



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

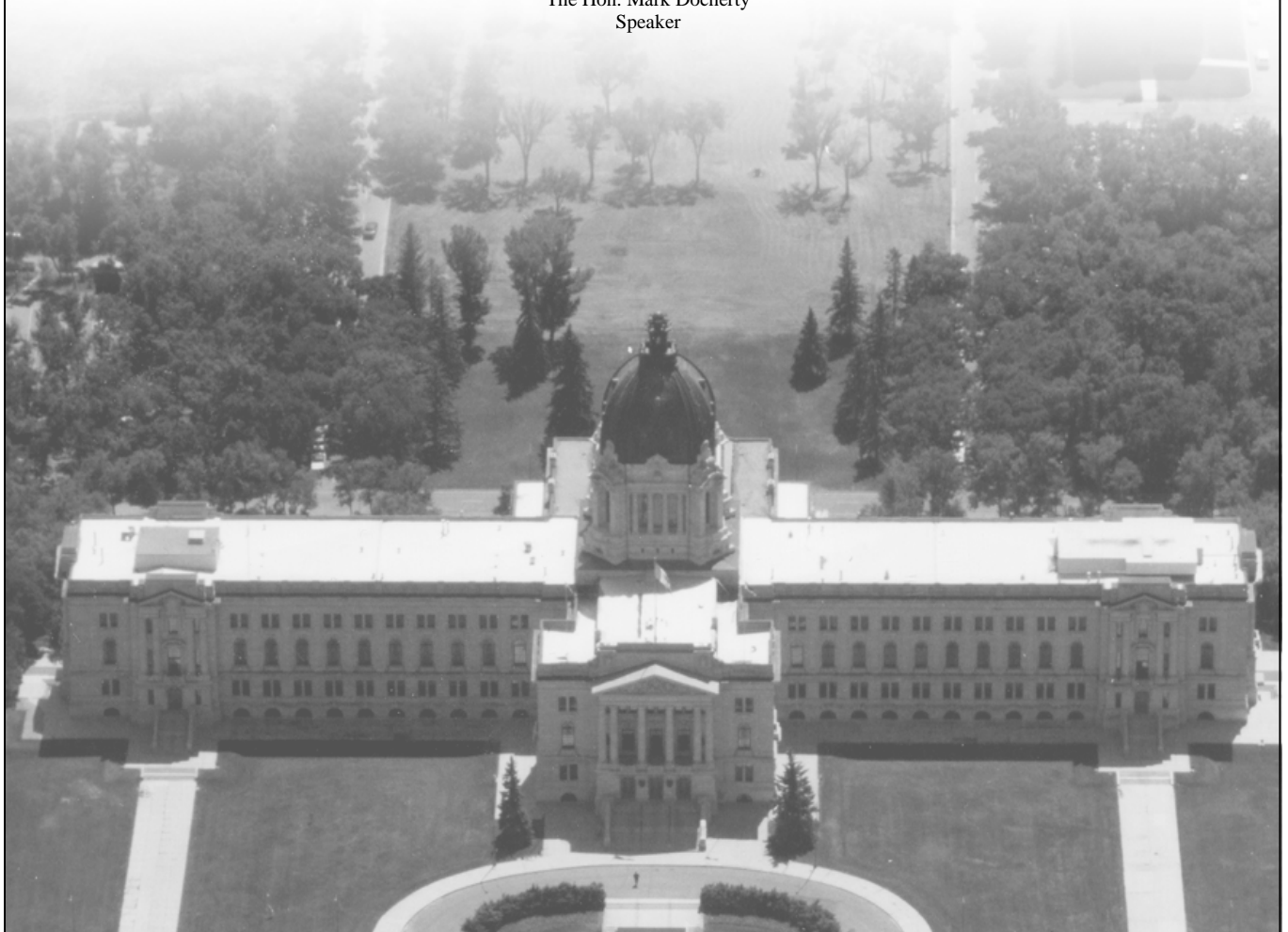
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Mark Docherty  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Ryan Meili

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<b>Cheveldayoff</b> , Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	<b>Morgan</b> , Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
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<b>Dennis</b> , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	<b>Olauson</b> , Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)
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<b>Doke</b> , Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	<b>Rancourt</b> , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)
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<b>Goudy</b> , Todd — Melfort (SP)	<b>Steinley</b> , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
<b>Hargrave</b> , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Stewart</b> , Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
<b>Harpauer</b> , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	<b>Tell</b> , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harrison</b> , Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Tochor</b> , Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)
<b>Hart</b> , Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Vermette</b> , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Heppner</b> , Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Weekes</b> , Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Hindley</b> , Everett — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Wilson</b> , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
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<b>Kirsch</b> , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	<b>Wyant</b> , Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

### Members' Decorum

**The Speaker:** — So yesterday, right on the heels of my ruling, the member for Estevan made a statement that was inflammatory. It was not helpful. The statement is an example of what happens when members on both sides of this Chamber engage in demeaning rancour. A pattern has been developing and is unworthy of this Assembly and is of considerable concern to me. The comments and the questions I ruled out of order yesterday are good examples of the negative spiral that can occur when members start impugning each other's character in this Chamber. I ask members to be cognizant of the tone, manner, and intention of their remarks and to measure their language accordingly in this Assembly.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for a couple of extended introductions, please.

**The Speaker:** — The Premier's requested leave for a couple of extended introductions. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to members of this Assembly for granting leave for these few moments. It's my privilege to introduce to each of you and through each of you to this Assembly, a great friend to members on this side of the House and a familiar face to all members of this Legislative Assembly for a number of years and even decades now. Joining us in the Speaker's gallery is Ruth Gaura.

Ruth is wrapping up a remarkable 44-year career in the public service including 10 years as executive secretary to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, Ruth is accompanied today by Rhonda Romanuk who has worked alongside Ruth for many of those years, and she will succeed her as executive secretary.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe that this day has finally come. Ruth has been such an important part of many of our lives for so long, it's difficult to imagine this place without her at that front desk. As Premier Wall said in his farewell speech last December, Ruth is like family. Premier Wall quite rightly thanked Ruth for running the government all of these years, and I second that sentiment here today.

Mr. Speaker, Ruth began her career in government in 1974, around the time Terry Jacks released "Seasons in the Sun." And

I'm sure Ruth and quite likely the Minister of Agriculture, fondly remember that song because it was a big hit in that year.

Ruth started out in the Department of Mineral Resources. She went to work for the Attorney General, a gentleman by the name of Roy Romanow. She served in the ministry of Northern Saskatchewan. She was a senior assistant in the office of the hon. George McLeod, who held several cabinet posts in the government led by Premier Grant Devine of the day. And for some time Ruth worked in the deputy minister's office at the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Speaker, over the years Ruth earned a reputation as a talented and trustworthy administrator, someone with good judgment and exceptional organizational skills. And so after the 2007 election, she was appointed as Premier Wall's executive secretary. And Ruth served with great distinction in that role. She and Premier Wall forged a strong relationship. They worked well together and they had a lot of fun together. There were one or two practical jokes from time to time and the Minister of Justice and others can tell you, but him most notably, as many of them were at his expense. And Ruth didn't hesitate to play along.

But I can say this, Mr. Speaker, Ruth is warm. Ruth is funny and Ruth is just a wonderful person to be around. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my personal gratitude to Ruth for showing me the ropes these last couple of months. She's provided excellent advice and she has provided some excellent guidance. And perhaps her best advice was to advise me to hire Rhonda as her successor.

Ruth and her husband Wayne are planning to do some travelling in their retirement. We wish them happiness. We wish them health and we wish them all the best on the road ahead, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask all members of this Assembly to welcome our guests and wish Ruth all the best in her travels.

Mr. Speaker, I do ask forgiveness in advance of the Assembly as I do have another introduction of some constituents of mine, but some constituents that have added greatly to the province of Saskatchewan. And it's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to this Assembly some constituents from the great community of Spiritwood. With us today are Harold and Margie Fast, and they bring with them Angelica Vargas.

Mr. Speaker, many in this Assembly will know Harold and Margie or they may be familiar with their names. The Fast's are founders and were owners of Fast Genetics, an incredible Saskatchewan success story and a company with quite an interesting history, a history that actually begins in Africa.

It was in Africa where the first vital partnership of Fast Genetics was formed. Harold was working in Tanzania after graduating from the vet college in Saskatoon, and that's where he met Margie, who is from Scotland. Mr. Speaker, Harold convinced Margie that the winters in Saskatchewan weren't all that bad and they're not very long. So the couple returned to our province and for a time Harold led the swine program at VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization] or at the

veterinary infectious disease organization in Saskatoon of which he's still involved and an advocate for. And then in 1982 the Fastos went into the business on their own. Fast Genetics was started on the family homestead near the community of Spiritwood and, from very modest beginnings, the company has grown into one of the world's largest providers of swine genetics.

Through the use of cutting-edge technology, innovation, and very strong partnerships, Harold and Margie have built a company that employs more than 80 people in that community and across the nation and around the world, and they do business not only in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and China. Mr. Speaker, Fast Genetics has pioneered major advances in swine health, in biosecurity protocols, and they have become industry standards in our nation.

But the contributions of the Fastos goes far beyond the company they created. Throughout the years they have sponsored many, many exchange students from all around the world. Harold has served on numerous boards and advisory committees. He was a member of the Asia trade advisory council, has provided valuable guidance to the Government of Saskatchewan, and Margie has spent many years teaching English as a second language to newcomers in the province of Saskatchewan. And the couple are well known in Spiritwood as well for their community work.

Mr. Speaker, members may have seen the media coverage of the Give Hope Wings campaign just this past year. It was a fundraiser for Hope Air, a national charity that arranges free medical flights for people across Canada. And Harold was one of three Saskatchewan pilots taking part in that 20,000-mile flight across Central and South America to raise about half a million dollars. And he's informed me they're far beyond that now for hope's wings.

Mr. Speaker, we often talk about the Saskatchewan advantage, usually in the context of the enormous natural resources that we have in this province. But the true Saskatchewan advantage are the people that live here. We are blessed in this province with some extraordinary citizens, whom we all know who contribute in every area in our communities: individuals who are modest, who are generous, and who are hard-working.

Harold, Margie, and Angelica are examples among many across Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, we owe these special people our thanks for their many years of service to their community and to our province. And I would ask all members of this Assembly to welcome our guests to their legislature.

**The Speaker:** — Recognize the Minister for Central Services.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Requested leave for an extended introduction. Leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I want to introduce some special young guests to the members of the Legislative Assembly. Joining us today in the west gallery are nearly 40 grade 8 students from Ituna School and Kelvington High School who are taking part in a program known as A Day in the Legislative Assembly. The students are here today along with their teachers, Cynthia Yanko and Rob Lissinna, their chaperones, and officials from the Provincial Capital Commission.

Mr. Speaker, A Day in the Legislative Assembly is an educational program that was created in 2012 by the Provincial Capital Commission in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Legislative Building, and is now offered semi-annually each spring and fall. Over the past six years, the program has become a memorable learning experience for hundreds of Saskatchewan youth that teaches them about our democratic process, its history, and the roles of members of the Legislative Assembly. The students from Ituna and Kelvington will be touring our historic Legislative Building, observing their MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in session, and participating in a unique panel discussion.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you personally for agreeing to lead a panel discussion with the students in the Chamber later today. This is a very special, hands-on learning opportunity that just might inspire a few of these students to one day become elected officials as well.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in welcoming these young guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the minister to welcome the outstanding young students from Kelvington High School here. I look forward to meeting with them a little later, and I look forward to seeing some of them in the legislature in the future.

The Premier mentioned the Saskatchewan advantage being not only the resources that we have but also the people, and I know that our young people are, truly are the Saskatchewan advantage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask you to welcome our students.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the Premier in welcoming Ruth and thanking her for her many years of service. He mentioned that she'd been running the government. We've been critical at times about how this government is run, but we can only imagine how much worse it would have been had you not been there. And now that the office is Ruth-less, we will be ruthless in our paying close attention to what goes on. But we're certain Rhonda will do an excellent job in carrying on the torch. And thank you for your service for all these years for the people of Saskatchewan, and I ask the members to join me in welcoming and thanking Ruth for those years of service.

And I'll join the member in welcoming the young folks who are here from Kelvington and Ituna. I hope that you enjoy today's show. We'll try to keep the theatre to a modicum of decorum and always remind you that what goes on in here is not the whole of what happens, and a lot of the time we get along much better than you might see here. And we hope that this isn't the last time that these students will join us, observe what's happening here, and see their role in designing and building the future of this province. I ask you to join me in welcoming them to enjoy their day in the House today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the Minister of Central Services, the member from Kelvington-Wadena, and the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming the grade 8 students that are in the west gallery, especially the students from Ituna.

Mr. Speaker, their teacher, Ms. Yanko, has been in this Assembly as part of the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] program, since then has brought a number of classes to the Assembly. And I think — well I know — she has told me that her experience through SSTI has certainly sharpened her enthusiasm for our Assembly. And I would certainly join with the Leader of the Opposition's comments that hopefully our behaviour here today will be somewhat more . . . resemble what takes place in the classroom.

And I will be meeting with them later in the day too, and I'm sure they'll have some interesting questions. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming both groups of grade 8 students.

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

[10:15]

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce Cheryl and Larry Dvernichuk.

I have a short story about Cheryl. We all go to events that we're not really sure what's going to happen and take place at the events. And I was invited to a quilting event in a high school in south Regina, not knowing much about quilting. I saw some lovely patterns and had some conversations. And there was a short break, and after that there was a few new quilts that were brought up.

And it was actually VE [Victory in Europe] Day, the 75th anniversary. And John Sheppard was there, and he was on the beaches on VE Day. And he read a letter back to all of us about what was exactly going on in a young soldier's mind that day. And that's when we learned about Quilts of Valour, and Cheryl has been a tireless advocate for Quilts of Valour.

And I'd had the opportunity to attend many of these ceremonies over the last couple of years, and they've been very special. And the military liaison from Moose Jaw Wakamow and I

attended one at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre where we handed out 70 Quilts of Valour to veterans across Saskatchewan that were there. And these ceremonies become very important to us and we try to make them to as many as possible.

And they do a wonderful job. The volunteers give of their time and their patterns and they think of these wonderful quilts. And they wrap them around the soldiers and you can just see the gratitude in their eyes. And I want to thank Cheryl for all they do.

And I know they're planning another quilting event here in Regina and I think they're going to try and get some of us on the sewing machines in May. So I've committed to sewing and if anyone else would like to join us . . . And I'm going to try and convince the military liaison to join me for a quilting event here, May 11 to 12th in Regina. And we'll try our hand and try not to get our hand stuck on the quilt. So I hope you join me in welcoming Cheryl and Larry to their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Oh, sorry. I recognize the member for Regina Rochdale.

**Ms. Ross:** — I'm short but not that short. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, seated in your gallery, my family. My husband, Terry, is here, and Terry is my biggest champion. Doesn't matter what I choose to do; he's always been so supportive, and so I have to thank him very much. And he was my sign guy last election because he had retired from the university. I think he thought of maybe going back to work as he was slogging through snow. But I was so grateful for his dedication, but his support and love.

And accompanying my husband, Terry, is our son Jon. Jon is married and he's here with his family, with Allison and my grandson Simon and Holly, my granddaughter. And then we can't forget Charlie.

Jon is a yardmaster at CN [Canadian National], so his job is to ensure that the produce from Saskatchewan gets sent in a timely manner to the ports and to destinations. But you know, Jon may be a yardmaster at CN, but Allison absolutely keeps the trains running on time in their home. She makes sure that those three kids get to their music lessons, their swimming lessons, their karate lessons, and fabulous meals always prepared on time. So I'm just so pleased to be able to introduce my family to the Legislative Assembly. So everyone, please welcome my family. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery is a very good friend of mine, actually my former chief of staff. Jason Wall is sitting in your gallery and no stranger to this building, Mr. Speaker. And he has moved down a flight of stairs to be the senior adviser to the Premier now, Mr. Speaker. But sitting with Jason, Mr. Speaker, is Jason's parents, Frank and Maxine Wall who I have come to know over the past couple of years. They are retired people in Swift Current, had a very successful moving business in Swift Current. And I'd like all members of the Assembly to

welcome Jason and Frank and Maxine to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — 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 citizens of Frontier and Shaunavon. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens calling for the restoration of public intermunicipal transportation for people living with disabilities. They recognize the isolation, the vulnerability that's been caused by the scrapping of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] and are calling for the re-establishment of transportation, a lifeline to many people in many communities. The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore public intermunicipal transportation services for people with disabilities.

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition calling on the government to stop the cuts to our children's classrooms. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a number of facts: to the fact that the Sask Party has cut over \$500 in government funding for every student across the province; to the fact that the Sask Party hiked education property tax by \$67 million last year but cut \$54 million from our children's classrooms; and to the fact that these cuts have had a devastating impact on classrooms all across the province, leading to loss of supports in the classroom, loss of buses for kindergartners, and loss of pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs for children with special needs. I'll read the prayer:

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

mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

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

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the people signing this petition from the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, even those outside the province, to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties; and that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics.

And we know over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations, of that, 2.87 million coming from companies outside of Saskatchewan. You know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people, and the federal government and 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. 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, to put a ban on donations from corporations and unions, 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.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise presenting a petition from good citizens across the province of Saskatchewan calling for a seniors' advocate:

The petitioners, in the prayer that reads as follows, 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 citizens from the good cities of Regina and Saskatoon. I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Observance of Easter

**Mr. Goudy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As it's Good Friday tomorrow, starting this year's Easter weekend and the Jewish

Passover, it's a time to remind ourselves, as we sit here in this beautiful Chamber, that the king of our Queen was born in a stable, grew up a carpenter's son, and hung out with fishermen, tax collectors, and sinners. He gave up his heavenly robes and stood before his people at the last, bloodied, beaten, and naked. He laid aside his heavenly crown for a woven crown of thorns, and the praise of angels for an angry, incited mob shouting, crucify him, crucify him.

And why, I ask, would he do this, Mr. Speaker? Because we needed more than a king to rule our bodies; we needed one to rule our hearts and save us from our sin and our pride. I needed one to save me from my sin and my pride. He taught us how to love: greater love has no man than this, than he lays down his life for his friends. He taught us how to live: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And he taught us how to lead: he would be greatest among us; let him be our servant.

This world wasn't worthy of him and the grave couldn't hold him. So though Friday was the day that Jesus gave his life for all people, Sunday is the day that he rose from the dead and we celebrate his victory over sin and the grave.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to thank God for his son, Jesus, who gave his life to save not only our Queen but all of us who would receive him as our king. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and may we all enjoy this Easter and Passover holiday.

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

#### **Gender Diversity Awareness Week**

**Mr. Forbes:** — I rise today to mark Gender Diversity Awareness Week here in Saskatchewan. Running from March 26th to April 1st, there has been several flag raisings in Saskatoon, Regina, and Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, on Monday I attended the raising of the transgender flag here at the legislature along with yourself, the member from Saskatoon Sutherland, Regina Douglas Park, and Prince Albert Northcote.

We all heard powerful messages from the transgender community about the work that needs to be done. We were joined by the member from Regina Rosemont Tuesday morning at the Regina flag raising. While flag raisings are important symbolic gestures, they must be followed up with real action and commitments to making the world a safer place for transgender people.

I also want to note Transgender Day of Visibility, which takes place on March 31st. This is a day in which people from around the world are asked to celebrate the accomplishments of transgender persons and to bring attention to the fight against transphobia. It is a day of celebration of outstanding work and the lives of transgender persons within our communities.

Though visibility and recognition of accomplishments are both very important, it is crucial that we as a society continue working to making our communities safer for our transgender friends, family, and neighbours. I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in continuing to push for a more inclusive society for all gender-diverse and transgender persons. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Business Builder Awards**

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night I, along with the members from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood and Saskatoon Westview, attended the North Saskatoon Business Association's 21st annual Business Builder Awards presented by Nutrien. Over 570 business leaders and supporters attended making this celebration one of their largest yet.

Mr. Speaker, last night's awards were focused on Building Bridges to Success. This theme was in recognition of the north commuter parkway bridge which will be opening in Saskatoon later this year. The NSBA [North Saskatoon Business Association] received a record number of awards applications this year, further demonstrating how strong the success and achievements were in the past year for Saskatoon businesses. Award winners include zu, Stantec, Vendasta, Industrial Machine, SARCAN, the David Aplin Group, Allnorth, Complete Technologies, and Biktrix Electric Bikes.

A special shout-out to Alex, DonnaLyn, and all the folks at SREDA for taking home the Team Building Award, as they were highlighted for their business management and staff who promote and foster a team working environment.

Ken Kreutzweiser from ICR Commercial Real Estate was awarded the Member of the Year Award. Norm Wallace, founder of Wallace Construction Specialities, was honoured with the Shirley Ryan Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in congratulating all the nominees and award winners of the NSBA Business Builder Awards and thank the association for such an incredible event. Thank you.

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

#### **Seniors Advocacy Centre Gala Luncheon**

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday, March 8th, I had the pleasure of attending the fourth annual Prince Albert Seniors Advocacy Centre gala luncheon. Each year the Advocacy Centre organizes a gala luncheon for Prince Albert and area seniors, and it's always a full house. The Advocacy Centre has a unique award which they give out at their gala. It is called the 70-Plus and Still Going Strong Award. You must, of course, be over 70 and still be active in the community in order to be recognized. The recipients are not told ahead of time, so it is a surprise to them when they are named.

This year's recipient is Eleanor George. Ms. George is very active with the community services centre, especially with senior transportation. She has sat on many boards in Prince Albert. As well, she volunteers at Mont St. Joseph senior home and volunteers at the library. Mr. Speaker, this amazing and very active lady is 81 years old.

[10:30]

It is very indicative of Eleanor's dedication that, though she was shocked and thrilled of her award, she promptly began speaking about how everyone should volunteer and encouraged those in attendance to become active through volunteerism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in extending congratulations to the amazing Eleanor George on being named this year's 70-Plus and Still Going Strong Award.

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

#### Remembering Bernie Collins

**Ms. Carr:** — Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to bring tribute to Bernie Collins of Estevan who passed away at the age of 82 this week. My personal memories of Bernie go back to my junior high school days when Bernie was a Catholic school teacher. He spent over 30 years teaching.

Bernie was a husband and a father to eight children. One of Bernie's sons was my junior high school teacher. I played soccer with two of his daughters, and I also worked on boards and committees with many of his other children. Bernie can be proud of the family he raised and the community values he instilled in them.

And, Mr. Speaker, Bernie was very involved in politics. He was the Liberal MP [Member of Parliament] for Souris-Moose Mountain constituency from 1993 to 1997. He served on Estevan City Council spanning over three decades, including a term as mayor from 1985 to 1988. Civic politics ended for him in 2003, but that didn't stop him. He continued to sit on boards and committees. He was truly dedicated to his community.

And, Mr. Speaker, in July of 2017 Bernie had a street named after him in the city of Estevan, so his legacy will live on for many years to come. When asked to comment on this street naming, he was humble as ever as he said, "The time that you put in is important, and I was grateful to serve."

So I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of Bernie Collins, who was a loving family man, dedicated teacher, and devoted to his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Lafleche is Hockeyville Finalist

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Lafleche is a small community located in my constituency of Wood River, where I myself played many hockey games, and their passion for hockey has launched them into the national spotlight. The town has been selected as one of the top four finalists of Kraft Hockeyville. If Lafleche can win this year's competition, they will receive \$250,000 for rink upgrades and will host an NHL [National Hockey League] pre-season game.

Mr. Speaker, the rink is truly the heart of the Lafleche community, as over 130 athletes from towns and surrounding area utilize the space. This isn't the first year Saskatchewan has had a team reach the Kraft Hockeyville final, but we have yet to take home the grand prize, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Lafleche is truly deserving of this rink so that it can grow its enthusiastic hockey community and show Canada just how passionate they are for the sport.

I ask all members of this Assembly help us show Canada how passionate the hockey fans of Saskatchewan are and support Lafleche as the first community in this province to win Kraft Hockeyville. Voting begins tomorrow, Friday, March 30th at 10 a.m. and closes on Saturday, March 31st, at 6:30 p.m. on the Kraft Hockeyville website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Go vote.

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

#### Checking Opposition Statements

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've spent the last couple of days doing some fact checking because on Monday the member for P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote made some interesting statements when speaking to Bill 99.

She stated that Justice now has increased costs because STC had been used for prisoner transport and now Justice is paying overtime for staff to do it. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, STC has never been used for prisoner transport; it has, is, and was handled by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and deputy sheriffs.

She said there are delays in getting hospital linens because they're now coming from Medicine Hat, Alberta. Mr. Speaker, laundry is done in Regina and done by Saskatchewan employees.

She said about transporting chemo medicine on STC, and I quote, they had specialized individuals that could do that. Now they need specialized people and it will be all privatized. And the costs, I'm not sure what that'll look like. End quote.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, STC was used for only the last nine months for medicine transport. Before that, and as far back as under the NDP [New Democratic Party], it was private charters, and Health didn't train any specialized people to do that. Mr. Speaker, stellar research. And speaking of research, we saw just this week, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP have put out a province-wide mailout with Saskatchewan spelled incorrectly.

So also on Monday, Mr. Speaker, she suggested that we were planning on selling this building. I would suggest if we do anything in this building, we lease out the NDP caucus research office because it's not being used.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Federal Carbon Pricing

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the Premier's in the news today, Mr. Speaker, claiming that he was surprised by the pollution pricing legislation tabled by the federal government on Tuesday and he wasn't aware of the details. And I must admit I was surprised by his surprise, because this legislation was released in mid-January — almost three months



ago.

The Premier hopefully should be doing his homework on this file, especially if he's planning to challenge it in court. And when discussing these types of court cases, his predecessor Brad Wall said that "The people of Saskatchewan must be assured that any challenge based on The Constitution Act has a reasonable expectation of success."

Now this government has done nothing to counter the impression that this will be as unsuccessful as previous court challenges they've embarked upon, and that as a result we'll have a plan imposed by Trudeau in Ottawa rather than a plan that's designed by leaders in agriculture, leaders in industry, our own experts right here in Saskatchewan.

You know, I've asked this Premier a number of times in the Assembly and I've received no reply to oral questions, to written questions. But hey, let's try again. Has this government done its homework? Have they got a legal opinion? What does that legal opinion say? Because otherwise, the people of Saskatchewan are forced to conclude that this Premier is playing expensive political games rather than showing leadership.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I think my surprise is that this carbon backstop was incorporated into a 556-page omnibus budget bill by the federal government, Mr. Speaker. If they were confident in their position, they would allow that bill to stand on its own, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, to follow up on Premier Wall's statement with a reasonable expectation of success, Mr. Speaker, it's this Premier and this government's belief that we have more than a reasonable expectation of success, Mr. Speaker. And we will be putting the full resources, Mr. Speaker, of the constitutional branch within the Ministry of Justice behind this case, Mr. Speaker. We will be putting every resource that the Government of Saskatchewan has into this case, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that this tax is not, not charged to Saskatchewan industries.

And since when, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition and all of those members, since when is standing up for Saskatchewan industry, Saskatchewan jobs, and Saskatchewan families a pointless crusade?

Mr. Speaker, what is pointless is a carbon tax that has not reduced emissions in any jurisdiction on earth, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we will not be waving the white flag, Mr. Speaker, like members opposite. And in the spirit of collaboration, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite to join the Government of Saskatchewan in standing up for Saskatchewan families.

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

#### Support for Agricultural Extension Services

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll agree with the Premier on one point. The method of using omnibus bills to hide legislation, it's

not a good way to go about things. We need transparency. We need to make sure that government decisions are being made in a clean fashion.

And, Mr. Speaker, we learned yesterday of the closure of seven satellite offices of the Ministry of Agriculture in Shaunavon, Assiniboia, Estevan, Moosomin, Wadena, Meadow Lake, and Lloydminster. We didn't learn by press release; we learned by discovering on the government's web page. So when we talk about transparency and clarity, we really need to make sure that the people are made aware of changes that are made instead of what we're seeing here, which is another sign of the Sask Party government taking rural Saskatchewan for granted and passing these things under cover of night.

Now, these offices offer essential extension services to support producers, Mr. Speaker. Why were these offices closed, particularly in a time of increasing complexity in the agricultural sector, and how will this government make sure that producers have the supports they need to succeed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, not only will we stand up for all of the people in this province of Saskatchewan, it will always be this government that stands up for all of the people in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I think that is most notable with the three by-elections that just went by with an 88 per cent win, Mr. Speaker — the largest win ever by this party, Mr. Speaker, in our 20-year history.

And, Mr. Speaker, further to standing up and representing people in this province, representing our economy and our jobs, Mr. Speaker, we have emissions reduction targets in this province, Mr. Speaker. We were identified as being the second-largest reduction, Mr. Speaker, by the auditor generals, and also in that report, Mr. Speaker, it was identified that our three major emitting industries in Saskatchewan was: one, electrical generation, of which we have a plan, a 40 per cent emissions reduction plan, Mr. Speaker. What would your plan be, Mr. Speaker, is the question I have for the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, a second emitter here in the province of Saskatchewan — and an employer, I might add — is our energy industry. Mr. Speaker, we have a 40 to 45 per cent methane emissions reduction plan here in the province of Saskatchewan. Would the members opposite reject that plan, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, our third emitting industry in the province of Saskatchewan — and employing industry, and the spinal cord of the economy in the province of Saskatchewan — is agriculture, Mr. Speaker. And I ask the members opposite, agriculture in this province is not only a carbon-neutral industry, Mr. Speaker, but an unrecognized carbon sink, and I ask the members who support a federal government carbon tax if they would come out and tax the farmers across the communities in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, sometimes we ask questions and we wonder if the Premier is in the same building as we are, because

you went nowhere near the very specific and clear question about the closing of those agriculture extension services, Mr. Speaker. You know, not to mention the fact that the decisions being made by this Premier are making it far more likely that we'll have a plan imposed on us by Trudeau that won't protect agriculture the way we know we need to.

At the same time, closing offices in all of those communities, in Assiniboia, in Shaunavon and Wadena and so many other communities, these offices are essential to support farmers — changing environmental conditions, changing market conditions. Mr. Speaker, why are those offices being closed, Mr. Speaker? We should be investing more in this time in supporting producers, not leaving all of this up to the private sector but making sure they have unbiased information.

Farmers need access to the research and marketing information today to thrive in tomorrow's market. So what steps is this government taking to ensure that Saskatchewan's agricultural producers have the supports and the information they need to succeed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Changing extension services to better meet the needs of agriculture is what we will continue to do when necessary, Mr. Speaker. With these recent changes there will be no job losses. The new model maintains the existing 10 regional offices in their current locations around the province.

The staff complement in each office will be tailored to meet the needs of the region and the demand upon that office. The new extension delivery model is designed to advance the new federal-provincial Canadian agricultural program, or CAP [Canadian Agricultural Partnership], which will replace Growing Forward after April 1st, 2018. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to do this in consultation with the industries we have in the past.

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

### Saskatchewan Employment Numbers

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is odd that this decision was made talking about consultation with the industry, but where was the consultation with the community? Where was the press release? Where was making sure that people were aware that this was going on?

Mr. Speaker, we also saw some new information yesterday from Statistics Canada, employment figures that are quite concerning — a loss of 300 jobs since December, 600 jobs lost since the same time a year ago. Now this government likes to talk about the last 10 years and job numbers there, and it's true. They've presided over some good times. But that's cold comfort for the people who are out of work today, Mr. Speaker, cold comfort.

And now we see a government that, its only approach right now appears to be talking about cutting jobs in the public service. Mr. Speaker, when will this government do its job? When will this government do its job and make sure that others have jobs to go to?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister of trade and export development.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And the Leader of the Opposition at least has a bit right in that we've seen very, very significant job growth in this province over the past decade. We've seen a decade of growth that has resulted in over 60,000 jobs being created. In this province, we have the third-lowest unemployment rate in the entire country, GDP [gross domestic product] growth of over 20 per cent since 2007, which is the third-highest increase in the entire country.

We will defend our economic record every day of the week. We are happy to stand in the House every day and talk about the decade of growth that we have seen in collaboration with the people of this province.

But, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't surprise me that they would get the math wrong on this because they also, Mr. Speaker, managed to get the spelling wrong. They just put out a province-wide mailout. I'm happy to table it. The members are asking to see the document. I'm happy to table it. This was sent out under taxpayers' dollars and, Mr. Speaker, what did they do in this mailout? They spelled Saskatchewan wrong, Mr. Speaker. They want to run the province of Saskatchewan, but they can't spell it.

[10:45]

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

### Economic Forecast for Saskatchewan

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, the . . . Do you have something to say? Okay. Mr. Speaker, the member is good to point out the typo. You know the old joke. Saskatchewan — easy to draw, hard to spell. Mistakes like those get made.

But let's talk about real mistakes. We had Mr. Wall get up and talk about the mistakes made in the last budget, mistakes like cutting libraries; mistakes like cutting funding for people who die while receiving social services funding, cutting their funerals; mistakes like getting rid of a public transit system that served the whole province. A missing letter, Mr. Speaker, is nowhere near the missing over a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker.

This government likes to talk about the past. This government likes to talk about the past, but they won't admit their own mistakes. And they should be focusing on the future, because the current economic forecast is so bleak. They've tried to convince us that last year's budget, that austerity budget, that was the right thing to do, that they had to make those mistakes, Mr. Speaker. The cutting services and taking away supports for the most vulnerable was short-term pain for long-term economic gain. Doesn't appear to be the facts, Mr. Speaker.

The Conference Board of Canada is predicting Saskatchewan to have the lowest economic growth in the country this year. TD Bank is saying the second-lowest, Mr. Speaker. Stagnant employment, job losses, minimal wage growth, not to mention slapping the PST [provincial sales tax] on restaurants, on construction labour — all methods that hurt consumer spending,

hurt small businesses, slow job creation, and worsen the economic development of this province, Mr. Speaker. When will the Sask Party admit that they can't cut their way to prosperity?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the minister for trade and export development.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And once again, talk about cherry-picking data, Mr. Speaker. The Royal Bank of Canada came out with their projection just very recently about economic growth for this country over the next year. And do you know what province, Mr. Speaker, they have leading Canada in economic growth? That would be Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Scotiabank recently put out an economic forecast March of 2018, and where did Scotiabank have Saskatchewan in terms of projected economic growth for the coming year? Number three, Mr. Speaker. National Bank put out an economic projection going forward for the next year. Where did National Bank have Saskatchewan? Number two, Mr. Speaker. CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] also put out an economic projection recently. Where did CIBC have Saskatchewan in terms of economic growth? Number two. These are consistent, Mr. Speaker, seeing our economy continuing to grow, going forward.

And I'll tell you what we don't need, Mr. Speaker, that would impede our economic growth, and that would be a carbon tax imposed on us by Justin Trudeau, supported by the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, who would sell out, sell out the interests of this province to Justin Trudeau who called our fight for the people of this province, our fight standing up for our economic interests, a pointless crusade, Mr. Speaker.

That's a weak position from the Leader of the Opposition. That's weak leadership from the Leader of the Opposition in contrast to our strong Premier. Our strong government will fight for this province every day of the week.

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

### Support for Special Needs in Education

**Ms. Beck:** — After the devastating budget cuts to education, the former Education minister promised that special-need preschool programs would not be cut. He said, "We've made a commitment in our province that we want to be the best province for people with disabilities, so we will ensure that those programs continue." But the minister broke his word and signed off on both Regina division budgets that included the closure of preschools for children with intensive needs.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about children with autism, children with cognitive and physical disabilities, children who are hard of hearing, and children who have experienced extreme trauma and neglect. They all lost their preschools. Why did the minister break his promise to these kids and to their families?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member

opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, I had an overwhelming desire to talk about the education system, and I didn't want to criticize the member opposite for misspelling Saskatchewan, because that's already been done. Because to criticize the member opposite would, by reference, criticize the school system, and I don't want to do that because we've got excellent teachers and excellent people working in our school system. So it's something I will of course stay away from, although I did find the brochure amusing when I got home last night. And I don't stay in the Regina Lakeview constituency but I was glad it got there anyway.

Mr. Speaker, we ran in 2016 on introducing individualized funding for preschool children under the age of six who are diagnosed with ASD [autism spectrum disorder], beginning with \$4,000 growing to \$8,000 by 2019-20. This represents a huge first step towards a goal of 15 to \$18,000 per year for a student under the age of six and \$4,800 per year for school-aged children under the age of 18.

Mr. Speaker, we have also received federal funding that is now being used for a lot of early years programs as well. Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that that minister found his feet for that question, because he is the one who made and broke that promise. And he may think this is a laughing matter and something to be flippant about. But I tell you what, those kids and those families who are depending on those programs, they don't think this is funny at all.

Mr. Speaker, to parallel that to a spelling mistake that we have taken responsibility for is frankly, in the minister opposite's word, weak. Weak and unacceptable. The Sask Party's cuts in education have led to even more preschool programs being at risk. With the Premier offering only a fraction of the reinvestment needed just to make up for last year's cuts, many students are not getting the supports that they need this year, and programs like the language learning preschool program in Saskatoon could be on the chopping block as well.

The new Minister of Education talks a good game about the importance of investing in our future and providing adequate supports to our kids. Now it's time to walk the walk. Will this budget fully fund, fully fund high-needs preschool programs like this in Saskatoon so that they can continue and so that no more children fall through the cracks?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, in a few short days the members opposite will be able to listen to the Finance minister introduce a very strong, very powerful budget that deals with a lot of issues.

Mr. Speaker, I can say this to the members opposite and to the citizens of Saskatchewan, that the federal money is now flowing into our province. The money that we have provided is now, by way of additional money mid-year, is now flowing in and children are being accepted into those programs for this

year and for next year.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the members opposite this: overall education funding has more than doubled since 2007, an increase of 114 per cent. Operating funding to school divisions is now up 32 per cent; 766 more teachers in Saskatchewan since 2007; 40 new schools, a number of them in her constituency; 25 major renovations. We've added nearly 6,000 daycare spaces, an increase of 62 per cent; doubled the number of pre-K programs up by now 104 per cent.

And what's the NDP record? They closed 176 schools, and they're standing in here being sanctimonious, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Global Transportation Hub

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, since the latest minister was handed the hot potato, the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] and took over, as one of the former ministers put it, defending the "position of the government," all the lines he's been reading say that this is business as usual. Mr. Speaker, the GTH debt is millions and millions and millions higher than even they predicted just last year. Only 40 per cent of the land is sold, most of which has been subject to lawsuits, and even when they do sell land, they often have to buy it back.

Mr. Speaker, I understand why the government wants to distance themselves from this mess. But will the minister at least admit the fact that they've already wasted over \$150 million of taxpayers' money at the GTH, and will he tell us how they plan to get any return on that money?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to encourage the members opposite to go to the Global Transportation Hub and have a look at what goes on in some of the buildings out there. Mr. Speaker, I've been up most days since we've been in the legislature and, Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat some of the numbers to them. Each and every week, 4,800 trucks come and go. Those trucks are delivering groceries, groceries that go into a warehouse and are delivered into the city of Regina and around the province. Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, there are four hundred and . . . There are nearly a thousand full-time jobs going on in . . . [inaudible] . . . There was 1,500 jobs when the project was under construction and, Mr. Speaker, there is \$450 million of private investment has gone through.

Certainly the times have slowed. Economic progress is not as fast as we'd certainly like it to be. But, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage everybody to have a look at the jobs. I would encourage people to have a look at what's going on there and see where things go in the future.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, no one can deliver turkeys like this minister does. The GTH's financial situation could only look worse if they literally lit a dumpster on fire. The whole

thing is propped up by taxpayers' money, and while Saskatchewan people are being forced to pay more in taxes and fees and deal with the Sask Party cuts, they're watching this government throw good money after bad at government pet projects.

The minister says the GTH is struggling because the economy is slow. No kidding. Jobs and wages are sluggish. Other provinces are way ahead of us and Saskatchewan is being left behind. But instead of throwing hundreds of millions of dollars at their pet projects, why is this government not investing in people and creating jobs and stimulating the economy?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like the member opposite to go there and I'd like her to look the nearly thousand people in the eye and say, you're not really jobs; you don't really work here. Because that's what she just said. The accusation that she made is that there was not a creation of jobs. Well, Mr. Speaker, there's nearly a thousand people working out there right now. A thousand people is a lot of people, a lot of jobs, a large payroll that's taking place out there. In addition to that, there's a major capital expense that's taking place out there. During construction there was 1,500 people working out there, every day during construction.

Mr. Speaker, for her to be demeaning and belittling the people that are working out there is something that's absolutely unfair to a project that is an intergenerational project that will bring jobs and bring goods and services into our province for years and decades to come. And, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the member opposite is able to arrange her schedule so she's able to go out there in the next few days, have a look at the jobs that are taking place there, and have a look and see whether she thinks it also is an intergenerational project.

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

### Government-Owned Buildings

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, the Minister for Central Services announced that he had found out there were 660 buildings owned by the province of Saskatchewan. He thought that was too many, and then he invited offers on those buildings, Mr. Speaker. We asked him, you know, what was the . . . if he thought that was too many, what's the right number, in question period. He wouldn't answer that, Mr. Speaker.

We asked him written questions to provide a list of what those 660 buildings look like, and yesterday, Mr. Speaker, they ordered the question, which of course means that they're going to sit on it for another six months, Mr. Speaker. So I guess my question to the Minister for Central Services is this: what are they so afraid of the people of Saskatchewan finding out when it comes to their answers about how those members are treating their assets?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Speaker. When we attend the SARM convention or SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] or talk to chambers of commerce or talk to groups across the province, they encourage our government to have as small a footprint as possible, to ensure that each and every taxpayer dollar is well spent, Mr. Speaker.

The Government of Saskatchewan owns or is involved with 660 buildings. My invitation there, and it stands today, was to talk to people around the province to make sure that each and every one of those 660 buildings is used to its highest and best use, Mr. Speaker. These are buildings that belong to the people of Saskatchewan. They're supported by taxpayers' dollars, and each and every member on this side of the House is concerned about each and every one of those taxpayer dollars, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite always likes to talk about numbers, and we've talked about numbers before. The 176 schools that they've closed, Mr. Speaker, the 52 hospitals that they closed, the 1,200 long-term care beds, Mr. Speaker, are a concern, Mr. Speaker. We will take no lessons from the members opposite.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

[11:00]

**Mr. McCall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, they don't have to worry about lessons. They could just give us the bloody list. You know, I don't understand why it's so hard to get a straight answer out of these people when it comes to the fair administration of public assets, Mr. Speaker. It makes me suspicious. It makes me think they've got something to hide, Mr. Speaker.

So when it comes to one building in particular, Mr. Speaker, where they've already done a review, where the review came back after talking to hundreds of people and said, you know, we want to keep the sound stage and improve its function and make sure that it's there as a pillar, foundation element of the film industry, you know, you'd think that would sink in with those members. But it apparently hasn't.

So I guess two questions for the Minister for Central Services, Mr. Speaker. Can he take the for-sale sign down off the front of the sound stage, and has he already taken meetings about what's going to happen with the sound stage, Mr. Speaker? Can he square that for the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. No decisions have been made. I've requested a review of each and every one of the 660 buildings and I feel that that's a prudent way to make sure that taxpayers' dollars are spent.

You know what we've seen in the first few weeks in the House, Mr. Speaker, is the Leader of the Opposition saying that he was going to do politics differently, Mr. Speaker. What we have seen is \$2.5 billion in promises, and today it appears that the list is growing, the expenditures are growing with no accounting at all to the people of Saskatchewan or to the list of those

promises. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan will want to know the cost of each and every one of those promises, and those are numbers that members opposite should be more concerned about, Mr. Speaker.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill No. 609** — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2018*

**The Speaker:** — Recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 609, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Regina Douglas Park that Bill No. 609, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 191 through 193.

**The Speaker:** — 191 to 193 tabled.

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

### Government's Fiscal Management

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And there's been a lot of vigorous debate here in the House over the last few days, and I think it's always an honour to be able to rise in this House and speak to the Assembly. Although sometimes I engage a little more in off-the-mike debate, I'm really honoured to be able to enter into the debate here today for 75 minutes, of which I get a mere 15 minutes, Mr. Speaker. I will be moving

my motion at the end of the debate.

And I just want to talk a little bit today about what this government has done in the last year in relation to the budget, and some of the impacts that they have had on Saskatchewan people.

The other piece, of course, is we're not really sure when they present a budget where we're going to end up at the end of the line, because the list of reversals in this past year's budget is long. I have 13 of them here that I want to put on the record today of reversals. This is a government that has been walking back this budget steadily for the last 12 months, Mr. Speaker. So we know that what we get on April 10th is only the beginning of another series of walk-backs if, indeed, that continues to be the pattern of this government.

We also know they talk a lot about balancing budgets and in fact had introduced legislation at one point, pulled it, promised other legislation which we haven't seen yet about balancing budgets. And the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is pretty clear. This government has only managed to balance three of their budgets, give us a balanced budget for three of the ten years that they've been in power. And we know that that's not even on the record for the next few years, Mr. Speaker, because their spending has been extraordinary. And now we're seeing the impact on the peoples of Saskatchewan because of all the cuts and the program cuts that we have seen.

But I'm going to just start with the list of walk-backs that we have kept track of. I mean, we know there's more than that, but we'll start with the ones on this. So first up, Mr. Speaker, was libraries. And what happened there, if you recall, was that there was supposed to be a cut of \$4.8 million to libraries, and that was a horrible decision as it turns out, Mr. Speaker, and one that wasn't thought through and one that unfortunately the people of Saskatchewan had to take to the streets on.

And I was part of the library sit-in in . . . I was actually in Estevan that day, Mr. Speaker, and there was probably a good hundred people out in front of the library in Estevan, protesting the cuts to libraries. And there was people all across the province in an unprecedented read-in, so I was pleased to be able to be part of that read-in. And I actually had a book written by, a small story actually written by Tommy Douglas called "Mouseland." And that was what I decided that I would share as part of my effort for reading in as thousands of people in Saskatchewan protested those cuts to libraries, Mr. Speaker. So what did the government do? They reversed it.

Then we have the CBOs [community-based organization] of Saskatchewan. The CBOs of Saskatchewan were being faced with a 10 per cent cut and, Mr. Speaker, after some reflection and thinking carefully, the government decided to walk back that cut.

Third cut that the government walked back was funerals. Now we know that this was actually singling out the people in this province that are the most vulnerable. The poorest people in our province were being denied a dignified farewell, Mr. Speaker, and that was a cool and heartless cut that people of Saskatchewan were ashamed of. The previous Social Services minister was able to walk back some of it, thank goodness, but

not entirely. So only \$600,000 of that funding was reinstated.

Another thing they reversed or walked back on, Mr. Speaker, was sleep apnea machines. Originally the cut was only to income that folks were receiving health benefits for, but they changed their approach to offer machines at \$275 to those with moderate to severe sleep apnea. And, Mr. Speaker, I was married to somebody with sleep apnea; I know how critically important those machines are, not only for the individual, but for the workplaces where those individuals work because if you are suffering from sleep apnea, that can really put you in serious positions at work if you're not getting proper sleep, Mr. Speaker. And so this is not just something that affects people who need the machines but it affects their workers, their families, and their spouses, Mr. Speaker. So this is one of those walk-backs that I think was appreciated by the people who could afford the machines, but especially for those who could not afford those machines.

We heard in the budget that they were going to terminate the hearing aid plan on July 1st of last year but, after having some careful, sober second thought, taking another look at these budget cuts, this government decided we'd better walk that one back too. And now we don't know for sure what the future of the program is; people are in limbo. But it is continuing to run for an undetermined interim period until they get things figured out. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the pattern. They axe first. They sort of have a knee-jerk reaction to the fiscal mess that they're in. And yet they've been walking back all of these original cuts, not to say that there still aren't many cuts that were held in place.

The next one, number six on my list, is the grants-in-lieu. Now we all know the shock value of that announcement in the budget last year, Mr. Speaker. City mayors were visibly shaken on budget day and incredibly, incredibly disturbed by the lack of consultation that this government failed to provide. They didn't let anybody know ahead of time. You know, the budgeting process isn't any easier for cities than it is for the government, Mr. Speaker, but basically they threw urban governments under the bus on that one. And that \$3 million they finally restored, 3 million of the original \$36 million cut. So \$3 million, after much protest on behalf of all of the cities and the urban municipalities who were impacted by this unforeseen cut to grants-in-lieu, they walked back 3 million of the original proposal of 36 million.

PST on construction. Again, Mr. Speaker, a government desperate for money, looking to find money, they threw on it, PST on construction. And June 30th came the walk-back. They changed the policy at that point and they made consumable lumber and plywood tax-exempt and then increased the threshold for the application of PST on projects started before April 1st to 25 per cent from 10 per cent. So that was number seven on the list.

Number eight on the list: they walked back some changes on PST to the oil and gas industry. So again, after much protest from stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, and industry, the government walked back the imposed PST on the oil and gas industry for drilling and other downhole activities. And the exemption for the service portion of these activities was walked back, that was restored. There was originally an exemption. This government

took it away in the budget and then they restored it back for that change.

Next one up — of course, we're all familiar with this one — is the PST on insurance. They extended the date on that one from July 1st to August 1st initially, and then . . . I'm coming up to another announcement on that one later in my list.

The University of Saskatchewan. They were going to take away \$20 million in funding to the College of Medicine, but after some sober second thought and actually doing their homework and consulting properly, they realized that was a mistake, Mr. Speaker. And so they reinstated that \$20 million.

Bill 40 — oh yes, Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, using the World Bank definition of privatization, used to help the Soviet Union in the 1990s become individual nation states. That was the definition of privatization that somebody dug up from somewhere, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't even exist on the Internet. So that was their all-hallowed definition of privatization. And for some reason, it was put in *The Interpretation Act*. I still have never heard any kind of explanation from the government why they thought that was a good place to slip in a new definition of privatization.

And now we have Bill 99 before us, Mr. Speaker, where they're trying to repeal it. And you know, why didn't that happen before the original bill was passed, Mr. Speaker? We asked and asked for them to make those changes. The public was upset. They heard clearly from the public before Bill 40 was even passed, but they let it go through. They dismantled and destroyed STC, and then they decided that they need still part of the windup provisions, and so they're not even repealing it in its entirety. That is I think lack of foresight, lack of consultation, and lack of understanding of what is at stake here, Mr. Speaker.

Corporate income tax. At first they were going to lower corporate income tax rates. But guess what, Mr. Speaker, yet another walk-back. They decided that they were not going to lower those corporate income tax rates after . . . I don't know what sort of consultations they did after the budget, but they walked that back.

And the last one I have on my list here today, Mr. Speaker, is of course, the reversal on agricultural, life, and health insurance, so crop insurance, life insurance, and health insurance. The PST was slapped on those things for the first time ever in the last budget and now the government most recently — this was the most recent walk-back — they went ahead and removed the PST on those things. However, we know that PST still remains on home insurance and health care insurance, which is a significant impact on many, many small businesses, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's a concern for many folks.

I also wanted to talk a little bit about some more of the cuts that we saw in that budget, and I just have to find my list because it's a two-page list. Here we are, budget cuts. So those are the walk-backs, but I think we have to remind ourselves of the other cuts that were in the budget. It's a long list and I don't think I'll have time to read the whole thing, but I will share what happened.

In Advanced Education there was a 5 per cent reduction to operational funding, for \$30 million. In Agriculture they ended

the pastures program. In Education, school division operating funding was cut by \$22 million; overall, education was down \$262 million in that budget; and obviously the libraries cut, which was reversed.

[11:15]

In the Economy, \$13 million, \$13 million reduction to labour market development. Mr. Speaker, with jobs disappearing in this province, people unemployed, people facing defaults on their mortgage at a rate that's unprecedented, Mr. Speaker, this is not where we need cuts. They also closed the Melfort and Ile-a-la-Crosse labour market service offices. So \$345,000 decrease there.

In Finance, a 9 million reduction due to the elimination of commissions paid to businesses for collecting taxes. Mr. Speaker, our independent businesses are collecting taxes for the government and they used to be paid a nominal fee. And what did this government do? They took that away. Nine million dollars now that . . . At least those businesses were doing a service for this government, and now they're being forced to do it for free. Not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, Government Relations, they reduced point nine per cent funding for First Nations and Métis organizations. There was a \$36 million reduction of the grants-in-lieu . . . well now 33 million. Municipal revenue sharing was reduced by 13.9 million.

In Health long-term care fees are increasing for those who pay a portion of their income, from 50 per cent to 57 per cent; the hearing plan was eliminated although, as I said, that was walked back somewhat; eliminated podiatry services. They walked back the elimination of funding for CPAP [continuous positive airway pressure] generators. They eliminated funding for orthotics, and chiropractic services are no longer available to low-income recipients.

In Highways we saw a 28.6 million reduction to the transportation system. We saw the Grain Car Corporation being wound down and privatized and sold off, Mr. Speaker.

Parks, Culture and Sport, we saw the suspension of the community rink affordability grant. And we had the Transportation minister up today talking about Hockeyville in Lafleche, and yet those are the grants that were being cut.

Mr. Speaker, they suspended the Main Street Saskatchewan program. They reduced the regional park funding of 50 per cent, eliminated Culture on the Go for \$800,000, cuts in funding to the Meevasin Valley Authority by \$409,000, a decrease in funding for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation for \$204,000. Mr. Speaker, those people are doing important work in our province.

Social Services, first home plan for recent graduates suspended, saving \$8 million. And of course a cut of \$10 million to social assistance programs like TEA [transitional employment allowance], SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], and SAP [Saskatchewan assistance program].

Mr. Speaker, we saw increases in the education property tax.

We saw reductions in municipal revenue sharing. We saw Wascana being taken over by the Provincial Capital Commission. And the list goes on and I'm running out of time. So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I want to move the following motion for the 75-minute debate:

That this Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for their 2017-18 budget that hiked taxes, cut services to the province's most vulnerable, and demonstrated the Sask Party's inability to manage the province's finances; and

That this Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for their continued mismanagement of the economy that has slowed job growth, hurt businesses, and has Saskatchewan families paying more.

And, Mr. Speaker, I so move that motion.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Saskatoon Nutana has moved:

That this Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for their 2017-18 budget that hiked taxes, cut services to the province's most vulnerable, and demonstrated the Sask Party's inability to manage the province's finances; and

That this Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for their continued mismanagement of the economy that has slowed job growth, hurt businesses, and has Saskatchewan families paying more.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Recognize the member for Saskatoon University.

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to stand in my place and enter the debate today and speak to this motion. I think it comes as no surprise, Mr. Speaker, I won't be supporting this motion as it's written and read.

You know, last April the budget of 2017 made some tough choices. You know, we made some tough choices that needed to be made. And you know, as we moved through this year, we've come to see that they were choices . . . Some of them weren't the best choices but some of them hit the mark. So you know, the people of Saskatchewan let us know what they liked and certainly they let us know what they didn't like, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud of that, you know. I'm proud of our democracy and the ability for people to come and criticize and talk to us about things that they don't appreciate that their government does. And I'll defend that right for anybody to do that every day of the week. I enjoy the conversation.

And governments are no different than anybody else. Sometimes they get things right and sometimes they get things wrong, and I think it's indicative of our government of how we take that criticism and move forward with it, Mr. Speaker.

You know, this budget touched everyone as every budget does. It's no secret that the government actually doesn't have a job. The only income that it receives, it takes from people and business and resources. And so when you're entrusted to spend that money as a scarce resource, you know, it's a huge responsibility, and we take that responsibility very seriously,

Mr. Speaker, as everybody in Saskatchewan expects us to. They entrusted us to do it and they expect us to do a good job of it.

Saskatchewan people though, Mr. Speaker, they also understand that, you know, for the last 10 years things haven't been really that bad. In 2007 we started off down here. I always like to explain, Mr. Speaker, we started off in 2007 here. And in 2016 we were here. And last year we just took a little step down, took a little step back. We readjusted to the fiscal reality that we have right now, and you know, the people appreciate that. Some appreciate it more than others, but people overall do appreciate that.

People in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, understand that you can't continue to spend more money than you bring in. That is a basic economic principle, Mr. Speaker. You can't spend more than you have. In your own house, Mr. Speaker, if you bring in \$1,000 a month and you spend \$1,500 a month, eventually that becomes unsustainable. That's a basic economic principle. Either revenues have to rise, expenditures have to go down, or some sort of a balance of the two. And that's what we tried to do last year in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan people also understand, Mr. Speaker, that it's morally wrong to continue to live at a high standard of living that's unsustainable and expect someone else to pay the bill especially, Mr. Speaker, when that someone else is our children and our grandchildren and their children, Mr. Speaker. There's something just morally wrong, and people in Saskatchewan understand that.

So thankfully the people in Saskatchewan have tightened their belts. They've put their heads down. They've put their shoulders to the grindstone and they've said, you know what, this is how we operate here. This is how we work in Saskatchewan, and we're going to get things done. We've got a three-year plan to balance, Mr. Speaker. We're going to carry down that path and accomplish our goals.

Mr. Speaker, in the budget last year we also said that we are going to invest in priority government programs, services, and infrastructure. And I think we saw that, Mr. Speaker — 6 per cent increase in social services; 3 per cent increase in health. And yet still, Mr. Speaker, they're called cuts. I don't know any other program on earth, Mr. Speaker, that gets a 6 per cent increase and it's called a cut . . . 6.9 per cent, I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I was being conservative, as I tend to do.

Our province's credit rating remains among the highest in the country. Mr. Speaker, that's because we've looked at our fiscal situation, we've decided to make steps to rectify it, and we've got a strong plan to return to balance. That's why our credit rating is so good.

There's no doubt that we still face a fiscal challenge, Mr. Speaker. Any time that you take \$1.2 billion off the table for three years running, you're going to run into some challenges, Mr. Speaker. But we are meeting that challenge.

So let's talk a little bit about how life is more affordable under the Sask Party government. In 2007, Mr. Speaker, a combined income tax and PST incidence on Saskatchewan residents — so basically a family of four who's making \$50,000 — in 2007 the



total tax bill for that family was over \$3,000, Mr. Speaker. Last year, that same family of four making \$50,000 paid \$2,366, Mr. Speaker — \$2,366. That's . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — \$634 cheaper.

**Mr. Olauson:** — You've got it — \$634 cheaper.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken 112,000 people completely off the tax roll in the last 10 years. So I wonder how those people, Mr. Speaker, would feel about how the Saskatchewan Party has managed the economy. A family of four that I just talked about, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan pays no income tax on the first \$50,000 of income. That's the highest tax-free threshold in Canada.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we go to the third quarter. Our bottom-line forecast actually improved from budget time. We have more to accomplish, but we're meeting the fiscal challenge by controlling spending, shifting away from over-reliance on volatile resource revenue, and ensuring our province and our economy remain strong.

So now I always like to contrast, Mr. Speaker, what this government has done and the economic growth that we've had in our province over the last 10 years, and I also like to compare it to what we can look forward to if ever the NDP are elected back into government, Mr. Speaker.

**An Hon. Member:** — Heaven forbid.

**Mr. Olauson:** — And we can look back on . . . Yes, heaven forbid. We can look back on what has happened in the past, Mr. Speaker. We've gone through this over and over and over again, and you know, there's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Canora-Pelly will be in long-term care but the bed'll be closed before he gets there.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we can look at the promises that were made just a couple of months ago in the NDP leadership race. And you know, I have this document that was tabled last week costing out the 2018 Leader of the Opposition's platform. So this platform adds two and a half billion dollars annually to the budget and obviously to the debt.

**An Hon. Member:** — Who costed that? Who's your coster? They were way off.

**Mr. Olauson:** — You know, we look at . . . Well we can go through it. The member from Saskatoon Nutana wants to know how we costed it, and I can go through it here. Should we price it out? Maybe we're short. Maybe we're short a few billion dollars. But let's look at here.

For seniors, for seniors for example, we "Establish a dementia strategy to proactively address the growing incidence of this condition." Sounds good, sounds good — \$3.6 million, \$3.6 million. Should I . . . Yes, I can keep going. Absolutely I can keep going. In education, "Develop and implement a comprehensive early years action plan to achieve the best outcomes for children." Sounds great — \$8 million, \$8 million, Mr. Speaker.

So I won't support the motion, Mr. Speaker. I'll stand behind our government's budget from last year, and we need to continue down the path that we have chosen. We're going to get back to balance next year, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to ensure that our economy will keep going and keep becoming stronger and stronger. We've made investments in the people of Saskatchewan. We've made investments in very important initiatives in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue doing that. I won't be supporting the motion, and at that I would like to say thank you very much.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to enter into what has already been a spirited debate this morning. In light of the upcoming budget, I'm happy to stand with my colleague from Nutana and to take a bit of a trip down memory lane here. I know my colleagues across the aisle really like to reminisce a little bit about the past. So we'll go back to last year and have a look at what last year's budget was and also what some of the implications are that came out of that. So I'll be focusing primarily on some of the tax hikes, the heartless cuts, and of course the impact, the real impact that this has had on jobs in our province.

[11:30]

So I know that there's a bit of a story here, and I'm going to take you through what that looked like. So here's the starting point. A government inherits a boom and a rainy day fund. Stop me if you've heard this one before. Government spends more money than they have. Government runs out of money. Government raises taxes.

And I have an article here from the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* that I think summarizes very nicely my main point here, Mr. Speaker. And it's from July 14th, 2017, and the headline is "It makes them look like they don't know what they're doing." And I think this is a good headline to start off with, Mr. Speaker, and a starting point here.

So let's talk about some of the tax hikes that we saw in the 2017-2018 budget. Now I wasn't in the House yet. I was not in this physical space as I was elected back in September, but where I was, was out talking to the people of Saskatchewan, getting ready for a by-election in Saskatoon Fairview, Mr. Speaker. So in door knocking in Saskatoon Fairview, I heard a tremendous amount of concerns from families about these tax hikes and people that just could not understand how after a decade of boom they were being taxed. They were like, this is the government's mismanagement; I cannot understand how the province has been doing so well yet somehow this is falling on my back and I have to bear the burden of this.

And what were some of these burdens? An insurance tax, where we were suddenly putting PST on insurance, increase 6 per cent from the zero per cent that we had before; a restaurant tax of 6 per cent; kids' clothing tax of 6 per cent; PST up 1 per cent generally; construction tax up 6 per cent; a beer tax . . . We can't even enjoy a beer without an additional 4 per cent tax, Mr. Speaker. And combining this with the cuts to grants-in-lieu and the constrained borrowing limits of municipalities meant

property taxes going up in municipalities as well, Mr. Speaker.

There is only one taxpayer. These are real people that we are talking about, and life is costing them more in this province.

The PST hike on restaurant meals, recently we saw . . . This is an industry that is hurting. This is a new 6 per cent that they did not previously face. And we've all heard about the fact that, you know, some restaurants were negotiating whether they were going to take hits on profits because they didn't want to download that cost on to consumers because they simply didn't think they could be competitive in the market.

And so we have newspaper articles talking about how this PST increase has impacted our restaurant industry. So I've got a few articles here. From the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]:

Sask. restaurants and bars suffering from PST, says industry. StatsCan reports Saskatchewan was the only province to see a decline in food sales from July 2016.

And this is posted in September 2017. I've got another one here. "Food and beverage sales down in Saskatchewan: Stats Canada," and this is from February 21st, 2018:

A recent Statistics Canada Report shows Saskatchewan is one of two provinces facing a decline of customers in the food and beverage industry.

So these are some serious trends that we're seeing here, Mr. Speaker. And if you don't believe the news, and we still want more support, *Sask Trends Monitor* from January 2018, in reference to restaurant and bar receipts:

There is no doubt that the expansion of the PST had an effect on sales at bars and restaurants. For the first time since the survey began 20 years ago, gross sales fell in 2017. The point six decline translates into a 6.8 decline where inflation, including the expanded PST, is taken into account.

So if you don't take my word for it, Mr. Speaker, take the words of the good folks at *Sask Trends Monitor*. Consumers are also taking a hit by paying more for the same goods and services, but being taxed on it.

This summer I heard people referring to this as a Tim Hortons tax. I may have been one of the people that referred to it in that way, Mr. Speaker, but now I'm starting to think of it a little bit more as a tax on date night. I can't go out as much. I can't have as much fun. You know, everyone likes a good date night, and when we're talking about 6 per cent on PST in restaurants, when we're talking about 4 per cent on beer, you know, these are . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . All right.

We don't want to see these additional taxes. People are being hurt by them, Mr. Speaker.

My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana also talked about the PST on new construction. And recently we saw a 7.6 per cent drop in investment in Saskatchewan while neighbouring provinces actually saw increases in investment in new construction. So

some of those increases were 14.8 per cent in BC [British Columbia], 14.7 per cent in Alberta, and in Manitoba, 18.1 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And according to the TD [Toronto Dominion Bank] financial outlook going forward, the outlook for construction remains soft as homebuilding activity is expected to slump 14 per cent this year. So it's not looking good in that industry either, Mr. Speaker. These are having real effects on real people.

And on top of these tax increases, we saw cuts. We saw cuts to education. I've talked to parents. I talked to teachers about the cuts. People believe that investing in education is a protection for our future; it's a protection for our future jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Advanced Education, my colleague from Nutana alluded to the fact that Advanced Ed has seen a 5 per cent cut as well. And this is the greatest single cut the University of Saskatchewan has faced. They've talked about not being able to meet their mission anymore. They're talking about the reduction in provincial grants in their 2016-17 annual report. And this is going to lead to layoffs, program restrictions, and increases in tuition. While increasing the taxes on education, they actually cut funding for education, and this is hard for people to reconcile.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk about the impact this budget has had on jobs in this province. These cuts hurt everyday people. And so I want to talk about, in particular, some of the numbers that support this.

So in February we saw 7,800 jobs lost in this province. And we've been talking about this but the members opposite don't seem to be showing the amount of concern that they should be about the way our industry's looking right now and how labour is looking.

Yesterday Stats Canada released job numbers. We've had the Leader of the Opposition refer to some of these numbers. In particular, so we saw 300 fewer jobs, fewer people working in January compared to December; 600 fewer people working from the January prior, all while the other Western provinces are creating jobs, not just a few — 5,600 jobs in BC over the last year, 44,600 jobs in Alberta, and 77,500 jobs in BC in the last year. This job creation record being seen by our neighbours, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if they know something we don't know.

On March 21st, the minister said it's not the government that drives our economy, it's industry. Surely the government has some role to play in job creation, Mr. Speaker, or there would not be a job for that minister. So people are hurting. This budget deals with the folks who are hurting. And so I want to talk about what some of these job situations look like. *Sask Trends Monitor* from February 2018: there is still no sign of a recovery in the labour market, and in fact things are getting worse. After several months of minor ups and downs, employment dropped 1.4 per cent in February, the worst showing in over a year.

Mr. Speaker, we need a job creation strategy. We need investments in education and skills training, not cuts like we saw in the budget. If the minister needs further proof, perhaps he should get out on the doorsteps of Regina Northeast and talk to the good people about the jobs that they are losing in this

province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Swift Current.

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in the Assembly today to speak to the motion from the members opposite. And the reason I think that it's important to speak to this motion, Mr. Speaker, is to get on the record some of the facts about our party's performance on this side of the House versus the members on the other side, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll start with some basic statistics, Mr. Speaker, to show where our province was about 10 years ago, compared to . . . prior to 2007, and where we're at today. Mr. Speaker, I think one of the biggest indicators we have is population. You need to remember that when the NDP were in power from 1991 to 2007, there were 56,000 more people who moved out of Saskatchewan than who moved in. And the population always kind of hovered around a million people, Mr. Speaker. Now since 2007, Mr. Speaker, when our party formed government, over 89,000 more people have actually moved into our province versus what's moved out. Our population has grown by 167,000 people. We're at an all-time high of 1.163 million people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that's an important fact to get on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I've seen this growth in my home community of Swift Current. Just this past year we've surpassed the population of 18,000 people. That's the highest we've ever been at. There's new businesses growing, going up in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity to be at one of those grand openings just a week ago. There's existing businesses that are expanding their operations. They're hiring staff. They're growing their footprint in Swift Current. There's new homes going up in new areas of Swift Current that we haven't seen before. And that growth in Swift Current and across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I think is due in some small part to some of the economic policies of our government and this party on this side of the House.

Now to speak to the motion, Mr. Speaker, yes, there were some difficult choices to be made in the 2017-2018 budget. No doubt about that. But the people of this province elected us to lead and to help make some of those difficult decisions.

We need to remember that our government has also made some significant accomplishments in investments in Saskatchewan, some substantial income tax reductions. We've talked about a family of four in Saskatchewan that pays no income tax, Mr. Speaker, on the first \$50,495 of income. That's the highest tax-free threshold in all of Canada right now, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan families pay some of the lowest income taxes in the entire nation, Mr. Speaker.

Economic growth, Mr. Speaker. Prior to 2007, Saskatchewan had the worst economic growth rate in the country. Since that time, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's GDP has increased by about 24 per cent. That's the largest increase of all the provinces, and that's also an important indicator, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we also had the worst job creation record in the nation under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. We were behind every other province in Canada. Since our party formed government,

Mr. Speaker, we've had the second-best job creation record in the country, nearly double the national rate of job growth.

Mr. Speaker, you remember the days of Saskatchewan being a have-not province. We were always in and out of equalization. A former premier actually referred to us as just a wee province, as they used to say. Mr. Speaker, our party on this side of the House, we had a vision for a province that could be so much more than that: a province that should be leading the nation, or at least near the top of that, based on our tremendous natural resources, based on our tremendous people, the hard-working people of Saskatchewan who have a vision for growth.

And you know, I've talked about a few things, Mr. Speaker, and that's just a sample of some of our government's record on this side of the House. And in the motion we're debating today, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about . . . The members have said that there have been some cuts; we've cut services to the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker. And I would argue that that couldn't possibly be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker.

The strong economy over the past decade or so has allowed our government to make some fairly significant investments. Our surgical wait times are now lower than they have ever been, the shortest in all of Canada as a matter of fact, compared to when the NDP were in power and they were the longest surgical wait times in the country under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, we've made some other major investments into health care. I think of the STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air ambulance service which is so important to our rural areas of Saskatchewan, a children's hospital being constructed in Saskatoon, a new hospital in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

In my hometown of Swift Current, a brand new long-term care facility, 225 long-term care beds servicing the seniors of Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan. It's a P3 [public-private partnership] model, a very successful model that was built on time and on budget and actually also saved taxpayers money in that process.

There's been a number of new schools built in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, 40 I believe brand new or replacement schools in Saskatchewan. That includes in Swift Current where we have the joint-use École Centennial and All Saints school, space for 1,000 kids and replacing some of the aging facilities, the aging schools in Swift Current that actually my kids attended.

Mr. Speaker, one of the areas that I think that we're most proud of on this side of the House is the investments that our government has made into programs and services for those with disabilities. And you'll remember prior to 2007, Mr. Speaker, there was no real long-term program, income assistance program for those with disabilities. And I would talk and meet with some of those folks and their families and people that are involved with community-based organizations in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, and they would talk about how every year they'd have to go and reapply for social assistance. They'd have to sometimes go see a doctor, get a form filled out. But every year, they'd have to make an appointment with their social worker. And it was frustrating for them, Mr. Speaker, because, you know, they have permanent disabilities, Mr. Speaker. They're

always going to be in need of financial assistance. And what they wanted was a long-term program that would recognize that, an income assistance program.

[11:45]

So in 2007, Mr. Speaker, when we had the chance to form government, that's when we created the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program, the SAID program, which has been well received by the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, in my community and across the province. And there's always tweaks to be done, Mr. Speaker, improvements to be made, but by and large people are very happy with that particular program.

On that same topic, Mr. Speaker, we've also made some pretty significant investments into long-term residential services for those who are disabled as well, Mr. Speaker. I remember, prior to 2007, having the opportunity in my former roles in government to sit down and meet with folks in Swift Current who needed a place to live. They needed a long-term home for disabled individuals. And there were only two group homes in Swift Current back then, Mr. Speaker. We helped out when we were in opposition. We coordinated a petition drive to help and try and lobby the NDP government of the day. And when we had the chance, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, we started to work on that waiting list. We had close to 30 people in Swift Current who were waiting for a long-term place to live. And, Mr. Speaker, we now have eight group homes in Swift Current.

There's more work to do. I met with Susie Eidem from the Southwest Homes community-based organization last week and there's a couple of folks on the waiting list. So we're going to continue to work on that but we're up to the challenge, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's a bit about our track record in government. There's always more to do, and as I said before, we're up to the challenge just like the people of Saskatchewan are. Our party on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is going to support the resource sector, the oil and gas companies in Swift Current and area and across the province who do an important role and employ tens of thousands of people in our province both directly and indirectly.

We're going to continue to support pipelines on this side of the province, Mr. Speaker, which is important for our economy. And I know that the members opposite don't recognize that. They're opposed to pipelines, as we know.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we're prepared to continue to lead. And I think what the people of Saskatchewan aren't prepared for is having the NDP mismanage the province again. Like how they increased taxes 21 times during their time in power with no plan to get away from tax increases. How the NDP closed 52 hospitals, eliminated 1,200 long-term care beds, closed 176 schools, or left a billion dollar pothole in our provincial highway system, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we used to say that the NDP, they didn't have a plan, and that's been true for the most part, I think. But they now do have a plan actually, Mr. Speaker. It's this one right there which you know . . . They haven't costed

this plan, Mr. Speaker, so we try to help out a little bit and put a price tag on this, and it's about a \$2.5 billion per year plan, Mr. Speaker. That's what it is. And so that's what they want to put on the people of Saskatchewan. Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, the NDP bumped up their leadership convention in May to March because who knows what would have happened if they had another month to come up with more ideas, and who knows what the price of that plan would've been if we waited another month or two, Mr. Speaker.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, the NDP, they have no plans to fight against the federally imposed carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. They are prepared to wave the white flag. They're in favour of it. And if the feds won't do it, they're prepared to put one in place regardless.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, I suppose that's where they want the province of Saskatchewan, back to the old days, a have-not province, always in and out of equalization. I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan people don't have time for that anymore.

Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude my remarks and I will not be supporting the motion of the members opposite. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always interesting to get into the 75-minute debate. They're always timely and robust. And I have to say this one, as we look forward to the budget which we hope is not quite as mean-spirited as the last one that caught so many people off guard, even though we were all aware of the financial straits and the mismanagement of the government and their inability to actually produce balanced budgets. And we know that's a well-known fact, that of the last 10 budgets, seven were not balanced. Three were balanced.

And I appreciate the member from Swift Current. It's good to see him on his feet and his remarks. I appreciate that often they're giving speeches and they have to say things they may not really understand or fully comprehend. But I just want to say that their remarks about some plan or something that they've costed out, I wonder if that's the same guy who came up with the 112,000 people they took off the tax rolls.

Mr. Speaker, we've asked for proof for the last umpteen years because they get up and they say 112,000 people thrown off the tax rolls because of tax cuts, and they've never been able actually to prove that. They say, "it's a fact; it's a fact, of course." Well where are the facts? We've asked written questions after written questions, and the answer back is, "to be determined," "we're not sure," or "ordered." Where are the facts on that?

So, you know, I think it's the same guy who does the budgeting. Who is that guy who does the budgeting? They probably should invest more in . . . Who are these people? And so, Mr. Speaker, forgive me if I'm a little skeptical about when they get up. And I understand some get up and they are just told what to say and they really don't know what they're saying.

It reminds me of Winston Churchill, if you've ever seen the movie, *Darkest Hour*, and you had Winston Churchill and Chamberlain and the next prime minister. Here we have the organ grinder, Brad Wall is gone, but now we have the monkey, you know. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have the same tune, Mr. Speaker, the same tune.

They're talking about a moral high ground, moral high ground from the member from Saskatoon University, who gets up . . . All of a sudden he's found his moral compass. After all these years of . . . He's saying that they have to curtail their spending, that they can only spend what they bring in. Seven years of budgets that were not balanced, and finally all of a sudden you find this out. How can that be? How can that be?

And so, Mr. Speaker, and I look at the headlines that we have in the papers before us in July 14th, where they continue to roll back . . .

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — On a point of order. I believe that he was talking and quoting Winston Churchill. He was comparing organ grinder and then he pointed over here and he said, "monkey." I had a couple members tell me he said that. I would ask that he withdraw and apologize for that comment.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, I was following the member as best I could in terms of his intervention, but I couldn't quite hear over the hollering that was coming from the other side in terms of what happened with the member's remarks. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you want to review the tape or take it away for further consideration or anything like that, but certainly I know the member to be an hon. member and I'm sure that he put it in good stead, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I'll have an opportunity to review the tape. We'll start with that, but let's keep our comments respectful. I don't know how many times I'm going to have to stand up here and go through this. It seems like it's daily, but keep the comments respectful, please. Period. And I will review the tape. I'll recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre. Thank you.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll save you some time. I will withdraw and apologize. I don't mean any offence to anybody personally over there. I did move my hand over here, but I am quoting Winston Churchill in the movie of *Darkest Hour*. And I do want to make a point about ideology and being so hidebound to ideology. And so I'll just say I withdraw and apologize that remark if it's offensive to those folks over there.

With that comment, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that my point stands, that it's the same old Sask Party when they talk about their ability to balance budgets and their ability to manage our financial records. And we have some grave concerns about that ability to do that, because while we see . . . And actually the member from Swift Current got up and was talking about the court ruling.

And I do have to just smile because sometimes there's unintended consequences when you go to the Supreme Court, as we have. And I think the member from Cannington always

appreciates their ruling now, of the fact that we have in Canada the right to strike. And it was the Sask Party that brought us to that in Canada. So I think the people in labour very much appreciate the fact that we have the right to strike and right to withdraw our labour so we can have meaningful bargaining, and it's because of the kind of legal stuff that happens over there. And so, Mr. Speaker, I do have some issues.

But, Mr. Speaker, what really I think people here are very much worried about is where you have stories that are appearing before us on the news, whether it's in the print media or on the radio. And this one's from CBC. It just happened on Monday, where the Finance minister, and I'm quoting. It says, "Everything is on the table." And she doesn't rule out another PST hike. Here is a group of people who have made their bread and butter talking about how they fight for the ordinary working people of this province and will do everything they can to stop tax increases. And here we have a government that seems to be bent on increasing taxes.

So I think this is something that we can really expect to see in the weeks ahead. And it's something, whether it's the environmental handling charge that we saw on juice while technically not a tax, it really is because now they're going to keep the excess funds. And it really is something that is quite expensive. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that people have a right to question the credibility of that group over there when it comes to managing our finances.

And really, Mr. Speaker, you know, the members over there will talk about the tough times that they're in right now, but we had so many years of record revenue and none of it was put away. None of it was put away. And the fact the member from Swift Current, and he would know this as what happened, and the former premier, Premier Wall, tried to portray the financial situation in Saskatchewan in 2007 as stark. It was stark; there was no money. And what did we leave them? What did we leave them? I think we left them . . . Was it \$2 billion that we had left them? And here they squandered that, squandered the years of record resource revenue.

And here we are now increasing taxes, and we have the Minister of Finance saying everything is on the table. We have the Minister of Central Services, and today he could not give a straight answer. It seems he doesn't know his file. A simple question: where is the list of 660 buildings that he would like to evaluate, maybe move on? Where is that list? Where is that list? People are asking straightforward questions and they can't be answered. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think we have some real concerns.

Now whether last year . . . And we do remember how these guys ripped up the contracts they had with the municipalities over their agreements with the cities over power sharing and revenues from that. I just want to read into the record here what some of the people were saying at that time. And here is a sample of what people were saying about the budget after it was released. Here's Saskatoon mayor Charlie Clark, and I quote, "We had no idea this was coming. It's a huge financial impact. It's unprecedented for a city to take a one-time hit like this."

And Meewasin Valley Authority says, "A 'very difficult day' for Meewasin. 'A \$409,000 hit to our budget is a very

substantial cut.” And we know in the recent weeks they’ve raised the issue about whether or not Meewasin Valley Authority is actually sustainable without their funding that this government and that member voted for. And he will stand up and say that he’s proud of that budget.

And here we have Vice-President Marilyn Braun Pollon from CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], often quoted by that person. And she says it’s brutal: “It’s brutal from a small business perspective.” And we’ve seen that in terms of the job record. The jobs that have been lost in the restaurant sector, the hospitality sector, because of the PST hike, and they can’t deny that. And here we have Western Canada for Restaurants: “The government has decided to kill food tax fairness.” These are what people are saying, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

And we have the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation] president, Pat Maze, saying, I quote, “We’re already at bare bones. There’s no way to escape it. There will cuts in the classroom.” So that was then. We’ve seen a minor increase but not, the full cut has not been restored.

And so, and then we have Councillor Bob Hawkins. He says, “This is a budget that comes like a thief in the night.” I couldn’t agree more. So I support this motion and I can go on and read more quotes.

Moose Jaw City Manager Matt Noble says, “This is out of the blue. It’s a total blindside.”

Like a thief in the night. I will support this motion. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s certainly a privilege to join into this 75-minute debate on the previous budget that our government put through. First of all, I want to congratulate you and say that you’re doing a very good job. You haven’t ruled against me yet. So I always think Speakers are doing a great job until they go against me, and then I have a second opinion. But you’re doing a great job, Mr. Speaker.

I see there’s quite a few people in the House here right now, and I just want to let them know that there is some really good egg salad, homemade buns in the lounge. Why don’t you go back there and have some dill pickles? I think the speech would sound better, especially with the TV on mute back there, than it is going to sound in here.

But you know, it’s interesting to stand here and listen to this side of the House and then listen to that side of the House, and the response that they have and how they’ve talked about the previous budget. And then what we have to say on this side, you’d swear you’re living in two different provinces completely. You know, it really is interesting.

Before I go too much further though, I also do want to talk a little bit about the three MLAs that were just recently elected in by-elections: the member from Swift Current who only garnered 74 per cent of the vote, Mr. Speaker; the member from

Melfort who was at 78-79 per cent of the vote, congratulations; and the member from Kindersley who was at 88. You could probably almost round that up to 90 per cent — an amazing number, Mr. Speaker. This all after a recent budget.

So you know, I know the opposition will look at two by-elections. They certainly won in Saskatoon and one being post-budget, one being pre-budget. We’ll look at the ones that we won in Melfort, Swift Current, and Kindersley, and especially not necessarily whether it was a win or not, but the numbers that they were able to generate at 88-89 per cent of the vote is incredible. I wonder, that member from Kindersley, you know, if he goes home over the Easter break and he goes into a restaurant, and there’s like 20 people sitting around in that restaurant, does he walk out of there and say like, 20 people sitting around, I wonder who the two were that didn’t vote for me? Because 18 of them did, Mr. Speaker.

And quite frankly, I think that reflects a lot of things, but it reflects generally the direction that this province is going and the plan that we’ve put forward. Because, you know, the opposition will take this budget and look at it in isolation, a one-year budget. But this isn’t a one-year budget; this is a three-year plan to get back to balance. And I think that is significant. It was lost on the opposition completely, but I believe that is significant and the people of Saskatchewan see that.

You know, you don’t have to look very far across this country and you see government after government that is in deficit positions: Ontario and Newfoundland, New Brunswick. Of course our federal government has deep deficit and no plans to balance. But also on each side of us, Alberta and Manitoba are running deficits. Running a deficit for a year or two or three because of difficult financial times may be a reality, but none of those other provinces, and especially the federal government, have a plan to get back to balance.

That’s where this is different in Saskatchewan and that’s why people in Saskatchewan, I believe, are willing to vote 89 per cent for an MLA in Kindersley and 74 per cent for an MLA in Swift Current because there is a long-term plan, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, it’s interesting. As I said, when you go from kind of reality out in the real world, which we’re all going to be out there in the next week, and then you come back in here, what I notice the most for myself is when I’m around the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone, whether it’s in Fort Qu’Appelle at the ski hill — which is still open this weekend, Mission Ridge, great snow conditions, Mr. Speaker — but whether you’re in Fort Qu’Appelle or in Milestone or whatever community, the conversations that you have with constituents. And I come back in here, and conversations that we have with MLAs seem to be an awful lot of the same conversation.

And I wonder what their world is like on the opposite side, where they go out and they come back, because the conversations that they’re having in the House when they stand and talk is absolutely nothing but negative. I haven’t heard one positive response for years and years. Now they’ll say that this budget is full of cuts and tax increases. And certainly there were some tough decisions that had to be made, whether it’s on the revenue side or on the expense side, Mr. Speaker, tough

decisions that had to be made. And people out there in the real world realize that. I've talked to farmer after farmer and businessman and whoever . . . business person, I should say, to be politically correct, person around the constituency that will all say those are tough decisions, absolutely, and we'll accept those tough decisions if you have a plan to get to balance, which we do. But that's a totally different conversation than what we hear from the other side.

And I listened to all three speakers. It was interesting. If you compare notes to all three speakers from Saskatoon, so they're all kind of in the same area, you'd think they'd have the same message. But the member that moved the motion was really quite interesting. The member from Nutana spoke for 15 minutes, because that's what her opening statement would be is 15 minutes. Eleven minutes was talking about all the decisions that were cuts that we've reviewed and changed.

Now I would think they've complained for about almost a year that these cuts were no good. We've listened to what some constituents have said. We've revised them. We've changed, not completely backed away from all of them, but changed an awful lot. Eleven minutes of her speech was talking about the revision that we had. I would think that would be a positive. Except the other two then spent their 20 minutes combined talking about all the negatives there was. So it's just such a mixed message coming from the same area of the province. You know, it's really interesting.

But what I would say though, from over and over again is do they live in this almost a cesspool of negativity because every time they come in here it is negative this, negative that. And the member from Saskatoon Centre is the worst. You never used to be that way. But he's had to stand and apologize twice in the last day and a half, Mr. Speaker, because he's called people, their motives into question.

Mr. Speaker, not once did I ever think when the Leader of the Opposition called for a pharmacare program, as a physician, that he had an ulterior motive, but talked about a conflict of interest, if you wanted to look at it that way. Mr. Speaker, that isn't how we think because we're not in a cesspool of negativity like those members are over there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the past 10 years of budgets have always been negative to those people. I can see them being critical because of some tax increases and cuts. It's part of a bigger program. But I can tell you that this province has never seen a better 10 years than it has over the past 10 years, and it will not see a better 10 years in the next 10 years under this Sask Party government and under the new Premier from Shellbrook, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the province is positioned very well, better than any other province because we're taking our fiscal situation, turning it into a positive, being balanced within two more years, and continuing to move on. I will not support the motion, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud of where this province is today.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the members

opposite were in power, they increased taxes 21 times in 16 years. And what did they spend this money on? Well, over 300 million taxpayers' dollars were spent on failed business ventures, many of which weren't even in the province.

They include SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], mega bingo, and Clickabid.com, just to name a few. Now this same old NDP wants to bring in the biggest single tax increase in the history of the province while increasing spending by 2.5 billion per year on projects, including leveraging our Crown corps to make Saskatchewan the home of cloud computing. Sound familiar?

My question is to the member from Saskatoon Centre. How can you possibly convince Saskatchewan people that your spending plan is anything different than what the same old NDP tried and failed?

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question, but it really begs the question of her, where did all the money go? They're focusing on this and they come up with numbers, but where did all the money go?

Now I remember the former Premier Wall, he would get up on his hind legs and he would talk about, I can tell you where all the money went. But then he would sputter out because it doesn't add up over there. You folks over there can't balance a budget. Shame on you. You know, you're worried about the future. Worry about next week and whether or not we're going to get a PST tax increase — that's what the people are worried about.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would ask the members to . . . Order. I'd ask the members to put their questions through the Chair and their responses through the Chair. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. More Saskatchewan people are moving to other provinces than 10 years ago when the Sask Party came into power. What does the member from Saskatoon University have to say about the 20,000 people leaving Saskatchewan to find opportunities in other provinces?

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our province now has a population of 1.16 million people. Ten years ago it was less than a million people and the NDP government said we'd never get more than that. We should just take what we get and just sit down.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about 2017-18 budget. We had tough decisions to make. Our record as a government is strong. One of the first actions we took, Mr. Speaker, was remove 112,000 people from the tax rolls, and that is true.

The NDP record, Mr. Speaker, is raising taxes 21 times in 16 years, Mr. Speaker — our young people leaving over and over, money leaving this province over and over. That's the record of

the NDP. I won't take any advice from that side of the House. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The reality is what we see across from us today is the same old NDP as this past week has shown: drive-by smears, just inadequate questions. It's kind of sad. And the records show that they have demonstrated their inability to manage this province. Their solution? We've got a new leader over there and he's kind of come up with some ideas: about \$2.5 billion in new spending every year, taxing our hard-working industries, racking up that orange credit card.

My question is for the member from Saskatoon Fairview: to pay for this \$2.5 billion plan, what'll you do, raise taxes on people?

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, this is a conversation about people who are hurting in our province as a result of the decisions that were made by that government and that that member voted for.

We need to come back to . . . We need to have a serious conversation about this. We need to be able to . . . These are unfair tax hikes. These are heartless cuts, Mr. Speaker. And we need to have a fair conversation about the budget last year and what the people of this province can expect this year, come next week.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is what the former Conservative candidate and Saskatoon ward 5 councillor Randy Donauer said: "This is a transfer of a tax burden from one level of government to another because they can." Because they can. Now this is a question for the member from Saskatoon University who was a colleague of Randy Donauer: can they expect yet another tax transfer in the next budget?

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

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to call Randy Donauer, the councillor from ward 5 in Saskatoon, a friend. He's a proud, vociferous . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Conservative?

**Mr. Olason:** — Conservative. Yes, he's a conservative, and he's proud of it. And he's a defender of the city of Saskatoon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I will stand here and defend our record on municipal revenue sharing any day of the week, 365 days of the year — \$46.5 million last year. I can go through every project that was funded for the member from Saskatoon Centre if he'd like the facts, Mr. Speaker — 161 per cent increase in the last

10 years. The last year that the NDP government was in power, Mr. Speaker, their minister said, we'll come up with a long-term plan, maybe in the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker. They did. In 2007 they certainly did. This is a long-term plan, and we'll continue supporting our cities.

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

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a shame that when members opposite were in government, young Saskatchewan families were leaving the province. Schools were closing, job creation was at an all-time low, and there was no room for growth. Families knew that if they wanted to succeed, they had to leave the province.

[12:15]

Thankfully that started changing in 2007. People and business grew the province, and we supported that. My question is to the member from Saskatoon Fairview. Do you agree that our investments in our leading industries, education, and job creation has made an impact on our population growth? Thank you.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, it's like these numbers are falling on deaf ears — 20,000 people have left the province, or 20,000 people are leaving the province in the past 10 years. We're talking about more people leaving . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No. And maybe the members opposite have not acquainted themselves with the material, and that is fair. But the growing population is due to immigration into our province, not interprovincial immigration. Interprovincial migration has doubled.

So we are talking about people leaving the province, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that this government is hiking taxes, that they are unfairly cutting the services that are important to people of this province, and not working to create jobs in this province, despite the fact that we have repeatedly asked for a job creation strategy.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the damaging PST hike on the construction industry has proved to be very destructive for the economy of this province. The TD economic forecast says, "Going forward, the outlook for construction remains soft, as homebuilding activity is expected to slump 14 per cent this year . . ."

To the member from Swift Current: how can you sit back while Sask Party decisions hurt the construction industry and cost Saskatchewan people their jobs?

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

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank



you to the member opposite for the question. No doubt about it, as we've talked earlier today, there were some difficult decisions that had to be made in the 2017-2018 budget, Mr. Speaker.

But what I would point out, Mr. Speaker, is that this party on this side of the House does have a plan to get back to balance, Mr. Speaker. You know, we're one of the only provinces, if not the only province in the country right now, that does have a plan to get back to balance.

And we've spoken to our constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've talked to them about what their priorities are and where they think that our government should be focusing in terms of areas of investment and taxation as well. And I know the folks that I've talked to on the doorsteps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they understand that there's some tough decisions to be made, but they're willing to pull up their socks and all kind of work together towards a plan here in getting the province back to balance, Mr. Speaker.

What we could talk about, Mr. Speaker, is the record of the members opposite and the number of times that they increased taxes during their time in power, Mr. Speaker. And I don't think the people of Saskatchewan want to go back to that, Mr. Speaker. And they don't want to go back to that . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next question. Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, 7,800 Saskatchewan jobs were lost this time last year. Now can the member from Saskatoon University stop spinning lines from 10 years ago and acknowledge that now, in 2018, Saskatchewan people are losing their jobs because of Sask Party's mismanagement?

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

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question.

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

##### Motion No. 2 — Opposition's Fiscal Plan

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Nerlien.]

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

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the arrival of new leadership in the Chamber. We of course on this side of the House know that leadership is strong and steady on this side of the House. Of course leadership is something that this party knows quite a bit

about, having brought Saskatchewan from nearly two decades of wandering in the economic wilderness and being a have-not province under the NDP to now where we have a strong decade of growth under Sask Party leadership. That has been characterized by growth in population, growth in employment, astounding growth in exports, unprecedented growth in manufacturing production, and as a result of the lowest corporate and manufacturing tax rates in Canada, the best incentives and rewards for business innovation, and the third-lowest personal income tax rates in the nation, Mr. Speaker. And we are the only province without a carbon tax of any kind.

Under a strong Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker, we have gone from a province standing on the margins of economic activity to being the centre of economic activity. Saskatchewan has become a place where our children can remain and prosper, where opportunities for our high school and university graduates will keep them here so they will never be condemned to be part of the greatest export of the NDP years — our youth. We've had challenges to be sure, Mr. Speaker, not the least of which is the shortfall in resource revenues that once again show that when leadership is needed, it is the Saskatchewan Party that steps forward.

Our party could have chosen the slippery slope that is now being demonstrated across the nation. We could have chosen to ignore the problem and allow the deficit to grow uncontrollably. We could have taken the stance that the present Prime Minister, who declared in his warm and fuzzy economic philosophy that budgets balance themselves or that you can grow the economy from outwards. This is catchy phrasing but not fiscally responsible, catchy phrasing from a Prime Minister who is on his way to increasing the Canadian debt more than anyone who has ever held that position before.

Mr. Speaker, our strong Saskatchewan Party government could have chosen the path of least resistance and condemned our children, or if we had taken the path the Prime Minister is headed down, our grandchildren, to cleaning up the mess that his policies will leave behind. But the Saskatchewan Party instead chose a strategy that will not leave a black hole for the debt of the future generations. We chose to ask the Saskatchewan people to roll up their sleeves and share in the hard work of getting this province back to balanced budget.

And we've been able to do so because of the diversity of our policies . . . have built into the Saskatchewan economy. As a result of Saskatchewan Party policies, Mr. Speaker, we have been shielded from the worst shocks of the resource downturn. Having lowest dependence on oil and gas revenues of the top three oil- and gas-producing provinces in Canada has made it easier for us to control and reduce spending in a measured and reasonable way without undermining the programs, services, and infrastructure that the people of Saskatchewan value . . . we have worked hard to establish.

Our province's competitive manufacturing and processing tax, the lowest in Canada, has resulted in more jobs created, an increased tax base, and more opportunities to get Saskatchewan products to the world. By building a diverse economy that is based on the strengths of multiple sectors, our Saskatchewan Party government has helped build an economy that is now on

track to balancing the budget by 2020. This is strong leadership, Mr. Speaker. This is the kind of strong leadership that has made Saskatchewan's per capita debt the lowest in Canada, in fact about half as much as the next lowest province.

About 20 years ago under the NDP, our province was paying over a billion dollars annually to service our debt. It is now less than a third of that. We have a AAA credit rating for the first time in the province's history. We have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in Canada, and we have among the lowest income tax rates in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party's strong leadership has us on track to balance the budget. Of course there is room for improvement as we chart our course towards balance, but we are making steady progress.

We have new leadership on both sides of the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. And when new leadership comes into the Chamber, I feel it's a good idea to take a look at what they have to offer. Our side has a clear stance, a strong, principled approach to achieving balance by 2020. I've also looked across the aisle and have studied the new NDP leader's fiscal plan and found it wanting. In fact, it's not a plan at all. It's only a lengthy list of uncosted promises.

Mr. Speaker, as you can plainly see, all the NDP is offering is weak fiscal leadership. I see no innovation here. I see no considered economic inspiration. I see no unique solution in the best interests of Saskatchewan. What I do see, Mr. Speaker, is mostly a rolling back of our government's approach to the challenges we face. What I see is this new leadership's utter capitulation to the idea that deficits are something that can be kicked down the road, not to be considered now but in the future. What they're offering has all the structure of wet cardboard, unable to even carry its own weight.

In other words, this new leader feels that creating deficits is just business as usual. Why not do just what their neighbours in Alberta are doing? Just run up debt as fast as you can, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan will balance our budget if we continue on our government's plan, not the strategy of the other provinces and the federal government, who are preaching government on a credit card.

And this new, weak NDP leadership has described our fight against the Trudeau carbon tax as a costly and pointless crusade. Costly and pointless, no, Mr. Speaker. What is costly and pointless is the unproductive and impractical new tax that only serves to hurt the very industries that drive our economy, makes it harder for us to make our ends meet, and in the end does nothing to reduce global emissions. What is costly and pointless, Mr. Speaker, is an exclusively Canadian carbon tax that makes it more expensive to do business in Canada while we compete on a global market.

If the new NDP leader thinks this won't cost us jobs, investment, and new business, he is sorely mistaken. In fact, Mr. Speaker, what a carbon tax will do is put Saskatchewan and Canada as a whole at a competitive disadvantage, hurting agricultural, mining, and energy-producing provinces like ours. It's a tax, Mr. Speaker, a tax on a country that produces less than 2 per cent of global greenhouse emissions.

Wouldn't it make more sense to focus on finding ways to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions? Wouldn't Saskatchewan's world-leading carbon capture technology, developed right here in Saskatchewan, be a better way of approaching the problem? This is a technology, by the way, that has reduced emissions by over 2 million tonnes. Or the world-leading work that's been done in regards to carbon sequestration in our agricultural sector. On Saskatchewan's native grassland alone, we have stored safely in the ground three times Canada's annual carbon emissions. This does not even speak to the amount of carbon that's taken out of the atmosphere every year in our farming industry. With the advancements in zero-till technology, much of which was pioneered and developed right here in Saskatchewan, we are changing the way agriculture is done globally.

We are already doing our part in the fight against climate change. Arguably we have already done more than any other province, yet the NDP think that we should just give up and follow the advice of Justin Trudeau.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party has vowed to stand up for the interests of the people of this province. We cannot see any benefit, only cost, to this new tax. Mr. Speaker, some things are worth fighting for. And this tax, imposed by the Prime Minister, who campaigned on a promise to collaborate with the provinces, to find a way that works for everyone . . . The best plan he could come up with on his own was to inflict a new tax on Canadians, a tax that will do nothing but hurt Saskatchewan families, farmers, and vital economic sectors that have no effect on global emissions.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Winston Churchill was once asked a question: can people tax themselves into prosperity? He said, "To answer that question, you first have to ask this one: can a person stand in a bucket and lift himself out by the handle?"

But what do we see from the new NDP leader? He's already running the white flag up the pole, either too afraid to stand up for the interests of Saskatchewan or so out of touch and ideological that he actually believes that a tax on everything, that would take billions out of the Saskatchewan economy while doing nothing to reduce emissions, is actually a good thing for our province. This is the kind of weak leadership that the province of Saskatchewan can't afford.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan exports 95 per cent of what it produces. We compete globally for our customers. And the new leader of the NDP advocates that we should stack the deck against ourselves for no measurable benefit. Mr. Speaker, this is weak leadership. This is economic and fiscal lunacy. It's an abdication of his responsibility. His responsibility is to defend the interests of the people of Saskatchewan. He is failing, Mr. Speaker.

Opposing the creation of a new tax that fights greenhouse emissions or to pay for the promises of an ambitious politician goes to the heart of why I call myself a fiscal conservative. Mr. Speaker, the latest long-term predictions about Canada's fiscal future from the Canadian Finance department says that within 15 years, our national debt could be \$1 trillion — one trillion, Mr. Speaker. That's trillion with a "t," as in trouble. I'm sure we haven't heard that word before in debt projections. But

when a government continues on the road to deficit spending and increased program expenditures, it's a recipe for disaster. And the solutions may actually be left not in our hands, but our children's hands.

But this is exactly the weak leadership that the new leader opposite is proposing, Mr. Speaker. The NDP has been feeding people a constant diet of rights and freedoms, but never once mentions responsibility. Rights and responsibility are a counterbalance. You can't have one in a functioning society without the other.

Only one needs to look at the campaign promises of the new NDP leader. There is a non-stop procession of promises, new programs, reinstating old programs, and even the creation of a new Crown corporation. The one thing that's missing from his campaign promises is the cost. Nowhere can you find any information on the cost of these promises.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have helped him with his math, and we have conservatively calculated that his campaign promises will cost \$2.5 billion in new spending every year. What is even more frightening, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that there is no plan to increase revenues. There is no plan, no foresight as to how they're going to pay for these programs. This is precisely the short-term, politically expedient thinking that we as taxpayers should be worried about. The NDP's weak leadership on the economic front is something that we've seen in the past and we continue to see from the current leader. It demonstrates, once again, that they believe in rights but not responsibility.

[12:30]

They promise everything to everyone, but forget how to pay for it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'll do Rudyard Kipling instead. Mr. Speaker, in the end it all comes down to leadership and having the qualities to be a leader. And when it comes to dealing with the challenges that are facing the Saskatchewan economy, a friend of mine reminded me of a Rudyard Kipling poem, "If." It says, if you can keep your head when all about you are losing yours and blaming you . . .

I'm proud of the strong leadership the Saskatchewan Party has given to our province. Turning our province from a have-not to a have province in good times, and then formulating a sustainable plan that carries us through the challenging times has shown us the most important qualities of strong leadership — clear headedness, the ability to formulate a workable plan, and the courage to carry on and see that plan through. And most of all, to keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming you. That is what strong leadership is, Mr. Speaker.

I now move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Moosomin has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So that the families, MLAs may go home to their families for Easter and have an enjoyable Easter week, I do now move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**An Hon. Member:** — Monday, April 9th.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Monday, April the 9th, yes, at 1:30 p.m. Okay.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:32.]

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