



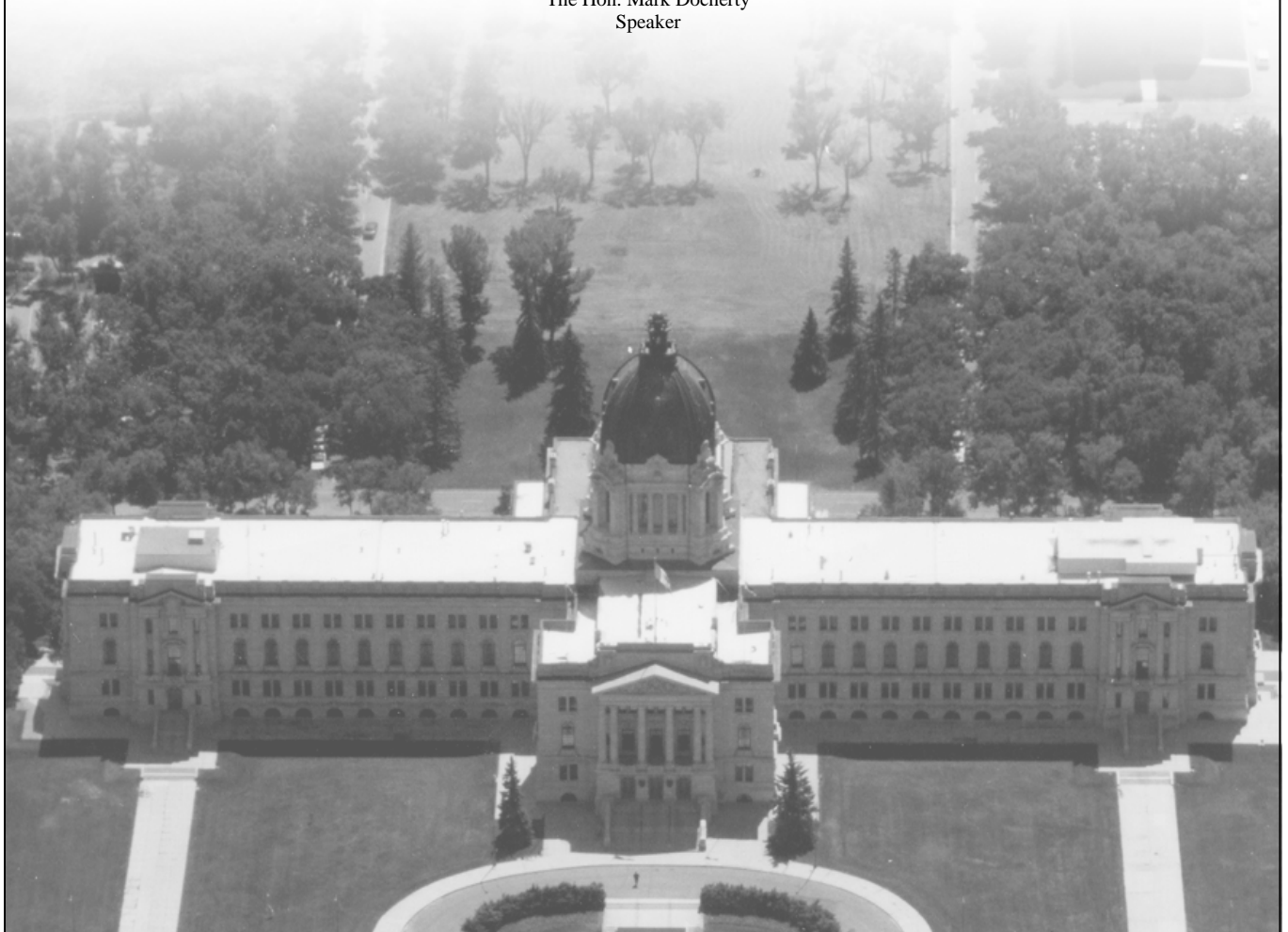
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 28th Legislature

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Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Vacant — Regina Northeast

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 1

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce someone who is no stranger to the legislature here. Mr. Rob Norris is sitting up in the gallery today, better known as Rob the thesaurus, I think, by some, with love. He's now at the research partnerships office for the VP [Vice-president] of Research at the University of Saskatchewan. He is, as you know, the former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Saskatoon Greystone and the minister of Advanced Education.

With him today is a special guest, Dr. Jerzy Szpunar, who is a renowned professor of nuclear engineering who joined the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] from McGill. And so I would like to say to you, sir, welcome to your Legislative Assembly and also welcome to our province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's my honour to join with the minister to welcome Rob Norris back to his Assembly. Certainly he's a friend. At times we had debate across the Assembly. He is a thesaurus of sorts. But he's doing good and important work with the University of Saskatchewan, an incredibly important institution, not just within our province but from a global perspective.

I am also pleased to welcome Dr. Jerzy Szpunar, professor, to the Assembly. I'm thankful for his work and his leadership at the University of Saskatchewan. So it's my honour to join with the minister to welcome Rob Norris and Dr. Jerzy Szpunar to the Saskatchewan Assembly.

And while on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to welcome Ms. Marsha Crossman and Ms. Megan Min to their Assembly. They're seated in the front row in your gallery.

Marsha Crossman is a tutor. She is a civil servant that works for occupational health and safety, and I'm thankful for her work there. But she's a tutor at the English as an additional language tutorial program out of the Regina Public Library, assisting those that are settling to Saskatchewan.

Ms. Megan Min made the choice to build her life in Saskatchewan in 2011, immigrating with her son who's now 18 years of age, was here for a year on her own before her husband could join her. And she's a fine example of those that are building and bettering our province by building their lives here in Saskatchewan. Megan Min recently passed her citizenship exam with a score of 100 per cent. So we've got a bright mind

in our Assembly here today and within our province. So I'm pleased to welcome Marsha Crossman and Ms. Megan Min to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, it's my privilege to introduce some guests that are here for the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, or SARM, as they're better known. SARM is the biggest annual convention in the province. It alternates between Saskatoon and Regina. This year Regina is hosting.

We have some delegates from my constituency, Mr. Speaker, from the RM [rural municipality] of King George. We have in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, the reeve, Norm McIntyre. Norm, give us a wave, if you would. We also have a number of councillors and the administrator. We have Les Dawe, Bonnie Simonson, Ed and Shelly Omiecinski, and the administrator, Kelly Dodd.

Mr. Speaker, a number of us will be at the convention later this afternoon and of course tomorrow for the annual bear pit and the Premier's speech. We're very much looking forward to that. We welcome the delegates here. They're looking forward to seeing question period. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of the House to give them a warm welcome to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce somebody in your gallery. I have three constituents of mine here from SARM convention. I'll go by age and then you can figure it out from there. We have the reeve from RM [rural municipality] of Good Lake, Dave Popowich. Give a wave. And the reeve from RM of Buchanan, Don Skoretz, and then we have the mayor of the village of Buchanan, but he's the councillor of the RM of Buchanan and he's also the president of my constituency and a good owner of G.W. Construction, Sean Wilson. He wears many hats and if you look at his hair, he needs them. I'd like everybody to welcome to this constituency . . . I mean to the House. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the members across and also welcome these delegates for the SARM convention here: Reeves, the councillors, and the administrators. Your roles are really important and you're strong municipal leaders. And we really respect the information that we receive from you. And we really appreciate all the hard work that you do to make sure that your communities are thriving and the work that you do for the province of Saskatchewan. So on behalf of the official opposition, we want to welcome to your legislature, and I'd ask that all members welcome them to their legislature. Thank you.

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 would like to introduce some very special guests who are sitting in your gallery. With us today is Patricia Anne Whitebear and her granddaughter Xavier, if you could give us a wave. Thank you. And Letitia Racine and her son Thunder, and as well Carrie Bellegarde of Punnichy.

These folks here are board members of the Sixties Scoop indigenous survivors of Saskatchewan, and they want us to be aware of some of the issues that are facing the Sixties Scoop survivors. Tomorrow there will be a rally right across Canada in nine major cities. The theme is I'm Not the Only One. It's a day of solidarity for those folks who are surviving the initiative of the Sixties Scoop. So I would ask all members here to give a warm welcome to their legislature. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to introduce some people close to me that are sitting in your gallery. No strangers to this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, of course, they're my parents. They are here today, Donna and Owen Sarauer.

But joining them are several very close family friends: Dennis Slade from Regina, very close family friend. Actually a colleague of mine just asked if he was a brother of my dad's. I think they just spend so much time together that they're starting to look alike. As well as Bev and Dave Pawliw from Saskatoon. I believe they're from the Deputy Premier's constituency, Mr. Speaker. They've been family friends of ours for a very, very long time. I often call Bev my second mom. For better or worse, my upbringing is partially because of her, so thank you for that.

I'm very surprised they made it to a 10 a.m. sitting, frankly, Mr. Speaker, as they were doing some celebrating last night as it was my mom's last day of work. She retired from SaskCentral and is now enjoying a lifetime of watching session, apparently. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to welcome our Sixties Scoop survivor folks here and thank them for their diligence and hard work on a very important issue that we've got in front of us.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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 good citizens of Chelan, Porcupine Plain, Weekes, and Bjorkdale. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the underfunding and the cuts to post-secondary education.

And the prayer reads as follows:

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.

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens from Moose Jaw. I know that there's many concerned citizens down in Weyburn as well, but I so submit.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to stop the cuts to our children's classrooms. Those who have signed this petition today wish to draw our attention to some of the following facts: that the Sask Party has cut at least \$674 million for every student across the province, and this has been the case despite taking in an additional \$67 million in education property tax, Mr. Speaker.

As might be expected, these cuts have had devastating impact on classrooms across the province, including such impacts as the loss of pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs for children who have been diagnosed with autism, children who are deaf and hard of hearing, despite promises by this government to the contrary that those programs would not be cut, Mr. Speaker. Of course, that is having devastating impacts.

I'll read the prayer:

We, the undersigned, call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and to stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works to support the education system pay the price for this government's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Martensville and Preeceville and Regina. I do so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And we know people are very concerned about this issue because the Saskatchewan outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals — even those living outside the province — to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties. And we know that Saskatchewan people deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics. And we know that over the past 10 years the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations and of that, \$2.87 million come from companies outside Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people. And we know that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws, to end out-of-province donations, and to put a ban on donations from corporate and union donations, and to put a donation limit on individual donations.

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

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

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a seniors' advocate in the province of Saskatchewan:

In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately appoint a seniors' advocate to ensure the rights of seniors are upheld and that all seniors across the province have the supports they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by individuals from Invermay and Saskatoon. I so present.

[10:15]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Donors Give \$1 Million to Saskatchewan Hospital

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to thank and recognize two very generous donors to the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. Irene and Leslie Dubé have donated \$1 million to the Saskatchewan Hospital for the New Beginnings campaign. This gift will bring the capital campaign to 75 per cent of its \$8 million fundraising

goal.

After that ceremony on Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, we were given a tour of this state-of-the-art facility, and the attention to detail by Graham Construction has left the hospital staff literally over the moon with excitement. Mr. Speaker, as we toured the Pathway to New Beginnings sponsored by the Dubés, as well as various other areas of the hospital, the entire build site was a beehive of activity, with close to 450 staff working hard to bring this tremendous project to completion.

Mr. Speaker, the Dubés are known across this province for their philanthropy and caring spirits as well as being passionate advocates for mental health. This project is so significant for the people of Saskatchewan, and I applaud this government for utilizing a P3 [public-private partnership] model for this build, saving the taxpayers of Saskatchewan millions of dollars. Mr. Speaker, what I find so truly unfortunate is that the members opposite still struggle to overcome their ideological notions and see the great and positive work that's being done on this project.

I now ask that all members please join me in thanking Irene and Leslie Dubé for their donation of \$1 million to the Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Educator Wins Outstanding Principal Award

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased today to rise and join with my community in celebrating the completion of the rebuild of Sacred Heart Community School and gymnasium in the fine constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. Sacred Heart School students moved into the new building on April 24th, 2017. It's a great new learning environment with the latest in technology, and I'm looking forward to attending the official grand opening today for the gym as students, parents, and educators attempt to break the record for a school ribbon cutting.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the work of a tremendous educator in our community. In February, David Magnusson, principal at Sacred Heart Community School, was named one of the 40 most outstanding principals in Canada. Magnusson is just one of two teachers in Saskatchewan receiving that award this year. Each year the winners of Canada's Outstanding Principals program become members of the National Academy of Canada's outstanding principals. The award winners are recognized for innovation, leadership, and creativity in finding solutions and opportunities within their school communities.

David has served as principal of Sacred Heart for the past three years and prior to that he was the vice-principal. And he certainly follows the tradition of great leadership at Sacred Heart, Mr. Speaker, coming on the heels of principals like Grebinski, Currie, and Tetreault.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating principal David Magnusson on being named one of Canada's outstanding principals and congratulating the community of Sacred Heart Community School for a great day in the history of the Sacred

Heart Community School. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Robotics Team Invited to World Championships

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in the House today to speak about an extraordinary achievement by a brilliant group of young students. Neilburg Composite Robotics Team has been invited to the Vex Robotics World Championship in Louisville, Kentucky. The team, dubbed 360X, consists of three 10 to 12 students: Carter Cammidge, Craig Hewko, and Hunter LeDrew.

Mr. Speaker, Neilburg Composite High School robotic program is remarkable and innovative. It consists of a practical and applied arts survey class for grades 10 to 12 and an afterschool club for junior high students. The program has been developed to teach students, science, technology, engineering, and math, and how to apply these skills in a competition. This allowed the students to develop the skills needed to succeed in this competition, and it truly paid off.

The team earned the Design Award and the Mixed Team of the Year Award at the Edmonton regional event and was crowned tournament champions and Excellence Award winners at the Calgary regional event. All of this culminated into the invitation to the Vex championship. The competition brings to upwards of 500 high school teams from around the world together to celebrate their accomplishments and participate with the brightest minds in robotics and engineering.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I wish the absolute best to team 360X as they compete at the Vex Robotics World Championship. Thank you.

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

Emerging Filmmakers Screen New Work

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The talents of three emerging Saskatchewan filmmakers were on display this past month with the premieres of the short docs, *To Wake up the Nakota Language* by Louise BigEagle, *Talking at Night* by Eric Thiessen, and *The Ride* by Kristin Catherwood, all produced through Doc Lab Saskatchewan, a new initiative led by the National Film Board of Canada in collaboration with Creative Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Film Pool Cooperative.

I was delighted to attend the screenings on February 23rd at the Remai Modern in Saskatoon along with a standing-room-only crowd. *Talking at Night* focused on Saskatoon's mobile crisis centre that provides 24-7 crisis resolution to people in distress, and workers take calls from individuals in urgent situations and respond in person when help is needed most. Director Eric Thiessen captures the behind-the-scenes experiences of the crisis centre staff, crafting a compelling portrait of a critically needed but largely unknown service in the city. Mr. Speaker, the centre takes about 26,000 calls a year.

To Wake up the Nakota Language centred on Armand

McArthur, one of the last fluent Nakota speakers living on the Pheasant Rump First Nation, Treaty 4 territory, and the importance of language and culture; while *The Ride* told the impressive story of Liam Marshall growing up in the Big Muddy Valley training to become a bareback bronc champion.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating these filmmakers in their new work capturing the Saskatchewan spirit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

4-H Provincial Curling Tournament

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last month Maple Creek had the privilege of hosting, and I had the privilege of attending, the 2018 Provincial 4-H Curling Competition. The best junior and senior division teams across the province, 17 teams with over 200 total participants, came to Maple Creek to compete. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm very happy to report it was a total success. The Hilltop Club from Yorkton and area was victorious in the junior draw, and the Hilltop/Springside rink won the senior draw in the fierce final game that had to go into extra ends.

Mr. Speaker, an event like this that draws hundreds of young people in small-town Saskatchewan has an immense impact on local economy and atmosphere. The opportunity for members of our community to show off their town is always welcome. I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge Nora Schock and her organizing committee for the hard work they put into making the tournament a success.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Assembly, I would like to thank the organizing committees and the town of Maple Creek for hosting the successful 4-H curling tournament.

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

High School Coach Has Winning Record

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to acknowledge Scott Hundseth, an exceptional coach and leader from Holy Cross High School in Saskatoon. Holy Cross is located in my constituency in Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood, and is my alma mater.

When Coach Hundseth began his career with the Holy Cross Crusaders girls' basketball program in 2009, the team had only won three city championships in their previous 46 years in this sport. Mr. Speaker, to summarize this coach's success, he has led the Crusaders senior girls basketball team to a total of eight city championships, four provincial championships, and 11 tournament titles. In addition, he has 94 consecutive wins in regular play in Saskatoon. Scott also received the Roughrider Recognition Award from Football Saskatchewan and the Rider organization.

He dedicated many seasons to the high school's football program, coached the Senior Bowl numerous times, and has been involved at the highest level of under-18 programs, representing Saskatchewan at the Football Canada tournaments.

Mr. Speaker, this is a remarkable career, and his presence will be missed at Holy Cross. Many of his student athletes and colleagues are very grateful for his commitments to sport in Saskatoon and wish him well on his next adventure in life. I now ask that his members please join me in congratulating Coach Scott Hundseth on a remarkable career and thank him for all he has done for the sports community in Saskatoon. Thank you.

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

Opposition's Platform

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The new Leader of the Opposition is only a few days into his first session and it's already become clear that the NDP [New Democratic Party] continue to live in denial. You don't have to look any further than his two and a half billion dollar per year platform, a platform that their party has clearly endorsed by electing him leader. With no realistic way of paying for his promises, this will be the return of the big orange credit card, unless of course the NDP carbon tax is big enough to cover this incredible amount of spending.

Speaking of carbon, Mr. Speaker, we watched the member for Saskatoon Nutana cherry-pick stats to drive an incorrect narrative about carbon capture this week. Two million tonnes of carbon captured at BD3 [Boundary dam 3]. That's not shuffling money. That's not taxation. That's actual carbon reduction, Mr. Speaker. And it doesn't stop there.

Mr. Speaker, some members are in denial more than others. The member from Regina Lakeview said on Tuesday about P3s, and I quote, ". . . this is a failed model that has failed in every other place on the planet." Well here's a reality check for the members opposite. From Columbia to Ontario, Australia to Alberta, Germany to Albania, Bangladesh to Mexico, P3s are being used and, Mr. Speaker, the last time I checked all of those places actually exist on this planet.

When we can save Saskatchewan taxpayers money by using P3s, we absolutely will. Mr. Speaker, the choice between our two parties is very clear. While our focus is on saving taxpayers money, the NDP's focus continues on spending it.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — It looks like we're in for an energized session. So with that, question period. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Supports for Indigenous People

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you well know, we're gathered here today on Treaty 4 territory. And that acknowledgement is something we're doing more and more, and that's very positive. As we look towards a focus on reconciliation, those words matter. But of course words are not enough. We need to move beyond words to real action, to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people in health, in justice, in income, and education.

But today in our province over 80 per cent of the people in our prison system are indigenous. We have high levels of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus], diabetes, suicide, and other conditions related to marginalization, related to poverty. Thirty to 50 per cent less is spent on a kid's education if they live on reserve than if they live in the rest of the province. Over 60 per cent of the children living on reserve in this province live in poverty.

The last 10 years has been described as a decade of inaction on jobs, on education, on training, on justice, and a decade of weakening relationship with indigenous communities.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, for the Premier, is a call to action. This is a top priority for us and we want to see movement. How will the Premier elevate this issue to the priority it deserves? What specific measures will he take to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous people in health, justice, income, and education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for what is a very important question for this province and in communities across the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we have had commitment and we have had investment over the last decade — over the last number of decades, to be fair, I think — in our First Nations communities, in our First Nation . . . closing the gap, if you will, in our K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education sector, both on- and off-reserve.

We've had targets that we've put forward, Mr. Speaker, and we are starting to achieve some of those, work towards achieving some of those targets, Mr. Speaker. But there's much more to do in our K to 12 system. Mr. Speaker, there's opportunities that we have invested in to date, but there needs to be further investment as we move forward in post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker, and in job creation, Mr. Speaker, in the industries that are already present across this province.

And I would point to some of the positive outcomes, Mr. Speaker, up in some of the communities where I live, Mr. Speaker, in the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker. The member from Meadow Lake, I think, has experienced similar positive effects in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, Mr. Speaker, in that industry. But the Leader of the Opposition is correct, as we need to continually do more to work with our communities across this province, First Nation and non-First Nation communities, so that we can all have a better Saskatchewan.

[10:30]

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

Government Response to First Nations and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned the need to move beyond words to real action to close that gap. But of course words still matter. We need to acknowledge past wrongs if we're to avoid future injustices.

Since 2015 we've heard repeated promises from this government to issue an apology for the Sixties Scoop, the Sixties Scoop that separated First Nations and Métis children from their families. But we've never seen this government follow through on that province. Now during the leadership, the Premier said that he would reach out to First Nations and Métis leadership and meet to proceed with that. Accountability matters. Words matter. When, when will the Premier keep his word, keep his government's word, and issue that long-overdue apology for the Sixties Scoop?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I know there was an apology that was offered by the previous premier. I have said before and I say here today that there will be an apology that is offered by this Premier, Mr. Speaker. We will work, as I said, through the Minister of Government Relations who will, as we speak, will be setting up contacting First Nations leaders, contacting leaders in the province, and contacting our Métis Nation's leadership in the province as well, Mr. Speaker, so that we can work with them on exactly how that apology would be delivered on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And it would be delivered by myself.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, right after he took office the Premier promised to deliver his part, but so far has failed. And dragging out this promise over the past two years has caused real harm and real damage in the lives of Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, they should know better. If they really want to apologize they should try some genuine sincerity and offer some real good faith. What is the government's timeline? What is the timeline? When will they apologize for the failures of governments of all stripes during the Sixties Scoop?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The timeline will be as soon as we are able to put this together, work with our First Nations leadership in the province of Saskatchewan, work with the leadership of the Métis nations to put this together so that it can be delivered in an appropriate fashion on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So the timeline, to be clear, is as soon as possible and as soon as we're able to work with those leadership communities on how this will be delivered.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, that's not good enough. This is a timeline that we need some specific dates . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, it's been two years. And I look over there and some of them are wincing. It's been two years. And this is on behalf of all stripes of governments who've been in power. Please, will the government today make a commitment to a real timeline with real dates?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations; First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, we understand the relevance and certainly the urgency of what we need to do to reconcile various actions, that we need to continue to have those dialogues with our First Nations and Métis Nation. We've had numerous changes in structure, in political structure on both sides of the discussion. We've had changes in leadership on our side. We've had changes in leadership in the Métis Nation. So as we can continue to have that dialogue with all our leaders, we will get this put forward as soon as possible. It is certainly a priority on this government's part to ensure that that discussion and that apology is given as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, tomorrow there will be a day of solidarity for people standing with the survivors of the Sixties Scoop. It's critically important that we move forward on this. People are becoming more and more impatient. It's been two long years. And while I understand the changes that have happened, this has not changed. And I call on the government today to make that commitment that they work with the people of the Sixties Scoop and get to work making sure this is a real priority. Will you make a commitment today to make sure that it happens? Tomorrow is a big day. It would be really good for you to make a statement for tomorrow.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations; First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know if it's the responsibility of this government to arbitrarily select a date that we need to . . . without consultation of our very important partners in this action. So we will endeavour to do this as soon as our First Nations partners, our Métis Nations partners, and ourselves have a very, very fruitful discussion as to what this apology is even going to look like, how we're going to deliver it, and what they expect in that deliverance. So we are not arbitrarily going to set any date for this to move forward.

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

Gaming Framework Agreement

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, one partnership that has been very successful for the province of Saskatchewan is the gaming framework agreement that exists between the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority and the province of Saskatchewan.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, that agreement has created hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of economic activity and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And perhaps the member from Cannington can get back into cabinet and then answer the questions from the floor.

But I guess, Mr. Speaker, the question is this: the gaming framework agreement has evolved over the years, and one of the outstanding items in that agreement is the fact of the crossover with revenue. This means that millions of dollars of

revenue that are earned in SIGA [Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority Inc.] casinos are clawed back by the province and are not available to First Nations for economic development, for education, and for the various activities of the First Nations Trust.

This is something that the government can move on very quickly. Will they take that opportunity today to say that they're going to end the crossover and make First Nations dollars that are earned in First Nations casinos stay in those casinos and those communities to provide that economic development benefit? Will they do that, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just recently we signed an extension of the agreement, just in the time I've been minister. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a partnership between the government and FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], who have had a long-standing partnership in this area. And I think it works well. It works well as a partnership.

In its most recent iteration of the agreement, we agreed to extend the agreement in order to help financing with the Lloydminster casino, Mr. Speaker. So it's an important source of revenue and I think we share that . . . Some of the money comes I know in the Community Initiatives Fund. That's part of it. Some of that goes to the Clarence Campeau fund as well. So, Mr. Speaker, I think this works well.

I will note, I will note that the current agreement is 25 per cent that comes to the GRF [General Revenue Fund] from SIGA casinos. Under the NDP it was thirty-seven and a half per cent. And so, Mr. Speaker, there is that point as well. So we value the agreement. We value the partnership, Mr. Speaker. I think it's working well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I guess the answer is no from that minister. And I guess I'd invite him to reconsider that, because certainly the dollars that have flowed to those communities under the gaming framework agreement have been vital in terms of economic development and education in addressing community priorities with SIGA as a tremendous partner, Mr. Speaker.

But I guess if the answer is no on that . . . and again I'd invite him to reconsider that. Certainly right now in the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation there is an open collective agreement that is currently being bargained, and one of the terms of the agreement around the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation and Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw is that we would have 50 per cent First Nations and Métis employment at the casinos. And that is a goal that that government has consistently failed on each and every one of the past ten years that this government has been in place, Mr. Speaker.

Will they commit to making that a hard target with real penalties, that if they don't actually accomplish that goal and

instead fail as they have continued to fail, Mr. Speaker, that there's an actual consequence for it, for that government? Will they make good on 50 per cent indigenous employment at Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the NDP began this with, I think, what they've heartfelt . . . and we agree, a sentiment of respect for First Nations and Métis people. And this side of the House agrees with that.

And then they go down this line of questioning where we have a negotiated agreement through SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] with First Nations people, that obviously they think we should negotiate with them, that they would get a better deal than the First Nations did, which I feel is disrespectful.

And now he's talking about the collective bargaining agreements which, again, we need to respect the process. We need to respect the collective bargaining, unlike the NDP that are showing that they feel that they should renegotiate here on the floor and disregard that respect. We don't agree on this side of the House.

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

Support for Indigenous Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, actions speak louder than words. And while the Premier's decision to remove the former Education minister from her role after her comments regarding treaty education in the classroom were welcome, there is so much more work to be done when it comes to the education of indigenous students in this province.

The education funding gap between on-reserve and off-reserve students is simply indefensible, and it's leaving students behind. Graduation rates for indigenous students remain persistently low, and the education funding gap costs the province more than a billion dollars each year. We simply cannot let this injustice go on any longer. The former premier said that we need to be vigilant on closing this gap.

My question is this: will the Premier do the right thing and give every child in Saskatchewan a fair shot by filling this gap and sending the bill to Ottawa?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're well aware of the funding gap, Mr. Speaker, but I am pleased to stand in the House today and report to the House that graduation rates are increasing for First Nations students in our systems, Mr. Speaker.

I'm also pleased to report, Mr. Speaker, that there's more relationships that are being developed between local school boards and local First Nations with respect to ensuring that First Nations children are getting the education they deserve.

But there is certainly a funding gap, Mr. Speaker, and we

continue to have an ongoing dialogue with the federal government with respect to filling that gap. And I'm encouraged by some of the things that we're hearing from Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, in terms of support for First Nations, not just in education, Mr. Speaker, but support for First Nations with regard to the economy, with regard to health care, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm encouraged by those ongoing discussions. We're going to continue to have them, Mr. Speaker. But we want to be focused on making sure that we fill that gap, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to do that as a result of our ongoing consultation, not just with the federal government, Mr. Speaker, but with First Nations and with local school boards.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the education funding gap is a disgraceful injustice that none of us should tolerate. It limits the futures of young people. It holds us back economically. It hurts our entire province. And it's past time to be punting around jurisdictional responsibility and kicking the can down the road. Instead of stepping up and funding all students fairly, the Sask Party has sat on the sidelines, let Ottawa off the hook, and the costs are paid by Saskatchewan people, young people all through our province.

The associated savings of closing this gap would more than pay for themselves with the costs in social services, in justice, in health — economically, Mr. Speaker, and the massive contributions that these young people can make to their communities and of course to our economy. It's a matter of basic decency, fairness, and rights, Mr. Speaker. When will the Sask Party stop the excuses, give every student the chance to live up to their full potential, fill this gap, and send the bill to Ottawa?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I answered it in the first answer, Mr. Speaker, with respect to what this province is doing, Mr. Speaker. In the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] calls to action, they call on the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy, Mr. Speaker. That's a conversation that this province continues to have with the federal government, and we're seeing some real progress, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing graduation rates increase, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing the funding gap start to narrow, Mr. Speaker.

There's certainly an acknowledgement, Mr. Speaker, and I'm prepared to stand here today and acknowledge to the people of the province and my fellow members in the House that that gap continues to exist, Mr. Speaker. But we're going to fill it by having our ongoing conversations with the federal government to ensure that they understand what their responsibilities are with respect to First Nations education. But we're going to continue to do this work, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to do it with our partners in education, with local school boards, and with local First Nations.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The funding gap should be tolerated by

none of us. Children across Saskatchewan, they can't wait for another decade, another two years, another three years. We need to step up today. Will the Premier of Saskatchewan, will he commit to fill that gap and send the bill to Ottawa today?

[10:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I'm committed to continuing to have our ongoing conversations with respect to filling this gap with the federal government, Mr. Speaker. And I'm committed to continue to have that ongoing dialogue, Mr. Speaker.

This is a federal government responsibility. Certainly the education of our children and the effects that the funding gap has, and the educational opportunities gap, has an effect on our whole province, Mr. Speaker. But this is an ongoing conversation. It's an ongoing dialogue and collaboration with all partners including the federal government and First Nations and school boards, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be vigilant. We're going to be diligent as we move this conversation forward. And I can assure my friend on the other side of the House that I will be leading that discussion and will be moving it forward as quickly as possible, Mr. Speaker.

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

Indigenous Land Use and Duty to Consult

Ms. Rancourt: — Ongoing dialogue does not help our youth in our province here, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, hometown leaders will tell you that the Saskatchewan Party does not like to consult. When it comes to First Nations and Métis communities they have even refused to ensure that there is meaningful consultation with issues that affect their rights. Leaders have real concerns to share about how decisions made by government impact the ability for indigenous peoples to use the land as outlined in the treaties.

The Sask Party's policy on the duty to consult was rolled out in 2010, but for years it has been criticized as inadequate and ineffective when it comes to making sure indigenous voices are heard.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Sask Party update its policy on the duty to consult to ensure that First Nations and Métis peoples can have meaningful consultation when their rights are infringed upon?

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for her question. So we'll just get into a little bit in background as to duty to consult. First Nations and Métis consultation policy framework outlines necessary processes to meet requirements of the Crown's legal duty to consult and accommodate. CPF [Consultation Participation Fund] was released in July of 2010. And after a lot of consultations with our First Nations and Métis and northern partners and other

stakeholders, we've fulfilled that process.

So since 2007-2008 this fund — there is a First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund — has issued over 173 grants totalling 6 million, over \$6 million. We can go through those if we like, but we have done a very extensive process. We've gone through the duty to consult process on virtually every file that involves our First Nations, Métis, and northern partners, Mr. Speaker.

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

Justice Programs for Indigenous Communities

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, indigenous people make up a disproportionate percentage of our province's prison population. The government should be working to lower that number and reduce the rates of recidivism. They claim to agree with that, Mr. Speaker. In fact, when the Sask Party talk about addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, they point to the Aboriginal court worker program. The problem is, Mr. Speaker, they cut funding to that very program which means fewer people are providing this crucial assistance. They also cut community-specific centres like the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. Will the minister admit that making cuts in these areas not only fails to reduce disparities, it increases them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we regard the relationship that we have with First Nations people as something that's incredibly important, and we want to do more to try and ensure that our First Nations partners and indigenous people in our province are able to participate fully in the growth and well-being and the prosperity that our province has to share.

Mr. Speaker, we've hired a second full-time victim services coordinator. We've increased funding to support another half-time position with the La Loche Friendship Centre. We've continued support for the Aboriginal justice program in 66 of the 72 First Nations in Saskatchewan. We contribute nearly \$8 million for Aboriginal justice programs annually, and in those there are included community justice and alternative measures programs, Aboriginal crime prevention initiatives, northern victim services, interpersonal violence and abuse programs, transition houses, northern youth violence reduction program.

We've done some of those things in response to the La Loche tragedy. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do those kind of programs because we want to make sure that the First Nations people in our province continue to grow and continue to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the Education minister was on his feet shortly and talked about the increase in the graduation rate. We've set that as a goal for our province. And we're going to continue to do that, because that's the best thing we can do for our people is to have them well educated and participating in the economy.

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

Support for Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, reconciliation is something that we as a generation must get right. And we've heard so much today about the need for further action, to move from words to action. A key guide to that action are the truth and reconciliation calls to action.

Mr. Speaker, in Premier's estimates in 2016, we saw a list of the steps that have been taken to address the calls to actions that really applied to the province. We haven't seen any further reports since that time. However we have seen steps backward. We've seen cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program. We've seen cuts to Aboriginal education outreach workers. We've seen the elimination of the NORTEP [northern teacher education program] program. And we see no meaningful action on poverty, no meaningful action on overrepresentation of indigenous people in our prison system, no meaningful action on unemployment or the education gap. We need action and we need accountability.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to a formal report to this Assembly on the province's progress towards meeting those calls to action, on what progress has been made, and what more needs to be done? And if so, what form will that report take? Will we be able to have that commitment from you today to bring this forward to our Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, we will commit to that here today, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to report to this Assembly and to the people of the province of Saskatchewan that 22 of the 34 calls to action are being supported through various ministries across government as we speak, here in the province of Saskatchewan — which tells me that we have accomplished some, Mr. Speaker, but there is much more to do.

Mr. Speaker, let me just speak to what has been accomplished so that we can replicate some of our success stories. And I will close with a personal success story in my . . . in the area of the province where I come, Mr. Speaker, but almost half a billion dollars invested since 2007, directed specifically into training, Mr. Speaker, of our First Nations, our Métis people across the province of Saskatchewan. It includes over 100 per cent increase in funding to an organization known as SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies]. We see what's happening at our post-secondary universities, our Sask Polytech, our regional colleges, Mr. Speaker.

But I would close with this. I would close with a forest management agreement that was signed a number of years ago by this government, Mr. Speaker, with the Agency Chiefs Tribal Council, Mr. Speaker. The community of Big River First Nations, Mr. Speaker, took the profits of that agreement, of that business, Mr. Speaker, and invested them in the Darby Morin Centre of Excellence for Business Development, Mr. Speaker. And they have partnerships with those very organizations like the University of Saskatchewan, SIIT, the North West Regional College, and they are training their individuals from their home community, Mr. Speaker, for jobs that remain in and around that home community, Mr. Speaker, so those individuals from that community can stay at home. They can be employed, Mr.

Speaker, and be part of the better Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We are proud of our record, Mr. Speaker, in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in this province, and we will continue to work with everyone in this province.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Fiscal Support for Municipalities

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to enter this debate today, especially on a day like today when it seems the folks on the other side of the House are particularly ornery and grumpy, so I'm hoping that that means that we will have a very spirited debate.

And frankly I would be grumpy too if I was on the other side and had to, you know, wear a lot of the horrible decisions that were made, in particular with respect to the issues that we are talking about today, but also with the last budget. And one of those decisions were the mass cuts to our hometowns and municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and the amount of downloading that we're seeing from the provincial government to our municipalities and by extension the fallout that that has on Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan families. So I guess I'm not super surprised that they're as grumpy as they are today; I'm just disappointed, frankly, Mr. Speaker.

But I think this is an important topic for us to talk about this morning. As I said, the last budget in particular really hit hometowns in a very difficult way which, as a result, we're seeing growing . . . each municipality trying to struggle with the amounts of downloading and the rising costs through tax increases. It's interesting coming from a government who likes to pretend that they don't increase our taxes. Instead they try to do everything they can to make other elected officials like our municipal leaders wear their mismanagement of our finances, Mr. Speaker.

And the problem, when you force municipalities to wear this, one of the many problems is that they can't carry a debt load. They're not allowed to by law to carry a debt load, so they end up having to cut very crucial programs that we as citizens rely on and at the same time hike our taxes in a way that is very difficult for many, many families.

Municipalities have been clear. Municipal leaders have been very clear. They need consistent funding. And one of the many reasons why our municipal leaders were so upset over the last budget, where not only were they caught off guard by the cuts to grants-in-lieu, but they felt that the cuts were massive, first of all, and second of all that they were improperly consulted.

Many municipalities had already passed their budgets, and then had to go back to the table after all of the work that their staff had done, after all the work that these municipal leaders had done, because they had no idea that this cut was on the potential chopping block. They hadn't even thought that that was a situation, when the former premier would like to say that he had

told SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] that everything was on the table. When he says that . . . when we were asking questions about were these groups, were these elected officials, were these leaders properly consulted.

That's not consultation, Mr. Speaker, when you walk into a room and you say everything is on the table. That's not proper consultation, Mr. Speaker. And that doesn't allow for elected officials who are, like us, answerable to their constituents to be able to effectively do their job. And I think that's why we saw so many municipal leaders speak out about the impacts of last budget and how much it affected them.

In particular, we've quoted him a few times on this side of the House since the last budget. And I am proud of the city council members in Regina who spoke out against this, and there was quite a few. But we have quoted him before, and I want to quote him again. Former Sask Party candidate actually, but current Regina ward 2 councillor Bob Hawkins called the last budget "a thief in the night," he said. As the complete quote, "This is a budget that comes like a thief in the night," Mr. Speaker. And that's a pretty accurate statement for how many municipal leaders felt about this last budget and felt about how their lack of, the disrespect that was provided to them by members opposite to them as elected officials by not properly consulting, by not talking to them about what the impact of this cut would actually be.

Another former conservative candidate, I suppose, and Saskatoon ward 5 councillor Randy Donauer also had a few things to say about the impacts of the last budget and he said, "This is a transfer of a tax burden from one level of government to another because they can," Mr. Speaker. And that adds to what I was saying before. Really what this amounts to is a downloading of a responsibility by the provincial government onto the municipal government. Not only are we seeing that from the financial end, but we're also seeing that from the service end as well, Mr. Speaker.

So more and more municipalities are left to pick up, to provide essential services, services that matter to all of us as citizens frankly, Mr. Speaker, and to do so with less money being provided to them by the provincial government.

[11:00]

So it's a double hit, Mr. Speaker, and it makes it very, very difficult and frustrating for our municipal leaders. It has a very serious impact on our municipalities. Regina Mayor Michael Fougere said, "It came out of nowhere. Many municipalities have already set their budgets and that's why there's some angst and concern and anger from this council." Again echoing what I had already said, Mr. Speaker. Many municipalities had already passed their budgets and then were hit with this and then had to go back to the table to pass their budgets again.

We are now seeing many municipalities talk about what their next budget is going to be and that we're seeing rate hikes being called for in many communities. And the concern is they don't actually know yet what the 2018 budget's going to look like — we don't know that either — though they sure hope that they're being properly consulted this time and that they're not going to have to go back to the drawing board because of another

surprise cut. But the Sask Party has had a history of blindsiding organizations, blindsiding communities, and blindsiding elected officials, so you can understand why there's a lot of angst in the room when they talk about this.

I do want to mention some of the budget, the tax increases we're seeing so far for 2018. And again who knows if the elected officials will have to yet again go back to the drawing board once they see what the 2018 provincial budget looks like. But already we're seeing tax hikes further from the tax hikes we saw in 2017 by our municipalities. These are really frankly, Mr. Speaker, Sask Party tax hikes. They are not at the . . . they should not lay at the feet of these municipal leaders. In fact you hear a lot of councillors talk about how . . . And actually I've watched some city council meetings, and I've heard them ask about whether or not they could actually separate the part of the tax that they feel, and is, a Sask Party tax hike that is as the result of Sask Party downloading or Sask Party cuts to the revenue that municipalities used to see.

Regina passed their budget last month. They hiked property taxes 4.3 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and that's on top of a hike of 6.9 per cent that we saw in 2017, Mr. Speaker, and that's the problematic thing.

And I can hear the member for Regina University saying that these city councils have reserves and they should be tapping into those reserves. Everybody . . . Well I guess I can't say everybody knows this, but if you talk to city council members, who are very passionate about ensuring that our municipalities stay healthy throughout the future, those reserves should not be used for operational means because you're tapping into a resource that depletes. And the problem with our current provincial finances is that's exactly what the Sask Party did, and that's why we're in the situation that we're in right now.

Moose Jaw, for their 2018 budget, they approved a 6.4 per cent mill rate increase, along with a 9 per cent water rate increase and a 6 per cent sewer rate increase. And that just happened just this week, Mr. Speaker. And that's in addition to a 6.24 per cent increase that we saw in the 2017 budget, Mr. Speaker.

Swift Current homeowners are facing a 13.14 per cent tax increase this year, and they've actually, city council members there, blamed a full 6 per cent of that increase directly on the province.

Prince Albert is looking at a 1.5 per cent tax increase, and they're also looking at eliminating nine jobs to deal with the \$3.5 million shortfall. And that's after a 1.5 per cent tax increase in 2017.

I want to add a few more from the 2017 budget. We don't know what all of the municipalities' tax rates will be for this year, but we do know what they were for last year and we do know who is to blame for those. Yorkton saw a 9.4 per cent tax increase in 2017; Melville, 8.36 per cent tax increase; Estevan, 8 per cent tax increase; North Battleford, 6 per cent tax increase; Humboldt, 5.7 per cent tax increase; Saskatoon, 4.8 per cent tax increase; Melfort, 4 per cent tax increase; Lloydminster, 4 per cent tax increase; Weyburn, 2.7 per cent tax increase. Mr. Speaker, these are Sask Party taxes, plain and simple.

Again I think the elected officials who are having to deal with this very difficult situation that they've been put in by the Sask Party say it best. So I want to continue with a few more of their quotes. Moose Jaw city manager Matt Noble said, "This is out of the blue. It's a total blindside." Yorkton Mayor Bob Maloney said, "Just to pass along what's been dumped on our plate would need a 10 per cent increase in taxes."

So Mayor Maloney is talking about, again, about the downloading that's happening. So in addition to the cuts to grants-in-lieu and the effect that that had on municipalities, also the amount of downloading we're seeing the provincial government onto our municipal leaders and our municipalities has really had quite a double whammy of an impact, Mr. Speaker. North Battleford Mayor Ryan Bater said, "Well, outrage is putting it lightly. We were absolutely blindsided by this budget," Mr. Speaker.

So like I said at the beginning of my remarks, you can understand why they'd be so concerned about this upcoming budget after the blindsided way the Sask Party introduced the cuts in the last budget. We hope they've learned their lesson. There is a new Premier, but frankly everybody else is still the same and that's a concern for many of our municipal leaders.

We are all elected officials in here, Mr. Speaker. We all answer to those who elected us, and the same goes for our municipal counterparts, Mr. Speaker. We need to respect the work they do, and we do respect the work they do by proper consultation. Oftentimes they are more connected or they're the first line of contact for many constituents. When they have challenges, when they have concerns they want to see addressed, often they find their city councillor to be one of the first people that they'll contact when they're looking for a service or they're looking for . . . when they have a complaint or they have an issue with government.

They do very good work. They do very important work, Mr. Speaker, and we need to respect them as elected officials and you do that by not . . . by first of all respecting them as counterparts by having consultation, having ongoing dialogue, not blindsiding them with cuts and not blindsiding them by downloading responsibility, and not blaming them for not using reserves when those should be used for, as I've been told by city councillors in Regina, those should be saved for special projects. Those should be saved for emergencies. Those should not be used for operations.

So with that I know I have many colleagues on this side and some colleagues on that side who want to enter into this debate, so I will move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports hometowns and acknowledges that our cities, towns, and villages deserve better than a freeze to municipal revenue sharing or cuts to grants-in-lieu which are forcing hometowns to raise property taxes and cut vital services.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is my motion and I will move it.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Douglas Park has moved the following motion:

That this Assembly supports hometowns and acknowledges that our cities, towns, and villages deserve better than a freeze to municipal revenue sharing or cuts to grants-in-lieu which are forcing hometowns to raise property taxes and cut vital services.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise in my place this afternoon and enter into the debate. And congratulations to you on your election victory on Monday.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that I was really very close to supporting this motion when the member from Regina Douglas Park read it. In fact I was excited when she started with, "That this Assembly supports hometowns . . ." I thought, yes, we do, absolutely we do. But then, you know, it kind of went downhill from there, so I won't be supporting the motion — that comes as no surprise.

When I saw the motion, Mr. Speaker, I had to do a little bit of research on my own. So I did extensive research through Google, and I found a couple of definitions here. So the definition of "support" is "to agree with and give encouragement to someone or something because you want it to succeed." And I think absolutely, with that definition, we do support our hometowns.

But I have to wonder, what did our hometowns and cities and towns and villages do in the past that . . . They must have behaved very badly, Mr. Speaker. So I'm going to take us back a little ways. The year is 1994 and, believe it or not, I actually worked for the city of Saskatoon and I was part of a union. So in 1994 revenue sharing between the province, the NDP government, and the city of . . . all the cities in fact, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan — in 1994 it was just over \$45 million for every city, town, village, and municipality in Saskatchewan. So that was just over \$45 million.

You know, that year, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon — for several years actually — we had an NDP mayor who refused to raise taxes. We had a city that was falling apart. We had potholes galore. We had streets reduced back to gravel. This is in a thriving metropolis, Mr. Speaker, of over 100,000 people. We had gravel streets because we didn't have any money to fix them. \$45 million for the whole province of Saskatchewan. Every city, town, and village had to share that \$45 million. And we had a mayor that wouldn't spend the money to fix our infrastructure, so it was actually falling, it was falling down.

1994, all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, everybody went on strike. Everybody who worked for the city, union members, went on strike. So not only was the province not supporting us, the city wasn't doing its part, and finally the workers had had enough. They revolted and that was the end of that. So that was 1994. So all of a sudden, Mr. Speaker, that \$45 million that the NDP government spread out throughout every town, city, and village in our province just wasn't enough. So I wonder, what did our cities do so badly, how did they behave so badly that we couldn't support them?

Went a little bit further, Mr. Speaker. In 2005 it didn't stop with

the cities, Mr. Speaker, it went out into the RMs as well. So let's skip forward to 2005 when we had a tax revolt from our RMs here in Saskatchewan. I don't know a lot about that because there's not a lot of farm land in Saskatoon University, but I can tell you right now . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There's a little bit. There's a little bit of farm land in Saskatoon University. But the RMs revolted, and it was because they were paying huge amount of taxes and it wasn't going to the proper place, Mr. Speaker.

Education property tax only accounted for 30 per cent of what . . . Thirty per cent of it was going to education. That's it. And these irate taxpayers finally said enough's enough. We need it to be closer to 60/40 or 70/30 the other way, with the GRF contributing 70 per cent and the EPT [education property tax] contributing 30. And government . . . I love this quote, Mr. Speaker. Government Relations minister of the day, NDP Government Relations minister, Len Taylor, said if all goes well with consultations with SARM and SUMA, there will be a long-term solution in place by the year 2007. And I think that you can agree with me, Mr. Speaker, that there is now a long-term solution in place . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. I think so. That's right. There is a long-term solution here, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

When we start talking about supporting our hometowns and supporting our cities, Mr. Speaker, this year Saskatoon, my hometown, is going to share . . . Their portion of the revenue sharing is \$46 million, Mr. Speaker, \$46 million in one fiscal year. One city, one fiscal year — \$46 million. Forty-five million dollars, Mr. Speaker, was shared throughout every city, hometown, and village. The whole province shared 45 million. My city's going to share 46 million, Mr. Speaker.

That is on top of a record number of investments that this government, this Sask Party government, has invested into my city alone. And I'll read off a few of them, Mr. Speaker. A few of them I was involved in as a city councillor as well. The Remail art gallery, over \$13 million; water reservoir upgrades, \$7 million; flood control, two and a half million dollars. How about the 25th Street upgrade, \$815,000. One that was near and dear to my heart, noise attenuation, \$600,000. Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on and on here and I won't belabour it but I will come back to a few of these.

And now we talk about . . . We heard from the member from Regina Douglas Park about how cities had to raise taxes to fill the gap, how they couldn't do it when we . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . through revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker. The revenue we gain in PST [provincial sales tax] went down two years ago, so naturally revenue sharing went down this year, last budget year, in Saskatoon to \$46 million. Naturally it did that. That's our agreement. We share 1 per cent of the PST.

So I want to go back and look when I was a city councillor in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to draw some parallels here. So in 2015 revenue sharing was just over \$47 million and we raised property taxes 5.33 per cent. So in 2014 we shared in almost \$46 million and we raised taxes 7.43 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon. 2013 revenue sharing was over \$47 million and we raised taxes almost 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

This year revenue sharing went down a touch to forty-six and a half million dollars, Mr. Speaker, and we raised taxes 4.8 per cent. So, Mr. Speaker, the last four years have had record municipal revenue sharing in Saskatoon, and yet this year when it was down a little bit, they raised taxes the least. In the last five years this is the least amount of property tax increase. How does that work? That's astounding math. Now I was part of that. I was part of that and fought against it and said, we have record revenue coming into the city; why do we need to keep raising taxes? I fought the battle but I lost.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a few more important infrastructure projects and important investments that we've made into the city of Saskatoon that I would really like to bring our attention to because sometimes, you know, when you have a lot of something and you have a wealth that comes in, we forget about those things that got done with the help of this provincial government, the things that didn't get done for the 16 years prior under that government, Mr. Speaker.

How about the Blairmore civic recreation centre and walking track, over half a million dollars for that, Mr. Speaker. The east fire station in Saskatoon, very important to keep our citizens safe, \$4.8 million. The Confederation Drive sewer system. Every time it rained hard, their houses were flooded that were in the flood plain. Saskatoon did what they could, and they did it over and over and over. This government came to the plate to the tune of \$7.2 million, Mr. Speaker, to have those citizens not have to pay over and over and over.

As I conclude, Mr. Speaker, and with friends like these you don't need enemies, I won't be supporting the motion. Thank you so much.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all I'd like to say that since I've been elected I was chosen to be the critic for municipal relations. And I do have to say that I've been really enjoying this profile and this portfolio and been enjoying the time that I've been having to spend with municipal leaders. And I was really happy to see that our new leader has chosen for me to stay in this portfolio and continue my relationships with our community leaders because, Mr. Speaker, I truly do believe that that's a very important role to play is having that relationship with our municipal leaders. They play one of the most important roles in our province. They're the ones that are running all the day-to-day operations in our communities, and so I've been trying to get to speak to as many as I can.

And I want to tell you a little bit though, Mr. Speaker, about the history of some of the topics that we've been discussing here, such as the grants-in-lieu and the municipal revenue sharing, because I've been spending some time with some people who have been in the municipal sector for many, many years, and they wanted to share with me the importance of these two programs and why we continuously bring those up.

So, Mr. Speaker, the grants-in-lieu were for royalties — or also they would call them concession fees — and that was secured under a contract with SaskPower for the sale of the municipal power production's distribution and sales rights. Mr. Speaker,

many of the small towns and cities produced their power before we decided to make it a provincial power corporation. And so in the '20s and the '30s, the past mayors and councillors had the foresight to establish these power stations in their communities that provided the power to their communities but also to the surrounding areas.

So these were community-owned power corporations that generated most of the revenue that was needed in these communities. For many communities, that revenue generated from their power plants covered 65 per cent of their budget, Mr. Speaker. So you think about that. Being able to keep taxes low so that . . . because they were using the royalties and the money that they generated from these power corporations for these communities to equal that in their budget.

So we know that these communities, in order to establish a lot of these power generation plants, they put a lot of investment into it. And the financial resources to be invested into these . . . And I know for my city that I belong to, Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert, some of the financial investment that they put forward came at a cost. And Prince Albert paid for that for many years but because they were trying to have the foresight and were wanting to do good for our city.

So when we talk about these royalties, they're so very important to look at why the province gave these royalties was because they knew that these communities were losing out on their financial abilities to gain that investment from that. So when the province decided to establish a province-wide power corporation, they approached these communities and offered them a deal which included grants in lieu of royalties.

And so I think this history is very important to remember when we think about how important these grants-in-lieu agreements were. And, Mr. Speaker, a lot of these communities still had their agreements in hand from those years back and basically, when this government decided to quit honouring those contracts, it was ripping up these contracts. And how can you trust a government who will just go behind your back and rip up a contract? And that was signed and agreed on, and that you need . . . You rely on that funding because that was revenue that was agreed on many, many years ago.

And actually the residents in those communities, they see a little bit of extra costs on their bills, and that was how the government subsidized that grants-in-lieu. The community members in those communities are not getting that money back. It's still sitting on their bill. So like, where is that money going? It's not going back to their communities anymore, and that's not very fair. So they're paying more in power and their communities are getting less. So I think that's really important that we look into how much that's impacting our communities.

So, Mr. Speaker, like I said, I also wanted to talk about the history of the municipal revenue sharing as well. And so, Mr. Speaker, the municipal revenue-sharing formula is very important. It was, like the member across was saying, it was first established and started the discussion, the dialogue with SUMA and SARM officials and northern officials on what the formula would look like when our party was in government. But municipal leaders are very happy that this government that's in power now decided to take on this funding agreement

and incorporate it while they were in power as well.

And so I think when you talk to most of the municipal leaders, they give credit to both parties, because it was started under the NDP but it was continued under the Sask Party. And it's an agreement and a formula that, if you talk to municipal leaders, pretty much every one of them will agree that this is a very important formula, that they rely on it to know what the province is providing them. There was a lot of unpredictable funding arrangements prior to that, but this, they know that it will fluctuate based on the percentage of the PST or the resource of the PST. They understand that, and they know it's two years back, so they can predict about how much they're going to be receiving.

And so I'm going to tell you some of the quotes from the ministers who have talked about how important this formula is. So the previous minister of Government Relations but the current Minister of Health said, "Our government understands that our municipal partners rely on these predictable, sustainable and unconditional grants to invest in local priorities and keep Saskatchewan strong."

And our former premier also said:

"The new funding formula provides a predictable, sustainable way to ensure municipalities know the amount they will receive in the coming years," Wall said. "This will help municipalities with their future planning as they work to improve their communities and the great quality of life we all enjoy in Saskatchewan."

And, Mr. Speaker, that is so very true. Like there's often times we don't agree on things, but I will have to say that that is so very true. So when the municipalities lost the grants-in-lieu but then they found out the PST was increasing 1 per cent within our province and that a lot of the exemptions were being eliminated, they thought maybe this'll have an affect on our municipal sharing revenue.

Of course communities should benefit on that increase, you know, and the 1 per cent increase that we'll receive on that because we know that the PST, because of the increase of the 1 per cent and the elimination of the exemptions, that this is going to be a billion dollars' revenue for this province. So if you incorporate how much that's going to increase the municipal revenue sharing, if that was included in that, that would be a lot of money going back to the municipalities who could really use this at this point. Because when we sit and think about the population growth within our province, a lot of those people who come to our province, they've come to our urban sectors that are the ones that have been hit the most with the grants-in-lieu funding being eliminated and the municipal revenue sharing.

Now the minister has indicated that they're not going to incorporate this extra PST revenue into the municipal revenue sharing so, in essence, they are not going to be agreeing to the contract that they made with municipalities. They signed an agreement that they would get one point of the PST, so that should include the increase of the PST revenue and it should include all of the extra revenue that this province is going to be getting. But this minister said that he's not going to honour that.

And they're also not going . . . They're going to freeze the municipal revenue sharing for the next two years, so that's not part of their agreement either. That's going back against what the municipalities and the ministers had agreed a long time ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, again that's a little wrap-up about what the history with the grants-in-lieu and the municipal revenue sharing is and how the importance of it for communities within our province, and the fact that this government has totally disregarded that and ripped up these contracts and is not honouring them. And I think we deserve more and we would expect that our province, our provincial government would honour their contracts with municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to . . . And congratulations to you on your new job. I'm happy to join in on the debate today that was the motion passed by the minister from Regina Douglas Park regarding freezing revenue-sharing grant . . .

An Hon. Member: — Minister?

Mr. Dennis: — Minister, sorry.

An Hon. Member: — It's member.

Mr. Dennis: — Member, member. If I apologize for nine more minutes, I'm okay. Anyway, I just wanted to just bring up a few things I heard them . . . The member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote wanted to know, she was talking to some of the municipal sector. And I have a little experience. I was on the municipal government for 20 years. 1994-2000 I was a councillor for the town of Canora; and 2000-2014, I spent five terms as mayor. A couple of them elected, and a few of them, a few of them nobody ran after me. I also spent 31 years as a grocery store owner in Canora, in a small business in rural Saskatchewan. So I've spent some time examining both life living under the NDP for 16 years, and the current government for about the last 10 years — and make the best shishliki in the area.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about revenue sharing, my hometown, which has increased over 110 per cent from 2007 to 2017 with a consistent formula of one per cent . . . Mr. Speaker, under the NDP there was no formula when I was on council, then mayor. And I just want to give you a few examples. In 1996 to '97 there was a . . . Canora got \$158,321; '97-98 we got 108,512; '98 to '99, 108,512; '99 to 2000, 108,512 — this is not a recording — 2000 to 2001, 108,512; 2001 to 2002, 108,512. Five years of frozen revenue sharing, five years in Canora. And then at 2000 we had a big jump to 123,472; 2003 to 2004, 103,278.

An Hon. Member: — So they cut it.

Mr. Dennis: — Well, no.

An Hon. Member: — Just a little.

Mr. Dennis: — A little. And 2005 and '06 it was 182,850, and then another freeze again in 2006-2007, 182,850. With no formula, it was basically they just gave us all the leftovers or the chicken feed that they had left. Then 2007 came in, and Canora jumped up to 206,000 and in 2008 we got 240,000.

An Hon. Member: — Who was government then?

Mr. Dennis: — There was a new government formed in those 10 years.

An Hon. Member: — Was there?

Mr. Dennis: — Yes. And 2009 it was three hundred and six thousand, eight hundred and fifty-four thousand. And then it stayed the same; there was a slight freeze. 400,000 in 2011; 445,000 in 2012; a jump of 497,000 in 2013; 2014 it was 483; and then 499 in 2015; and a jump to 511 in 2016-17. And we had a drop because of the grants-in-lieu and our resources to 432,000.

Revenue sharing in Saskatchewan went up from 85,000 to 257 . . . sorry, 86.6 million in 2007, all the way up to . . . In 2017 the revenue sharing jumped up to 257.78 million for our province. Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to say that not only our revenue sharing has doubled over the last 10 years, but our infrastructure has also doubled in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about grants-in-lieu being cut, this is a formula that was unfair, inequitable, and confusing. Grants-in-lieu only covered 13 out of 16 cities for the SaskPower. SaskEnergy grants-in-lieu only covered 109 communities out of 358. Some were paid 3 per cent; some were paid 5 per cent, with no consistency whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, now I'd like to talk to you about some cuts to vital services. Since 2007 there were some 750 more doctors, over 3,400 more nurses, and we opened long-term care facilities, schools, and much more in our province. Those don't sound like cuts.

Mr. Speaker, in Canora since 2007 we opened 35 daycare spots in 2008 and 35 more daycare spots in 2013, for a total of 70. In 2013 we also added three classrooms to our Canora Junior Elementary because of all the increase in our population. Our population went from 2,200 to 2,845.

Mr. Speaker, now let's look at the record of the NDP when they were in. They closed 19 long-term care facilities with 1,200 long-term care beds, 52 rural hospitals, and 176 schools, with over 800 jobs lost. And here are some of the schools that were in my constituency: we've got the Endeavour School; we've got the Willowbrook School; we got the Rhein School; the Theodore School; Norquay School; Sheho School; Ebenezer School. We've got the Arran School, the Fort Pelly School, the Togo Elementary School, Buchanan School, and Canora Senior Elementary School. I've had to highlight them because there's so many damn schools were closed . . . darn.

I'd like to tell a quick story, a little story about back in 2004 when we talked about vital services in Canora. When I was mayor, Mr. Speaker, when I was mayor, the previous Premier Calvert gave me a call and wanted to know about meeting with

me and some of my area people for rural revitalization . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it was good. So there was 15 of us. I got RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]; I got ministers; I got farmers; I got business people. And we all met with Premier Calvert and his crew, entourage came down, and we met for a full day and we had a very good discussion, good thoughts on how to build rural Saskatchewan. Well that next day, Premier Calvert announced the closing of our rural centre in Canora, along with 21 others, and a layoff of 120 staff, Agriculture staff.

An Hon. Member: — That happened right in Canora, didn't it?

Mr. Dennis: — Yes, there was layoff notices. Also there was 20 . . . in Meadow Lake, Lloydminster, Unity, Humboldt, Hudson Bay, Kindersley, Biggar, Rosetown, Davidson, Watrous, Wynyard, Kelvington, Canora, Maple Creek, Shaunavon, Assiniboia, Indian Head, Moosomin, Estevan, and Carnduff.

When we look back at the last 10 years, I think our commitment and our record speaks for ourselves. We have given back to the province and it shows in the trust and the number of seats we have in rural Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give you a few quotes from the *StarPhoenix* over the past years. "Rural patients waiting longer for care." That was from the *Leader-Post* on March 9th, 2007. "Hospital closures are still possible." "Long-term beds on the chopping block" in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I can't believe this motion was brought forward and I will not be supporting the motion.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I join you today in the year 2018, Mr. Speaker. You know, there was a budget last year and there's a budget coming very soon this year. April 10th I think is the date that they've decided on, Mr. Speaker. And judging by the general mood across the way, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if they had a treasury board meeting yesterday or cabinet didn't go real well or, you know, the grappling with the decisions continues.

But I understand how it is. Like maybe they look at this as therapy. Maybe it's like a trip to the spa or something, Mr. Speaker. They're going to float around in their own warm bath water and feel better about themselves if but for 75 minutes, Mr. Speaker. But you know, this debate will come to an end. And then they're going to have to go back to treasury board and to cabinet, and then they're going to get confronted with the reality of what they have presided over, Mr. Speaker, and where the finances have wound up, after how many years of this government? Twelve years now? Dirty dozen? Where are we at now in terms of Sask Party? Since 2007, Mr. Speaker.

I guess the 11th anniversary is coming up this fall and I'm sure it's going to be an interesting one. I'm not sure if it's . . . What do you get for that one? Do you get lead? Do you get tin? I don't know, Mr. Speaker. We'll see.

An Hon. Member: — Wood.

Mr. McCall: — Wood, wood. Oh, they're going to lay on the lumber for the 11th anniversary, Mr. Speaker. So we'll see how that all goes.

But it's interesting listening to the various speeches that get given in this place, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the, you know . . . I guess I wouldn't want to talk about my budget if I was this government either. You know, I wouldn't want to talk about the way that they ran in the 2016 election and said, we're going to keep Saskatchewan strong; everything's going to be great. I wouldn't want to talk about the way that the switcheroo went on after that, Mr. Speaker, in terms of like, well you know . . . Wasn't days after the election where it was, like well it's time to crank up the transformational change agenda, Mr. Speaker. Transformational change — you remember that one, eh? Like it's sort of the kind of language that you get in a cult, where it's like, you know, we're going to transformational change you to the next level or something like that, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, people are not to be fooled. People saw through that pretty quick, and they're like, okay, it was keep Saskatchewan strong. Now it's transformational change. Uh-oh, something's coming down the line here, Mr. Speaker. And what in fact was coming down the line? There was a lot of tap dancing went on in the interim, Mr. Speaker, but we had one of the worst budgets we've seen in the history of this province brought down by that government last April, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, I think back to what they tried to do on libraries, what they tried to do on libraries, Mr. Speaker. And you know, the member from Saskatoon Southeast, the then minister of Education, fought a game fight around trying to hold on to those cuts, Mr. Speaker, and the way that it was patently obvious that they didn't understand what was happening in the library sector.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, they came forward. They got a good talking-to from library supporters right around this province. And you know, to their credit, you know . . . And they also then tried to take credit for listening, Mr. Speaker, but it was hard not to hear the way that they were being tuned in right across this province, Mr. Speaker. So they backed down on that. And we'll wait to see what happens in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, because of course they just said, well we'll put a pin in it for this year. And we'll see what comes back in this budget.

[11:45]

And again in terms of casting some thoughts on what the general mood is over there, Mr. Speaker, I think some of the reality's setting in. You know, the surreality of some of the speeches that go on in this place across the way, Mr. Speaker, I don't think they're going to cut it for very long because the bill comes due at the end of the day. And maybe you can camouflage it and hide it until after the election, but certainly the bill came due last election.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. You know, they've reversed the library decision. They partially walked back some of the more head-scratching, regressive decisions they'd made out in Social Services, Mr. Speaker.

You know, in terms of Advanced Education, I wish my colleague across the way good luck with that. But in terms of what the sector needs, the sector needs a partner they can count on instead of this, you know, coming around mid-term, you know, clawing back whatever meagre increase had been promised.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's where I get to today's . . . You know, so there were . . . Different exercises like that went on after the budget dropped and after this government, you know, got a drubbing in a couple of by-elections. The premier of the day reconsidered what his future plans were, Mr. Speaker. You know, he lit out to the speech circuit.

And again, you know, it's great. We just received a fine lecture from the Premier on fiscal probity, fiscal probity, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the proper administration of the finances of Saskatchewan. You know, I guess my first response was like, well how about a little fiscal probity when you were actually in charge of the finances, Mr. Speaker, instead of presiding over a decade of the best times this province has had and then come around and say, well is there a sovereign wealth fund at the end of the rainbow? Well no, there's not. You know, did we save a dollar? No. No, they blew through the rainy day fund then, Mr. Speaker.

And then, you know, the . . . presides over an election where it's keep Saskatchewan strong and here we go, here we go, Mr. Speaker. The budget that's come down last April, you know, I think it's only just begun in terms of the kind of decisions that this government is making, and making the people of Saskatchewan pay the prices for the mistakes and the bad choices of the members opposite. We see that certainly in our municipal sector, Mr. Speaker.

And again, last year's budget . . . And you don't have to take my word for it but Bob Hawkins, you know, city councillor here in the city of Regina, on the board with SUMA . . . And who is Bob Hawkins? Well he was a Sask Party candidate in 2007, Mr. Speaker. Pardon me. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the instruction, the guidance. But of course, Dr. Bob Hawkins said that last year's budget came "like a thief in the night." It came like a thief in the night, Mr. Speaker. And you can check the record for that in terms of city council and, you know, the interviews he'd given with *Global* and with the *Regina Leader-Post*.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that's I think a pretty accurate depiction of the way that all these different partnerships throughout the province that count on the provincial government to be an honest broker and straightforward in their dealings and took them at their word when they said they were about keeping Saskatchewan strong, took them at their word when they were going to be honouring agreements around grants-in-lieu that had been in place for decades, Mr. Speaker, when that, of course, was given the old switcheroo with last year's budget.

You know, maybe there's some kind of magic solution coming along here, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think year 2's going to be much better of this trajectory that the government's got the province on. And that's a shame, Mr. Speaker, because the province deserves so much better. The partners that count on

this government to provide the services, to provide the things that we all value in common in this province, Mr. Speaker, they're going to be looking to this government and saying, you know . . .

And of course, you know, there are a lot of people in very vulnerable situations, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this government. So they're hoping that the listening and the backtracking and the repenting that went on after last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, they're hoping that that's going to stick; it's going to take somehow, Mr. Speaker; that the new Premier's going to make it work somehow.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think, you know, if past is indeed prologue, or the . . . I forget who was, who's fond of saying this, Mr. Speaker. Oh yes, it was the premier. He was saying that the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. And so, you know, what are we to take from the behaviour of this past budget, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that it was one of the worst, if not the worst budget in the history of this province? And what's going to happen in this year to come, Mr. Speaker? What lessons will have been gleaned from this experience, Mr. Speaker?

So in that we'll be standing up alongside Saskatchewan people every step of the way, calling that government out, calling them to account. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations on your election to Speaker of the Assembly. It's an honourable position, and I am sure you'll do it well.

You know, listening to the members opposite in their presentation today really reminded me of the 1982 NDP election platform. The family of Crown corporations is strong. That was their slogan, Mr. Speaker, while interest rates were running at 20 to 24 per cent and families across the province were losing their homes, they were losing their farms, and they were losing their businesses.

That lack of understanding of reality is clearly seen in today's NDP, Mr. Speaker. And fact is, if you take a look at the new Leader of the Opposition's statements and calls from the members today, it's continually spend, spend, spend. And fact is, the Leader of the Opposition, in his platform to win the leadership, promised to spend \$2.8 billion per year. And the only place that it looked like in there he could find the money was by imposing a carbon tax on Saskatchewan. Totally irrelevant to the people of Saskatchewan. No realization of the facts on the ground, Mr. Speaker.

You know, as an example, the member for Regina Douglas Park thinks that we were ornery today. You know, from her point of view I can understand — I can understand — where she comes from on that, because the truth makes it very difficult to keep promoting your philosophy when it's absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker. So I can understand that she would think we were being ornery.

The member for Regina Douglas Park wants consultation with municipalities. And we do that, Mr. Speaker. And yet her

colleague, the member for Saskatoon Centre, wants us to arbitrarily, without consultation, set a date to declare an apology to First Nations for the Sixties Scoop that happened — that happened — under the NDP and the Liberals, Mr. Speaker. No consultation on that; just do it arbitrarily, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, they are split in their caucus. There are factions all over the place in that caucus, and they don't consult each other, Mr. Speaker.

You know, councillors say that they want to identify the budget cuts in municipal budgets. Well as I look back over history, Mr. Speaker, looking at what has happened in the past when the NDP were government, most if not all of the budgets of rural and urban municipalities would have identified it as NDP cuts.

Let's take a look at what was actually happening. So this past year, this past year, the spending on urban municipalities was 165 million, and indeed that was a reduction from 174 million the year before. Let's look at the year that we formed government. First budget, 2008 — 77 million using the formula that was in place under the NDP.

An Hon. Member: — There was no formula.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Well there was no formula. It was simply grants given out. The 2006 budget for urbans was 44 million, and we had almost doubled it in the year that we were government. And yet today the NDP are saying, oh my God, the sky is falling for municipalities, both rural and urban, because we're giving them more than twice what they were getting under the NDP. It's a terrible thing when you have more money than you've ever had before.

Rural municipalities under last year's budget got almost 73 million; 2006 under the NDP, 37 million; almost twice as much. You know, you go back a little bit earlier, go back to 1993, rural municipalities were getting 31 million and in 2006, 37 million. Wow, what an increase under the NDP, what an increase. You know, so municipalities, like every form of government, whether it's federal, provincial, or municipal, if you give them money they will spend it.

So they never want to see a reduction. We don't want to see a reduction. Federal government doesn't want to see a reduction. But you can't ignore the realities on the ground, which is what the 1982 NDP campaign was trying to do, was ignore reality. That is also what the current Leader of the Opposition, in his campaign to win that position, was ignoring reality of where are you going to come up with two and a half billion dollars a year to pay for his promises unless you cut, let's say, 50 per cent of the Health budget, or both the Education and Advanced Education budgets to zero. You know, you might get two and a half billion dollars there, you know. So there's no reality in what he was . . . what he raises.

You know, the member for P.A. Northcote is always talking about the need for a second bridge in P.A. We have said we would pay, we would put up one-third of the money if the feds would put up one-third of the money and P.A., like everybody else, puts up one-third of the money within a P3. No, no, no, we can't have that. No, no, we can't do that. So, Mr. Speaker, they just continue to ignore the realities.

And the municipalities, under last year's budget, continue to receive 1 per cent of the PST that they agreed to and that we agreed to, and they still do that today, Mr. Speaker. So they're . . . Yes, they all want an increase. We want an increase as well, you know. But we also have to deal with the realities of the world today, and when you lose 10 per cent of your revenues, reality strikes home really quick.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the non-realistic motion of the member for Regina Douglas Park and her colleagues because it's bound to fail.

The Speaker: — The time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Swift Current.

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The tax burden for Saskatchewan families and businesses is lower now than it was 10 years ago and revenue sharing is also significantly higher than it was. In fact, in my home community of Swift Current, we're at 138 per cent higher than it was prior to 2007. Yet the members opposite critique both of these areas actually, while also proposing a massive \$2.5 billion per year spending increase.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Prince Albert Northcote. To pay for this two and a half billion dollar plan, will you burden our RMs and municipalities with a tax increase, or will you cut much needed programs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's pretty rich for them to be talking about taxes when we have the highest property taxes in Saskatchewan's history. They've raised the PST. They eliminated the exemption. They're forcing municipalities to raise their taxes and raise their service fees. So that's pretty rich coming from you.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wonder if the member from Cannington could clarify because, you know, sometimes it gets a little off the trail and, you know, things start to get kind of gauzy. But could he clarify for us, at very least the Premier has indicated that the province would pay for 100 per cent of some kind of yet-to-be-determined P.A. bridge. At least he got that part right. The member from Cannington said something very different. Could the member from Cannington tell us who is right, the Premier or the member from Cannington?

[12:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again we see an example of the misunderstanding and the misdirection provided by the members opposite. The Premier said earlier today that the Saskatchewan Party government would fund 100 per cent of the hospital — not the bridge, Mr. Speaker, the

hospital. With every tertiary hospital in the province is paid for by the province, be it Saskatoon, Regina. We're paying for the North Battleford hospital, Mr. Speaker. We're paying for the children's hospital. It was the members opposite as government that closed the hospitals around this province, 52 hospitals including the Plains hospital here in Regina because it had asbestos and then they turned it into a school after that, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, we find this motion just a little bit hypocritical. The members opposite say they're all for our cities, towns, and villages deserving better on one hand, and then on the other hand, including their own leader has stated openly that he supports the carbon tax — a carbon tax, Mr. Speaker — that hurts ag producers, the energy industry, and many other people in between. This tax, Mr. Speaker, can and will cause job losses as well as significant increases to costs at the pumps.

Mr. Speaker, my question is posed to the member from Prince Albert Northcote. How can you honestly say that the people deserve better, yet support a tax that negatively affects every person living in every city, village, and town?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from P.A. Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to add to the fact that this government's trying to deflect from the fact that they haven't consulted with municipal leaders when they're making these decisions. And they make these decisions on the floor of the Assembly, when they had meetings with municipal leaders but they didn't even inform them of the decisions that they were going make. Have some respect for our municipal leaders.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The interim CEO [chief executive officer] of the Meewasin Valley Authority, Doug Porteous, issued a letter last week in which he wrote, and I quote:

It is essential to the survival of Meewasin that the Government of Saskatchewan . . . [does] the actions from last year, and in its budget this fiscal year, reestablishes long term sustainable funding . . .

And speaking to Global News, Porteous was very clear. I quote, "Meewasin cannot exist without statutory funding."

To the member from Saskatoon University, a former Meewasin Valley Authority board member, so he knows this issue well: what has he got to say to the CEO and the supporters right across the province, and in particular in his own riding, that want to see that statutory funding re-established?

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

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. Meewasin is a vital,

important part of the city of Saskatoon and Saskatoon University constituency. We're working hard with the Meewasin board and with the Meewasin Valley Authority to find a path forward to continue to support this very important initiative.

And on another note, we also are supporting many other things in Saskatoon that are very important initiatives. I forgot to draw attention to the children's hospital, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon University, \$235 million; two bridges, Mr. Speaker, \$147 million; U of S got \$346 million for capital funding. The Gordie Howe Complex was one and a half million dollars; and lest we forget, the Remai art gallery, \$17.1 million.

I'm proud to stand on our record that we have established over the last 10 years and will continue to do that. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melfort.

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member from Regina Douglas Park has been very vocal about revenue sharing and yet is critical of our government's plan to balance the budget. Today she mentioned that we had cut her community funding, and yet in Regina alone, since our government took over, there has been a 157 per cent increase in revenue sharing, bringing that total up to \$40.5 million in the 2017-2018 year.

So since the Saskatchewan Party took over in 2007, your constituency as well as mine are getting a bigger piece of a bigger pie. And so my question is for the member of the Regina Douglas Park. If you're so determined to increase revenue sharing for your city more than we already have, and since you can't have your cake and eat it too, what programs would you cut in order to pay for it?

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

Ms. Sarauer: — I appreciate the question. And I'd like to welcome all of the new members, and welcome them to their first 75-minute debate, and look forward to when they are participating in the debate portion of the event so we can ask them some questions. But I'm happy to see them join in.

I do want to point out the member's own constituency, own city of Melfort's tax increase last year was 4 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We're trying to provide for a better province. I'm not just talking about Regina. I'm talking about the whole province. The whole province received a devastating cut from this Sask Party. If they don't want to believe us, then they can believe the municipal leaders, and they can believe the quotes from the municipal leaders who are working on the front lines, who are dealing with these budget cuts, who are really dealing with the situation that the Sask Party put them in.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course one of the cuts to hometowns that was announced in last year's budget was devastating cuts to our regional library system. And it was, with some credit, eventually turned around, but not before we saw the second-largest protest in the history of this province. And people of Saskatchewan took that fight to over 90 locations

around the province. Mr. Speaker, at that time the minister indicated that there would be a full review of library funding in this province, but we've seen nothing but radio silence on this up until now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Regina University, my question is this. We know what your response was last year to those who expressed concerns about the cuts to library funding. What will your response be this year if your government decides to go after libraries again?

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

Mr. Olauson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm the member from Saskatoon University. I was waiting for the minister to get up, but . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, can't even get that right. I know, it's hard.

Mr. Speaker, when we had our budget last year, we made some tough decisions and we made sure that we are down a path to prosperity and a path to balance the budget. We heard from the citizens of the province. I had a few people show up at my place, and they were gracious and polite. And we, you know, we made decisions based on that. That's democracy, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to defend it.

I'm also proud to defend our record. Saskatoon, this year . . .

The Speaker: — The time for debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 2 — Opposition's Fiscal Plan

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, at the end of my time today, I . . .

[Interjections]

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of my time today, I ask that the following motion be entered into the records:

That this Assembly rejects the NDP's plan to increase spending by over \$2.5 billion, as it would leave Saskatchewan with an extreme deficit and increase the debt of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, for emphasis, let me be clear. The NDP, under this newly minted leader, have put forward an estimated \$2.5 billion — that's billion with a "b" — of new spending, with absolutely no plan to fund this spending nor any end in sight. Mr. Speaker, that amounts to \$2,145 for every man, woman, and child in this province, about 10,000 per average family.

Mr. Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't note for the record that it's now been two full days since the NDP advocated for a

carbon tax in this Chamber. Let me begin with some context for my comments that follow.

First I'd ask my colleagues to really pay attention because this is going to get very complicated for a couple of minutes. Let's look at the NDP leadership contest. I had to reach out to some of my colleagues to try to make some sense of this recent contest. The member for Saskatoon Meewasin — for our purposes today we'll call him run-run-run or three-run for short — defeated the member from Regina Rosemont. And for our purposes today we will refer to him as run-run, or two-run for short.

So stay with me on this; this really continues to get complicated. As explained to me, three-run beat two-run in a run to replace two-run, who stepped down to run against three-run to lead a party currently led by Norma new girl, the interim leader and member for Regina Douglas Park. All of the pundits seem to believe that had the interim leader run, she might well have defeated the noted candidates. So if I have this correct, one-run could likely have beat two-run and three-run to run the party that is now run by a leader who is about to run out of options.

So being a good political student, I watched the final hour of the NDP leadership process, including one-run's speech and the election of three-run over two-run. In hindsight, I wish I would have had a screenshot of the scenes of the NDP caucus surrounding the new leader. Let's remember that two-run had the broad support of seven caucus members over three-run, who was supported in a leap of faith by one member. Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, did I use the word "leap"? I'll come back to that in a few minutes.

Mr. Speaker, the screenshot at that moment would have shown emotions running from anger to despondency to disappointment. The Opposition House Leader used the word "grumpy" today. Perhaps looking in the collective mirror these days would be appropriate. Clearly that caucus knew they were now on an entirely new path. The word that comes to mind to describe the scene is tergiversate. Tergiversate means to turn one's back. It was exactly at that moment, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that a lot of what the member opposite is putting forward is meant in a state of levity and all of that, which is fine. But as hon. members in this place, we're to refer to each with some decorum and respect. And I think I heard the member opposite refer to the member from Regina Douglas Park as the new girl. So if he could please observe the proper respect and decorum that we're due to each other in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and if you could remind him of that fact, I'd be much obliged.

[12:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Just to respond.

The Speaker: — Yes.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — As the House Leader, I was listening. I didn't hear that. We will check, but I will ask the member that . . . In the text of a broad spectrum of speeches here, things are sometimes said. And I will review it, but it'll also be up to the member, who'll know what he said at that end, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Yes. It's a good reminder for all the members. Treat each other with a level of respect, and everyone here is honourable. Thank you, member from Regina Elphinstone, for the reminder. I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the opposition member for bringing that to my attention. And I do apologize for using that term. Thank you.

We'll continue. So as I was saying, as . . . being a good political student I did watch the last period there, and the term "leap" was used, which I will refer to later. Clearly the caucus knew . . . sorry. It was exactly at that moment that the NDP completed the process of turning their backs on the hard-working, common-sense people of Saskatchewan. More on context, the Saskatchewan NDP Party Constitution reads, and I quote section 1.3:

The purpose of the Party shall be to promote through political action and other appropriate means the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth in which the principle regulating production and exchange will be the supplying of human needs and not the making of profits.

Section 1.5 reads, and I quote:

In any matter not dealt with by this Constitution, the Constitution of the New Democratic Party of Canada shall prevail.

As a result, we have to keep in mind that the term "profit" is clearly a dirty word in NDP lexicon. Also when in doubt, deferring to the federal NDP, to which I will make comments later.

I did also, being a sucker for punishment, watch the NDP national convention in part . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What can I say? I found it quite fascinating, Mr. Speaker, to watch as various factions within the NDP party . . . and let's remember, this is the mother ship of the provincial party. It was very interesting to watch the various factions within the party, and I don't know how to use . . . perhaps I won't find the right term. Debate would hardly be the right term in this context. They were arguing, challenging each other, struggling to figure out whether it was the eco-Marxists or the socialists or the wannabe socialists or the Greens or who else might actually be trying to take over the convention as it evolved. And there was a great rush to the microphone every few minutes by various participants to perpetuate their perspective on various things depending on where they were coming from.

One more item of context, it has to be demonstrated time and time again in this Chamber that the NDP math is a nebulous thing. In fact it can easily be stated that preposterous postulations of members opposite lead the NDP precipitously

close to sharp review.

NDP in question period earlier today talked about the complete disrespect for contracts, negotiations, stakeholders, and they want us to make unilateral decisions affecting stakeholders, as the member from Cannington spoke.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, we digress and I'd like to get back to the motion itself. The new NDP leader, and the NDP party platform based on the new leader's own website, outlines about 70 un-costed policy proposals that we can assume will form their position going forward. It's likely safe to assume that some of the defeated candidates' positions will be added. But for our purposes today, let's just assume we are dealing with the leader's promises.

Now we've already stated that the NDP math is a bit of a challenge, but surely a modicum of costing might have been considered. But alas, not so seen. To help the new leader out, in the spirit of co-operation that both parties spoke to on the session's opening day, we thought we would provide costing for his promises. And he's certainly welcome to use these numbers going forward.

Now then, keeping in mind that facts are often hard to find in NDP positions, we had to make some minor assumptions. But all in all, I believe we have made best effort to be accurate and, as we are most likely to do, we have been conservative in our costing of budget issues.

So big picture, we have identified \$2.5 billion per year of spending proposed. This represents about 16.9 per cent increase in budgeted expense from last year's Saskatchewan budget. Given that governments have only three ways to manage the balance of revenue and expense, those being tax increases, debt, or service reduction, we can assume that the NDP, based on their endless position on spending more, will propose huge tax increases or debt on the province — more specifically, the good citizens of the province of Saskatchewan.

Interestingly though, only yesterday the opposition Finance critic was criticizing the government for debt in the Crowns. I'm certain the member will share with us which tree money actually grows from in the NDP world.

So who exactly will pay? Well to get to that answer, we have to educate our friends across the way on how the economy actually works. They would have you believe that we should just tax those evil corporations as clearly they are the cause of all of our problems. So who are these evil corporations that they want to tax? Well let's assume they will follow their noses and tax the potash industry, the oil and gas industry, and by definition corporations will have to include the hundreds of businesses in agriculture, in forestry, in service and hospitality across the economy.

So who owns these businesses then? Well in many cases they are our neighbours, people who have invested their lives in growing Saskatchewan. In many cases they are owned by Saskatchewan shareholders, good people who actually believe in the value of industry and commerce. In many cases the shares are held by pension plans, including the pension plans of our valued public sector workers and, yes, even by the unions'

investment management arms.

So bottom line is, taxes move money from one pocket to another, either to raise revenue for the government or to influence a societal behaviour. In this case, the NDP will do both. They will move money from entrepreneurs who build the economy to their social agenda and they will grow government to support that same agenda. Meanwhile those same corporate bodies will have to adjust workforce, raise prices to consumers or, as is being displayed as a result of current federal policy, those good corporate citizens will look for a more friendly environment in which to do business.

With business go people. Does this sound like the last 16 years of the NDP government? Mr. Speaker, untethered capital always creates opportunity. The NDP are bound and determined to drive private capital from our province. Of course the NDP, like the federal Liberal government, believe that the high-income earners should pay more. So who are those evil people?

Well they are our community leaders engaged in medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, business and finance, and management. In fact, the top 10 per cent earners would include about 2,500 SaskPower employees, and can assume a similar ratio in SaskTel and SaskEnergy and government, and a significant number of health care workers and most senior management and technical people. They would also include each and every member on that side of the aisle.

They would also want to increase taxes on a good number of farmers, small-business owners, and again, those who build our Saskatchewan economy by putting their money at risk.

Members opposite struggle with the concept of risk-reward for those who build our economy, as they see every job as a right, not the privilege that is earned through sacrifice, dedication, and hard work. We should be celebrating the people who get up every morning, make breakfast, get the kids off to school, head off to work and put in an honest day, then off to the rink or school play, and volunteer at the bingo, pay their bills, help the neighbour clean the driveway, and clean up the park without saying a word, because that's what we do in Saskatchewan. On our side of the House a strong and vibrant economy with everyone fully participating to the best of their abilities is the scenario we strive to achieve. On their side it is a fantasyland with imaginary dollars.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to touch on some of the specific commitments that the Leader of the Opposition made in his leadership bid and I think they speak . . . And we have gone to the trouble of costing out all of these promises. As I said earlier there are about 70 of them. But I'm only going to touch on a few. So the leader is going to phase out the \$40 million per year graduate retention fund and invest that money in reducing tuition from the highest to the lowest in Western Canada.

Well, Mr. Speaker, according to StatsCan Manitoba has the lowest tuition in Western Canada. In order to lower tuition to Manitoba levels, an investment of \$127 million would be needed, less the \$90 million to GRP [graduate retention program] payments, or \$36.7 million new money. Mr. Speaker, they would also develop a cash flow model for the College of

Medicine that would cause an increase of \$7 million to what we already contribute to the College of Medicine — \$7 million new money.

Mr. Speaker, in agriculture they would encourage agricultural practices that decrease carbon input through crop choices, fuel efficient farm equipment, and on-farm electricity production through wind, solar, and biogas. Now I would comment real quickly, Mr. Speaker, that I was throughout my constituency all through the fall and I did not see a single, not one combine, not one tractor, not one truck run by solar power. Not one, not a single one. That promise . . . Nor wind; nor wind. That promise — \$10 million.

Mr. Speaker, they're going to retain it and protect remaining native grasslands on Crown land, including community pastures. That cost, \$62.5 million per year. Mr. Speaker, they're going to support the expansion of shortline rail and support producer efforts for shipper protections to access existing rail services at reasonable rates — something that is already being done by the private sector — at a cost of \$900,000.

I'm going to skip ahead to a few other things. Education, they're going to make a made-in-Saskatchewan, affordable early childhood education program — \$40 million. Mr. Speaker, I took the liberty of doing a little bit of research on the entire education platform that the leader opposite put forward and the only reasonable comparison I could come up with was what Norway is actually doing. And Norway's structure, which fits reasonably close to what the Leader of the Opposition was proposing, would cost the province of Saskatchewan \$5.2 billion — billion dollars, billion dollars — annually for education alone. Mr. Speaker, where they find the money for these things we will never ever understand. It is beyond the imagination.

But I do want to quickly mention one final thing before I come back to the motion. Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the opposition's position on carbon tax and more specifically, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the leader's opposition to the ongoing development of the oil and gas industry. And I want to leave you with this image in your mind, Mr. Speaker: without the oil and gas industry, without the oil and gas industry this place would not exist. Without the oil and gas industry, your desk would not exist; your chair would not exist. And, Mr. Speaker, those across the floor, without the oil and gas industry — and I want you to keep this image firmly planted in your mind — without the oil and gas industry, the emperor across the way would have no clothes.

[12:30]

Mr. Speaker, I would again wish to make this motion:

That this Assembly rejects the NDP's plan to increase spending by over \$2.5 billion, as it would leave Saskatchewan with an extreme deficit and increase the debt of future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Kelvington-Wadena has moved the following motion:

That this Assembly rejects the NDP's plan to increase spending by over \$2.5 billion as it would leave Saskatchewan with an extreme deficit and increase the debt of future generations.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — I move this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — This House stands adjourned until Monday . . . Oh, sorry. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Okay, now? This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:32.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Beaudry-Mellor	3449
Wotherspoon	3449
Reiter	3449
Dennis	3449
Rancourt	3449
Forbes	3450
Sarauer	3450
Kaeding	3450

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Nerlien	3450
Wotherspoon	3450
Beck	3450
Forbes	3451
McCall	3451

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Donors Give \$1 Million to Saskatchewan Hospital	
Cox	3451
Educator Wins Outstanding Principal Award	
McCall	3451
Robotics Team Invited to World Championships	
Doke	3452
Emerging Filmmakers Screen New Work	
Forbes	3452
4-H Provincial Curling Tournament	
Steele	3452
High School Coach Has Winning Record	
Lambert	3452
Opposition's Platform	
Heppner	3453

QUESTION PERIOD

Supports for Indigenous People	
Meili	3453
Moe	3453
Government Response to First Nations and Métis Nation of Saskatchewan	
Meili	3453
Moe	3454
Forbes	3454
Kaeding	3454
Gaming Framework Agreement	
McCall	3454
Makowsky	3455
Harpauer	3455
Support for Indigenous Education	
Beck	3455
Wyant	3455
Wotherspoon	3456
Indigenous Land Use and Duty to Consult	
Rancourt	3456
Kaeding	3456
Justice Programs for Indigenous Communities	
Sarauer	3457
Morgan	3457
Support for Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action	
Meili	3457
Moe	3457

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Fiscal Support for Municipalities	
Sarauer	3458, 3467
Olauson	3460, 3466
Rancourt	3461, 3466

Dennis	3462
McCall	3463, 3466
D'Autremont	3465, 3466
Hindley	3466
Francis	3466
Forbes	3466
Goudy	3467
Beck	3467
PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS	
Motion No. 1 — Opposition's Fiscal Plan	
Nerlien	3467
McCall (point of order)	3468
Brkich (point of order)	3468
The Speaker (point of order)	3468
Carr	3470

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

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