in Canada, Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of young people. This was announced in the newest census data release here in Saskatchewan last week. Mr. Speaker, this contrasts the record of the members opposite. We must not forget the generations of youth who left our province during the time of the NDP [New Democratic Party].

Saskatchewan has changed in the past decade, becoming more and more attractive for young people to stay and raise a family. Year after year, there are more opportunities becoming available for youth in business, education, and tourism. Not only are youth staying in Saskatchewan, there are many newcomers joining our communities each day as well.

In the recent census, Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of young people aged 14 and below, which saw significant increase between the years of 2011 and 2016. The commitment our government has shown to younger generations and their future is reflected in this census, and the future of our economy and workforce is looking bright for all generations. With new schools opening as soon as this fall, more communities rising from the ground, Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in celebrating this government's commitment to young people across Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Before question period, I'd like to thank members for their co-operation in reducing the partisanship in

the manner that they have been treating each other in the recent weeks. In this vein, I advise members that in accordance with the rules, I will make my decision on the privilege case before orders of the day.

Let's have a respectful question period today. Remember that vigorous debating of ideas and policies are encouraged in this Assembly, but we shouldn't debate the character and motives of hon. members on both sides of our Assembly.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Details of Land Transactions

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this government likes to pick winners and losers. While the Sask Party tells Saskatchewan people they have to accept higher taxes, funding cuts, and job losses, they're handing out a \$60 million corporate tax break, \$11 million to a couple of friends for their GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal, 300 acres of land to CP [Canadian Pacific] Rail for free, and the list just goes on and on and on. This while nuns, landowners, and Saskatchewan people got ripped off with the Sask Party's GTH scandal.

Mr. Speaker, before the Premier stands up and grandstands or maybe waves a supposed secret memo, I want to ask him a simple question. If he says CP Rail's treatment is defensible, why did SaskPower not get the same treatment? Why was this Crown corporation, who belongs to all of us, why was it forced to pay \$25 million? Are our Crowns really nothing more than cash cows to that Premier?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank my hon. friend for the question, Mr. Speaker. I would take exception, perhaps, to some of the preamble. I would point out that even after this budget made some tax changes, our taxes are much, much lower than they were in 2007 when we took over. Taxes for Saskatchewan families, for farmers and businesses, all much, much lower — for seniors as well — much, much lower than they were when we first had the honour of forming the government in 2007.

And as to the member's question, you know, Mr. Speaker, if you look through the cabinet documents that we have quoted here from when members opposite were in government, they understood the importance of having an anchor tenant, especially CP Rail, at the GTH. That's why they approved \$33 million, Mr. Speaker, the NDP approved \$33 million to make that happen. Mr. Speaker, they were working with the city of Regina. They were working with CP Rail. And by the way, it was exactly the right thing to do, because in order for a hub like this to be successful, there needs to be rail access.

So, Mr. Speaker, as per the NDP plan, we moved ahead with CP Rail to ensure that rail service was there. Subsequent to that, all of the tenants . . . And, Mr. Speaker, we just had an announcement last week of a brand new tenant paying about 260,000 an acre and creating jobs at the GTH. But as a result of the deal initiated by the NDP with the anchor being CP Rail,

we've had commercial rates for subsequent tenants, mostly the private sector, Mr. Speaker, and in this particular case a Crown corporation.

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

Closing of Saskatchewan Transportation Corporation

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, lots of spin and noise, but not a single answer about why SaskPower was forced to pay \$25 million for half the amount of land. It shows sort of the respect that they have, or the disrespect they have for our Crown corporations, that of course are world-class companies proudly built by generations. And our Crowns of course are service-providing, job-creating, money-making innovators, and they provide thousands of good, local, mortgage-paying jobs in every corner of the province, on top of, of course, keeping rates low and services provided across the province.

You know, the Sask Party's putting that economic impact — thousands of head office jobs and thousands of other jobs through hundreds of small businesses connected through their supply chains — on the chopping block.

Mr. Speaker, they said that STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] was not a sell-off. Now we see that their cabinet is ordering STC to now sell off its assets by "sale, transfer, exchange, or any other manner that STC considers appropriate." Sale, Mr. Speaker, in a rushed and desperate sale that's not even being handled by CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], avoiding accountability and oversight. With all this at risk, with the loss of STC, the countless lives and communities impacted, why is the Sask Party moving ahead with this desperate sell-off? Why won't the Premier finally do the right thing and scrap this fire sale?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question. Again I don't agree with the preamble necessarily, Mr. Speaker, because what we do now going forward with the Crown corporations — much as the NDP planned with SaskEnergy when they were in government — is that we are not going to entertain any sort of partnership that risks head office jobs, that risks affordable rates for Saskatchewan people, that risks the kind of economic impact that the member was quite properly canvassing in his question, Mr. Speaker. And so we simply won't be going forward with any arrangements, any partnerships, unless we can check those boxes and ensure that in fact this will strengthen the Crowns.

With respect to STC, Mr. Speaker, a difficult decision was taken. Mr. Speaker, we have been subsidizing passengers on the bus to the tune of about \$95 per passenger. The taxpayers have been providing a subsidy. Members opposite, when they were government, actually shut down routes when the subsidy was as low as — what? — \$20, 30 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . \$5, \$5 per passenger subsidy was considered too large for members opposite, and they shut routes down.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that this is not a sale. It is a wind-down, Mr. Speaker. And moreover, I would share with the member that he's sort of characterizing the fact that now buses

will be sold as some sort of evidence that this is a sell-off. It is a wind-down, Mr. Speaker. The government routinely sells assets. There are CVA [central vehicle agency] vehicles, when they get miled-out, they are sold. SaskPower has a fleet of vehicles, of trucks, that at some certain point they are sold, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately there's not an entity to sell here because it loses so much money, and so we've simply made the difficult decision to wind it down.

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

Effects of Changes in Taxation

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's a nonsense answer like that that has Saskatchewan people not trusting that Premier. And I guess, maybe as a bit of a reminder to him, this is a service to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. You know, the facts are the facts, and then there are the lines that the Sask Party performs every day.

Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier that of course promised not to raise taxes in the election of just a year ago, and now he's forcing a billion dollar tax hike on hard-working, on everyday Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And defying common sense, he's adding his new 6 per cent PST [provincial sales tax] to job-creating industries like construction.

You know, the Saskatchewan construction industry is united against these tax hikes, and it's easy to see why. In just the first month following the tax hike, there were 4,200 fewer workers in Saskatchewan's construction industry, that many fewer than just a year earlier, Mr. Speaker. The number of Saskatchewan people looking for work since the Sask Party took over has doubled to 40,000 people, and last month there was another 5,600 more people looking for work in Saskatchewan than just last year.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, at a time where we need investment, at a time where we need job creation, how can this Premier justify his job-killing tax on construction?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, even after the changes in the taxes that the member's referencing in his questions, Saskatchewan is paying today, the taxpayers here, businesses including in the industry across the province, and seniors and farmers are paying much less in terms of taxes.

And when members opposite had the opportunity to do more than just ask questions, when they had the opportunity to actually do something, Mr. Speaker, in 2007 under the NDP, a person with 40,000 income paid 3,688 combined provincial income and PST. Mr. Speaker, today that same taxpayer, 2,939 even after the budget, a decrease under this party in power of 20 per cent. In '07 a family of four with 50,000 combined taxes paid just over 3 grand. Now they'll pay 716 bucks a year under our plan. That's a 77 per cent reduction over members opposite. It's true as well for a family at \$75,000 combined tax, even after this budget, their taxes have dropped from when members opposite were in power by 31 per cent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the member references jobs. We're happy to have a debate about the job record of this province because even through this time of very low commodity prices, very low oil prices, and low potash prices, and some layoffs and some significant numbers of layoffs — even despite all of that, we saw the job numbers on Friday. This last month represents the third consecutive month of year-over-year job growth. Three months ago, we had the best numbers in the country, still 2,000 more jobs than a year ago.

And we know there's more work to be done. We know the effort to diversify the economy is not over but, Mr. Speaker, given the challenges we faced and the jobs that have been created, Mr. Speaker, we are making progress in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

[14:15]

Job Creation Record and Support for Women

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, this job-killing tax on construction could not have come at a worse time. For the first time in over 15 years, GDP has now declined for two consecutive years. The largest source of decline was a 14 per cent drop in construction, and the number of housing starts has fallen to their lowest level since 2009.

At the same time, the Sask Party is also cutting services like health care and social assistance. More funding and job cuts are on the way, but those sectors have already lost 2,300 jobs since last year. These Sask Party attacks on education and health care hurt our kids and the province's most vulnerable. They also disproportionately push women out of work. In April alone, 84 per cent of the people thrown out of work in Saskatchewan were women. Mr. Speaker, at this same time, the Minister for the Status of Women has no one working in her office. I'll repeat that. The Ministry for the Status of Women currently is empty. Why is the Sask Party turning its back on so many and leaving women behind?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I am very happy to rise in my place to talk about the job creation record of this government. Sixty thousand jobs have been created in this province since we formed government: second—highest in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, versus their record. Their record, Mr. Speaker, was dead last. Over their last decade in office, dead last in job creation in this country, Mr. Speaker. We continue to have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the entire country.

The member referenced construction — non-residential building permits up 138 per cent, month over month, in February 2017; total value of all building permits up 66.4 per cent over the same period, leading the country in growth. I'm happy to go down more economic stats, Mr. Speaker, that show Saskatchewan continuing to lead Canada, versus their record which led Canada in the wrong direction.

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

Honorariums for Public-Private Partnership Bidders

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, after hearing a response like that, it's clear. The Saskatchewan Party's priorities are not with Saskatchewan women. They are not with Saskatchewan people, not with stimulating the economy or with creating jobs, and not with helping the most vulnerable and those in need, Mr. Speaker. It's clear. Their priorities are with helping their wealthy and well-connected and corporate friends.

Last week in committee, we found out that the Sask Party forked over \$5.6 million in consolation prizes to failed bidders in P3 [public-private partnership] projects in 2015-16 alone — millions of taxpayers' dollars in goodie bags for large out-of-province corporations. Just a thank you for showing up at the party, Mr. Speaker, at a time when the Sask Party has been preaching belt-tightening to everyone else and cutting and slashing much needed programs for Saskatchewan people.

How can the minister justify giving away those millions?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a grand revelation. Mr. Speaker, we've been talking about honorariums. This is a transparent process with respect to P3s. They're not new, Mr. Speaker. They're Canadian best practices for large infrastructure projects, including P3s, Mr. Speaker: the city of Regina, the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and our government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there's a fairness adviser that files a report with respect to these matters, Mr. Speaker. The auditor has said we have good practice with respect to our P3s, Mr. Speaker. These P3s are saving the taxpayers of this province, over the life of those contracts, Mr. Speaker, over a half a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these are large, complex projects, Mr. Speaker, and at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the payment of the honorarium, the Government of Saskatchewan owns the contracts. They own all the work that's been done on that, which allow us to be innovative with respect to further contracts coming down the road. But, Mr. Speaker, even in committee, even in committee last year, the interim Leader of the Opposition acknowledged the fact that there are honorariums to be paid and acknowledged the fact that they were fair in the circumstances.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, this isn't just business as usual. And the fact that the Sask Party thinks it is, the fact that the Sask Party thinks it is explains a lot about how we got here.

P3s cost money, period. They're good for the party making the announcement, but everyone else pays the price, Mr. Speaker. On the Swift Current long-term care facility, there were two

payments of \$300,000. The Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, two payments of \$500,000. On the Regina bypass, there were three payments totalling \$3 million, Mr. Speaker. On the joint-use school project no. 1, 600,000; and on project no. 2, \$500,000 for each. All of them, Mr. Speaker, for failed bids.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget is full of taxes and cuts that will hurt families and local businesses, but the big corporations get to pay less and collect more cash. Mr. Speaker, why won't the Sask Party simply admit that the P3 process costs Saskatchewan families too much?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I argue with the preamble. This is business as usual, Mr. Speaker. P3s are being used, Mr. Speaker, in over 40 jurisdictions in this country, successfully, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be saving over \$500 million for the taxpayers, Mr. Speaker. Even . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, even the Notley government in Alberta is using the P3, and they're paying honorariums, not only with respect to the Anthony Henday, Mr. Speaker, but most recently the P3 that that government announced for the south Calgary bypass, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is about innovation, Mr. Speaker. And if the members opposite want to look to see where the savings are in our P3s, they only have to go online. They only have to go online, Mr. Speaker, and look at the value-for-money reports. All the numbers are there, Mr. Speaker.

But again, Mr. Speaker, the interim Leader of the Opposition acknowledged the importance of honorariums in committee last year, Mr. Speaker. So for the fact that they stand up and think this is a big surprise, Mr. Speaker, some big, hidden number, they only have to look online to look at the actual numbers, Mr. Speaker. We're saving the taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, these honorariums amount to no more than one-third of 1 per cent of the total contract price, a small price to pay for innovation.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this government helps their friends but are hurting Saskatchewan people and our kids. Education taxes went up, but funding went down. People are paying more, and the Sask Party is giving less.

Mr. Speaker, we've already seen huge job losses in the education sector, and more are coming. Teachers in Regina are now getting emails about what these cuts mean for classrooms and for students. There will be more jobs cut. Teachers are being told to expect larger class sizes, fewer resources, and fewer supports for students.

Mr. Speaker, when will the minister finally admit that his cuts are going to cost jobs and hurt our kids? And when will he realize that since he's taken away all control from school divisions, he will have no one to blame for the damage to our kids' education system but himself?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, they want to talk about control. We don't have a desire to control school boards, but we do have a strong desire and a strong need, on behalf of all of the citizens and students in this province, to make sure that money is spent wisely and spent carefully, to make sure that we're not duplicating service, to make sure that we're doing a good job of procurement.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to urge the members opposite to show some clarity in their own positions on where they're at on things. They seem to change their mind. They'll say something one day, something different the next, and they never go back and say, oh that isn't what I meant. All those things, Mr. Speaker, are on the public record.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the interim Leader of the Opposition accused the government of mischaracterizing his quotes regarding funding of independent schools. I want to read one of those quotes again and ask him whether that's still his position: "... this government is diverting already thin educational dollars to private independent schools. This move reduces equity, standards, and support for students ..." That was his position, March of 2012. Does he have a different position today? Does he stand by his 2012 statements? Or does he want to have something new and fresh and different today? We'd like to know his position regarding his 2012 comments.

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

Funding for Health Care

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, even before all the Sask Party cuts have finished rolling out, 2,300 jobs have already been lost in education and health care. And still they have the nerve to be so smug.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party cut audiologists and support workers with the hearing aid program. Mr. Speaker, that's 19 fewer people providing services to kids, seniors, or anyone requiring hearing services. The Sask Party also cut podiatry services. They cut spiritual care. They cut the travel clinics, and they cut parenting mentoring programs. At least 59 positions have been cut, and the minister can't even give us the full picture on the jobs he is cutting.

Does this minister not realize the impact that his cuts have? Does he not realize the importance of these jobs? And does he really want to stand by his previous statement and say that these workers do not provide core services?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we had a number of difficult decisions to make in this budget.

We've lost \$1.2 billion in resource revenue, Mr. Speaker. Health is 40 per cent of the provincial budget. It's going to have an impact.

Mr. Speaker, we have focused on core services in Health. We have had a number of programs that again were difficult. They would have been nice to have, Mr. Speaker, but we're focusing in the key areas.

Mr. Speaker, the member in her preamble insinuates somehow that this side of the House, that this government doesn't care about health care. Since we formed government, there's been over a 50 per cent increase in expenditures in health care. Mr. Speaker, when we had the privilege of forming government, there was a perennial doctor shortage in this province. Mr. Speaker, there's now 750 more doctors. There's over 3,000 more nurses. There's many more care aids in long-term care, Mr. Speaker. While we had difficult decisions to make, Mr. Speaker, we stand on our record in health care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, our province needs health care professionals, and the Sask Party is dropping the ball. At the same time they're cutting health care jobs, at the same time they're cutting health care jobs, Mr. Speaker, they are struggling to recruit doctors: the Sask Party's own report that says that per capita Saskatchewan has 18.9 per cent fewer physicians compared to the Canadian average.

Mr. Speaker, included in the doctors we need the most are pediatricians and psychiatrists — the people who care for our sick kids and the doctors who provide the mental health care folks need. What has the Sask Party been doing to address this shortfall? They're cutting deeper. How can this Minister of Health think that another 3.5 per cent cut will help get the doctors we need in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, we know we can always do more and we're going to continue to strive to do better. But, Mr. Speaker, the critic should probably get her numbers straight. There's 23 per cent more psychiatrists in the province right now than there were when we were given the privilege of forming government.

Mr. Speaker, the recruitment that's went on for the children's hospital for instance, the member opposite tries to scare people that there's not going to be enough people recruited in the different positions. Mr. Speaker, the team has done an outstanding job of recruiting medical specialists. Mr. Speaker, that's going to continue.

As I said in my first answer, the member's criticizing about not enough doctors. Mr. Speaker, there's 750 more doctors practising in this province than it was when they were in government. Mr. Speaker, there are areas we can always do better, Mr. Speaker, but if she's calling this a shortage, what was the case when they were in government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Services Provided by Community-Based Organizations

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, there are even more health cuts in community-based organizations. These small but crucial organizations provide services and help people every day. They are now being asked to justify their own existence and choose what services they're providing on tough budgets that they would cut in order to save the others.

Mr. Speaker, there are equally important CBOs [community-based organization] in Social Services and Justice that perform very important jobs. With almost no funding, Mr. Speaker, at a time when the Sask Party is cutting so deeply to everything, these CBOs are needed more than ever. Can the Minister of Social Services tell us today which of the CBOs will be cut, by how much, and how does she plan to make up for the loss of those services?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. In the 2017-18 budget, Mr. Speaker, our government is going to continue to partner with CBOs with an investment of approximately \$420 million government-wide, Mr. Speaker. There is no general increase for CBOs this year. Our officials are going to work with our CBOs over the coming months to discuss the services they provide, to ensure they're effective, efficient, and sustainable, Mr. Speaker; that is, that they are aligned with government priorities. Mr. Speaker, this kind of review is just part of sound management and responsible government.

It's also something that has been flagged by the auditor for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to have these kinds of conversations with our CBOs. I'm looking forward to those discussions. They might result in new ideas about how we can work better together to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to that process. Thank you.

[14:30]

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

Provision of Funeral Services

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, those CBOs look after the most vulnerable, most marginalized people in our province, people who even in death can't avoid the Sask Party's cuts. Last week the Minister of Social Services defended the move to slash funding to funeral services. She tried to justify the cuts with shaky references to other provinces. But under her plan, Saskatchewan will be the only province that doesn't cover a funeral service.

These cuts weren't thought out. The minister didn't even talk to the funeral home association before announcing the cuts on budget day. The Sask Party gave no real consideration to the way these cuts would affect the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. Now that it's clear how damaging and unusual these cuts are,

will the minister do the right thing? Will she restore funding for funerals?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again I thank the member opposite for the question. On Friday, officials and I met with the Saskatchewan Board of Funeral Homes and issued a joint statement which recognized that we both share in common the desire to support people who are vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the board and especially Todd Lumbard for starting from a place of constructive common ground.

We have a working group consisting of our ministry officials and members of that board, and we will be working together over the coming months to find mutually agreeable solutions to this end.

Mr. Speaker, this budget was clearly difficult, and for reasons of confidentiality, we were not able to have specific discussions with stakeholders in advance. But however, our officials did do some cross-jurisdictional research, especially around the issue of rates, Mr. Speaker. Our current flat rate plus the additional fees that we were paying, Mr. Speaker, set us, on an average basis, among one of the highest rates in Western Canada.

And so again, I have directed my deputy minister to create a working group to work with the Saskatchewan funeral boards, and we're going to develop some options together, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its fourth report. I move:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly read for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER**Question of Privilege**

The Speaker: — On Thursday, May 4th, 2017 I deferred making a decision on whether a prima facie had been established in the privilege case raised by the Government House Leader earlier that day. I wish to advise the Assembly that earlier today I received a written request from the Government House Leader to withdraw the case. The letter indicates that both House leaders have come to a mutual understanding concerning the subject matter of the case.

I wish to thank the House leaders on both sides for their co-operation in resolving this issue. Given the request to withdraw the letter and an agreed-upon resolution by both House leaders, I find that this matter is now closed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**GOVERNMENT ORDERS****ADJOURNED DEBATES****SECOND READINGS****Bill No. 70**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 70 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Why can't we all just get along indeed, Mr. Speaker? But you know, despite the moments of co-operation that break out in this Assembly, you happen upon bills like this where, you know, why can't we all just get along becomes apparent. I couldn't even have the moment.

But you know, such is the relentlessness of the agenda of this government, Mr. Speaker, where of course they bring forward the PST amendment Act, 2017 where again, you know, it's not much more than a year after the last election where they said, you know, we're going to keep Saskatchewan strong, and toe the line, and all these great things, Mr. Speaker. And it turns out there was, I don't know if there was an asterisk in the deal or, you know, see the fine print, or what the particular approach was. But, Mr. Speaker, the cheque has come due in terms of what this government wasn't talking about, didn't have the decency to speak about with the fine people of Saskatchewan when they're asking them for their vote last year at this time.

So of course, Mr. Speaker, we see here as part of a billion-dollar tax increase that this government is moving forward on Saskatchewan people, and the way that they are making Saskatchewan people pay the price for this government's waste, mismanagement, and scandal.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of Bill 70, they'll be raising the PST from 5 per cent to 6 per cent. And again, one of the things that was

interesting in the budget speech debate, Mr. Speaker, was you had different members on that side talk about how it was the lowest PST in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, for, asterisk, jurisdictions that had a PST. Of course they didn't talk about Alberta, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that there is no PST there, and the fact that of course along the west side, this poses a tremendous competitive challenge for men and women engaged in business all up and down that west side, Mr. Speaker. Didn't hear much about that.

But again, I don't know if they get a crowbar over there when they get the new MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, because it sure ain't a shoehorn that does the kind of wrenching the facts around that goes on, Mr. Speaker. But again, in terms of the celebration of the lowest PST for all the jurisdictions with the PST, except for Alberta of course, Mr. Speaker, that was the battle cry over there in the budget speech debate. But of course the cheque comes due, Mr. Speaker, and we see here where they're raising the PST from 5 per cent to 6 per cent and expanding the PST of course, Mr. Speaker, expanding the PST to insurance premiums, to children's clothing, to construction labour, and to restaurant meals, Mr. Speaker.

And I just want to, you know, in terms of all the young people that we heard being celebrated just in this very session of the House, Mr. Speaker, in terms of all those young people that are here in Saskatchewan and what a great thing that is, Mr. Speaker, well guess what? They all need clothing. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if it was like, you know, the Sask Party caucus hung back and thought, well here's a growth market for taxation; let's put the PST on children's clothes. They may have thought it in the last few months, Mr. Speaker, but they certainly didn't say a darn thing about it at election time.

We also see the, again, as referenced here around construction labour and the, you know, the very definition of a disincentive for growth or a job-killing tax, Mr. Speaker, and the kind of impact that this is contributing to in the loss of construction jobs that is observable as late as this Friday with the Statistics Canada jobs report, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I add parenthetically, you know, it's interesting how they'll look at the Statistics Canada report and that's something that they want to talk about, but when it comes to the impact this government has had on tuition and the way that Statistics Canada comes out and, you know, measures the fact that Saskatchewan is now providing leadership on the top end of tuition. And you know, Lord only knows where that's going to wind up after this round of tuition increases, after what different folks from the university sector describe as the worst budget in their history, Mr. Speaker. We only know where that's going to wind up, and it's going to be higher. And will Saskatchewan lead the nation in tuition or be second? We'll find that out come the Statistics Canada report in the fall. But they'll be falling all over themselves to try and discredit it at that point, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the restaurant meal PST increase, again, Mr. Speaker, I've been around long enough to have seen the Boughen Commission report and that being one of the items that was recommended for consideration by the people of Saskatchewan. And again the way that the folks working in the

restaurant sector and the food and beverage sector come forward with a pretty vigorous campaign against that measure, Mr. Speaker.

And one only thinks that the advantage of just dropping this on those men and women was, you know, not by accident, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that this government came forward with that measure in the budget. Because if there had been advance notice, certainly, Mr. Speaker, not only is the sector clearly on record against it, but you don't have to go back too far into the speeches of members opposite, Mr. Speaker, to hear about the vehement opposition that got expressed by those members against PST on restaurant meals.

They've discontinued the trade-in allowance on light used vehicles, Mr. Speaker. They've removed the lower PST for mobile, modular, and ready-to-move homes, Mr. Speaker. They've raised the minimum tax on goods and services valued between 25 cents and 49 cents, from 2 cents to 3 cents, Mr. Speaker. There are so many ways that this particular bill makes the people of Saskatchewan pay the price for the Sask Party's waste, mismanagement, and incompetence, Mr. Speaker.

And in terms of again where they get the mandate for this, well they certainly didn't get it at election time, Mr. Speaker. Of course we only heard about keeping Saskatchewan strong at election time, and when they come forward with the billion-dollar tax increase and socking it to families and socking it to job creators in this province, well here we are. This is where the cheque is coming due.

Mr. Speaker, this is, as with all taxation bills . . . There's a level of complexity in this particular piece of legislation that will lend itself well to further discussion in the committee, Mr. Speaker, so at this point I'd like to invite my colleague opposite to do what need be done to move Bill 70 on to committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 70 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 70, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the standing committee on Crown agencies. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the committee work this afternoon, I move that this

House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:43.]

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