



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

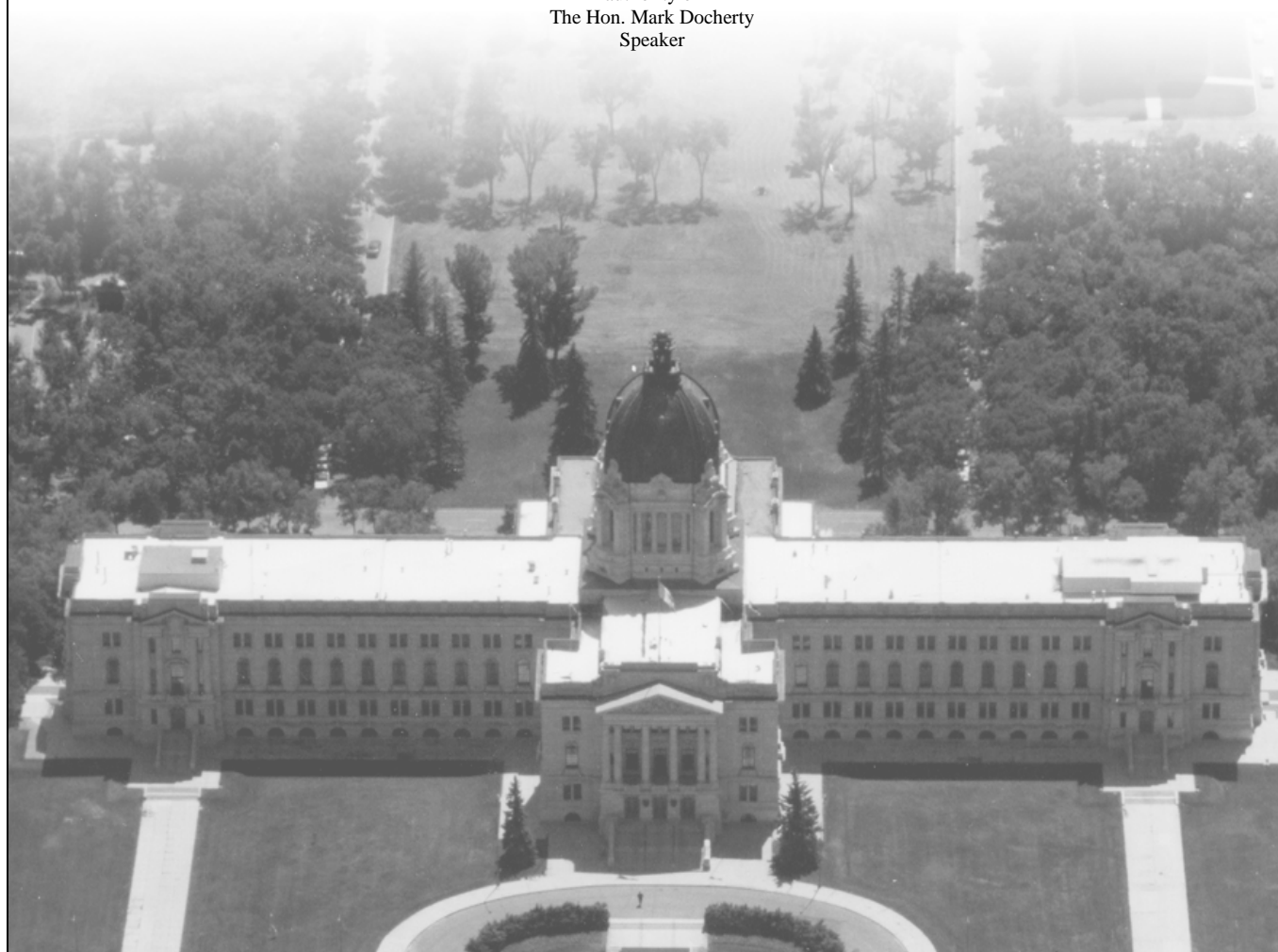
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



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

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

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Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
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Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
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Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask leave to move a motion of condolence.

The Speaker: — The Premier has moved a motion of condolence. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Humboldt Broncos Bus Tragedy

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the co-operation of all members of this House and the Leader of the Opposition for granting this leave here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, a few days ago Edmonton Oilers coach Todd McLellan was speaking to the media about visiting Humboldt after last Friday's unimaginably tragic accident. Coach McLellan reminded the reporters that it wasn't just young men on that bus last Friday. There was a young woman as well. Her name was Dayna Brons.

Dayna was the trainer of the Humboldt Broncos, and yesterday she passed away as a result of the injuries that she suffered in this accident. Mr. Speaker, Dayna was 24. Dayna's passing is another reminder that the tragedy confronting us is an ongoing tragedy and that the families going through this painful ordeal will need our love and support for the duration, for as long as this takes.

Mr. Speaker, Dayna was a graduate of the University of Regina's kinesiology program. She volunteered with a number of teams. Dayna's family said that she will be remembered for her joyful smile, and her passion and love of sport. And they added that Dayna was extremely proud to be part of the Broncos family.

Mr. Speaker, there was a good column in the *StarPhoenix* the other day by Cam Fuller, and I quote:

There are reports of surviving players fighting for their lives in hospital. It's all a fight. A fight to believe it actually happened, a fight to understand, a fight to keep going, a fight to make a meaningful contribution.

What is the right thing to do? Everything . . .

We are imperfect. But in times like this we are something more important, which is wonderfully human. Keep it going. Like The Wave in an arena.

Mr. Speaker, I say one more time: this is our team — the Humboldt Broncos. Their school is our school. Their

community is our community. And their families continue to be our families. Today I am asking again, everyone in this province and across Canada, to continue to support our team, the Humboldt Broncos, in honour of their hour of need.

Mr. Speaker, by leave of this Assembly I would like to move the following motion:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan express its deepest sympathies and condolences to the friends and families of Dayna Brons, 24, from Lake Lenore, Saskatchewan; and further

That her name be added to the list of names acknowledged by this Assembly on April the 9th, 2018, as follows:

Adam Herold, 16, from Montmartre, Saskatchewan
Conner Lukan, 21, from Slave Lake, Alberta
Evan Thomas, 18, from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Jacob Leicht, 19, from Humboldt, Saskatchewan
Jaxon Joseph, 20, from Edmonton, Alberta
Logan Boulet, 21, from Lethbridge, Alberta
Logan Hunter, 18, from St. Albert, Alberta
Logan Schatz, 20, from Allan, Saskatchewan
Stephen Wack, 21, from St. Albert, Alberta
Parker Tobin, 18, from Stony Plain, Alberta
Brody Hinz, 18, from Humboldt, Saskatchewan
Darcy Haugan, 42, from Humboldt, Saskatchewan
Glen Doerksen, 59, from Carrot River, Saskatchewan
Mark Cross, 27, from Strasbourg, Saskatchewan; and
Tyler Bieber, 29, from Humboldt, Saskatchewan.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Premier, by leave:

That the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan express its deepest sympathies and condolences to the friends and families of Dayna Brons, 24, from Lake Lenore, Saskatchewan; and further

That her name be added to the list of names acknowledged by this Assembly on April 9, 2018 as follows:

Adam Herold, 16, from Montmartre, Saskatchewan
Conner Lukan, 21, from Slave Lake, Alberta
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Glen Doerksen, 59, from Carrot River, Saskatchewan
Mark Cross, 27, from Strasbourg, Saskatchewan
Tyler Bieber, 29, from Humboldt, Saskatchewan

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add my regret, my sadness, and my agreement to the motion of condolence for the family of Dayna Brons. It's very troubling to hear of her passing and it reminds us that while an accident happens in a moment — it's a matter of seconds and lives are changed and sometimes lives are lost — that the extent of the damage takes much longer to really understand. And the healing for those who have survived the accident, those who are members of the family, the friends, the communities, it takes a lifetime.

And I want to once again reiterate my thanks for those who were there that day to respond and help everyone in that moment — the first responders, the health care providers — but also those who continue to work to support the survivors, to support the community: clergy members, counsellors, health care providers, family, friends, community leaders.

It is so important . . . And Dayna's passing reminds us that there's a tendency, when a tragedy happens, to come together to grieve and then to want to look away. But we can't look away. We need to continue to be there, to be present, to be reaching out to each other for support and reaching out to those who are struggling the most, to give them everything we can.

So once again my thanks to all those around Canada, around the world, who have given their attention, their generosity, their time to help the survivors, to help Saskatchewan. And ask for that support to continue, and offer the condolences of the members of this caucus, the members of this team, and of all the people of Saskatchewan and wholeheartedly second this motion of condolence for the family of Dayna Brons.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — With leave, to move a motion of transmittal.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader is asking leave for order of transmittal. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

TRANSMITTAL MOTION

Hon. Mr. Brkich: —

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion as well as the verbatim transcripts of the debate to the family of Dayna Brons, the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey club, and the city of Humboldt.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader by leave:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly,

transmit copies of the motion, as well as verbatim transcripts of the debate, to the family of Dayna Brons, the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey club, and the city of Humboldt.

Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery it's my pleasure to welcome Ethan Niebergall and his parents, Kelli and Ken, to their Legislative Assembly. Ethan is a grade 3 student attending Emerald Ridge Elementary School, and is a skilled writer, Mr. Speaker. He's a remarkable young man.

Ethan has authored three books in his *Mega Ninja* series, and is donating all the profits to charity. The series includes *Mega Ninja*, with proceeds going to the Canada Children's Wish Foundation; *Mega Ninja Mini Adventure: Attack of Rat Man* — which I had the pleasure of reading this morning, Mr. Speaker — with the proceeds going to the Canadian Red Cross; and *Mega Ninja: Attack of Spiky Giants from the Sun* with proceeds going to the Royal Canadian Legion for the Power in Me program, Mr. Speaker.

I finally got my hands on Ethan's newest book this morning, *The Hero Squad*, with all the proceeds going to the children's hospital in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And with your permission, once I've read it, Mr. Speaker, I'll place it in the Legislative Library.

Ethan, your hard work and creativity will make a lasting impact in the lives of so many that are in need in this province. Our province is fortunate to have such gifted and philanthropic students such as yourself in our province. So, Mr. Speaker, Ethan's going to have . . . I had an opportunity to meet with Ethan and his parents in my office this morning. He's going to have a chance to tour the legislature this morning with a special stop at the Premier's office after question period, Mr. Speaker. So I would ask all members in the legislature to welcome Ethan and his parents to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Deputy Premier in welcoming Ethan and his family to their Legislative Assembly, and congratulate him on his early success as an author, and to congratulate both him and his parents on raising such a dedicated and warm-hearted young man. I look forward to the exceptional things that you will continue to do in your life, Ethan, and I just want you to know that all members of this Assembly are very proud and impressed by your authorship skills, by your kind heart, and we all welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the legislature, it's my pleasure to introduce to you in the east gallery that obscure figure way at the top there all by herself, my favourite 10-year-old in the whole wide world which would be Ophelia Chartier McDaid. My favourite 20-year-old unfortunately isn't here; she's at school in Montreal.

But Ophelia is not a stranger to this place. When I was first elected, Mr. Speaker, she spent the first two years of my elected life commuting every week with me back and forth, and used to run down the halls when my office was in the basement, quite loudly I'm sure. Those of you who were here undoubtedly heard her as she rolled down the hallways, Mr. Speaker.

Ophelia is a pretty amazing kid. She does drive me nuts at times, as both my children do, but I'm very proud to have such a kind, funny . . . One of her traits, she really likes people in her life to smile and laugh, and does her best to do that on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker. She has a great social conscience, which I really love. She's concerned about other people in the world, in her community around her. She's a pretty fantastic kid. She's the reason and Hennessey are the reasons I'm here, for them but for all the kids who come after them too, kids like Ethan and their family.

But Ophelia and Hennessey have made great sacrifices. Ophelia has spent 9 of her 10 years as having a mom as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. And there's lots of times where she's not a fan of session, Mr. Speaker. So she's made a great sacrifice for the people of Saskatchewan too and for people of Saskatoon Riversdale so her mom could serve. For that I'm grateful, and I love that girl an awful lot, Mr. Speaker. But with that, I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Ophelia to her Legislative Assembly.

[10:15]

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Porcupine Plain. I do present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to

present a petition concerning funding to our children's classrooms in this province. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to many things, Mr. Speaker. One of them is the fact that even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less. They point out to the fact that last year, the people of Saskatchewan paid an additional \$67 million in education property tax, but the Sask Party cut \$54 million.

And those who have signed this petition know that costs have only continued to increase since last year, that we have more children, about 5,000 more students in our classroom than last year. And that \$30 million offering in this year's budget doesn't come close to undoing the damage inflicted on our classrooms. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works to support our education system pay the price for the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

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

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand here today to present a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition want me to draw the following points to your attention. Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its door during daytime hours resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress.

The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile has put stress on the Prince Albert Police Services, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide counselling and intervention services to clients. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition come from the community of Prince Albert. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Yom Hashoah Observed Across Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is Yom Hashoah, otherwise known as Holocaust Memorial Day. From 1933 to 1945, six million Jews were murdered by the Nazi regime, a culmination of thousands of

years of anti-Semitism, of pogroms, expulsions, and terror.

Here in Saskatchewan, we must not forget the legacy of the Holocaust. Synagogues across the province have had memorial events and will continue to have them over the next month. At many of these events, Mr. Speaker, Holocaust survivors share their stories and experiences with thousands throughout the province. I had the opportunity to attend such an event a few weeks ago where Robbie Waisman, a Holocaust survivor, shared his story.

Mr. Speaker, our society is more peaceful and inclusive than ever before. But there will always be those like Neville Chamberlain, on the eve of the Holocaust, who look to avoid any direct confrontation in the hopes that our enemies will forget their evil ways and learn to love us. Those voices do not speak for the rest of us. You and I know and we do not believe that peace can be achieved by avoiding the face of evil. And our honoured dead who gave their lives to stop the advance of the Nazis didn't die in vain. They knew that evil where it exists must be confronted, for the price of civilization is eternal vigilance.

Lessons of the Holocaust are universal. They are a lesson written in blood, remembered in tears that represent the horrifying price demanded should we falter in our ongoing fight against evil. We will remain eternally vigilant so that we must never relearn the lessons of that dark chapter of human history. Never again, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

St. Louis Lions Club Celebrates 50 Years

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday April 7th, I had the pleasure of going back to my hometown to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the St. Louis Lions Club. Mr. Speaker, St. Louis was a wonderful place in which to grow up, in no small part because of the many contributions to our community from the St. Louis Lions Club, including the skating rink, the curling rink, the ball diamonds, and the bowling alley, to name a few of their many projects.

After a delicious supper, a program followed which included Don Brooks from Rosthern as the guest speaker. The member from Batoche was also in attendance and I was pleased that, during his greetings, he said that he has been working with the federal government to obtain funding to convert the old St. Louis bridge into a pedestrian bridge. Knowing how the people of St. Louis love their historic bridge, this is a perfect use for it.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate President Emile Boutin and his executive, the charter members, and the current members of the St. Louis Lions Club on 50 years of service to the village of St. Louis. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the St. Louis Lions Club on their excellent service and dedication, and acknowledging their many contributions to their community over the past 50 years and to wish them well in their future endeavours. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Assiniboia Athlete Successful in Basketball and Track and Field

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand in the Assembly today and acknowledge a bright young constituent of mine, Logan Fettes. Logan is a grade 12 student at the Assiniboia Composite High School and a member of both the basketball and the track and field teams.

As a basketball player, Logan was the highest scorer in the Moose Jaw high school league in both 2016 and 2017. Mr. Speaker, despite his success in basketball, Logan has said his favourite sport is track and field, and he has also experienced great success as a track athlete. In 2015 he won the provincial medal in triple jump, and in 2016 he took home silver and two golds in triple jump, long jump, and the 4 x 100-metre relay.

He then went to achieve similar success at the Saskatchewan Summer Games, winning multiple medals. And, Mr. Speaker, his high school track career culminated in a sixth-place finish in the triple jump at the Legion national track and field meet as a member of Team Saskatchewan. Logan plans to take his talents to the U of R [University of Regina] this fall, and I know he'll represent the people of Assiniboia well.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I'd like to congratulate Logan for all his success and wish him all the best as his career continues here in Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Outdoor Hockey League Thrives in Regina

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the great Canadian tradition of outdoor hockey was very much alive and well here in Regina this past season, including at the Regina Rosemont rink. The Outdoor Hockey League, also known as the OHL, is a very successful program that was started more than 20 years ago by Ranch Ehrlo and run by Sport Venture for those years. This program ensures that kids from all walks of life have the opportunity to take part in Canada's game. I've volunteered for many years as a coach with the OHL, and I have so many great memories of young people growing and building relationships through hockey.

More than 300 young people from all across our city take part in this program. This wouldn't be possible without the dedicated work of Taylor Ward, the interim program manager of Sport Venture. She stepped in for the amazing Amanda McConnell who's on education leave. I also want to thank the staff that help run the program: Ojay Stein, Cody Woit, Kailey Budd, and Tracie Leost.

I also wanted to recognize a local volunteer that's up for an award. The WHL [Western Hockey League] has named Regina Pats forward Matt Bradley as the eastern conference Humanitarian of the Year, in part for his volunteering with the OHL.

Mr. Speaker, we know what hockey means to this province. It binds our communities together with pride and develops young people. This is on full display within the OHL. I ask all members to join with me in recognizing the OHL, all of its

staff, all of these community leaders, the amazing players, and the dedicated coaches for making it happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Healing Lodge Volunteer Receives Taylor Award

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to recognize an exceptional constituent of mine, Captain Ed Dean. Mr. Speaker, Captain Ed Dean received the Taylor Award. This award is presented by the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Volunteer Association for outstanding volunteer work dedicated to service.

Along with the recognition, Captain Ed Dean was also draped in a star blanket during the award ceremony, from Chief Alvin Francis of the Nekaneet First Nation. The star blanket was very meaningful to him as it recognizes his community's appreciation for his service and is considering him as a very good and honourable man.

Mr. Speaker, it was truly an honour for Captain Ed Dean to receive this award. After learning of his nomination, Ed stated, "I didn't think I'd done anything out of the ordinary," as he reflected on over 10 years of service and volunteerism at the healing lodge. His humble spirit and dedication to this service is inspiring.

The award is named after Charles Taylor and is in memory of his lifelong dedication to faith-based counselling with offenders in correctional facilities and other communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to please join me in congratulating Captain Ed Dean on his award and thanking him for his dedication to the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Primary Health Centre Opens in Cut Knife

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to bring greetings and join the celebration of the newly relocated and expanded Primary Health Centre in Cut Knife a few weeks ago. I was also joined by Chief Wayne Semaganis of Little Pine First Nation.

The opening of this health care facility is a great achievement for this community. The new space is three times larger than the former clinic, and patient access to care has nearly doubled thanks to the new availability of the nurse practitioner in town, Casey Gaw. The facility also includes additional space for visiting mental health counsellors, chronic disease management professionals, nutrition specialists, public health nurses, and home care nurses. These additional spaces and expanded hours will benefit both the town of Cut Knife and the surrounding area greatly.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to investing in primary health care, and our government has made significant investment over the past several years. But it takes the efforts of the community to undertake an important project such as this.

We are grateful to the town of Cut Knife, the surrounding community, and especially Mayor Gwenn Kaye, who was instrumental in the development of this project. And as a side note, Gwenn has worked at this facility for 30-plus years.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in congratulating the community of Cut Knife on the opening of their new Primary Health Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

First Annual Wheelchair Curling Funspiel Held in Kamsack

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to acknowledge the hard work from the people of my home constituency, particularly those from the town of Kamsack. Mr. Speaker, on March 9th and 10th Kamsack hosted a first annual wheelchair funspiel at the Broda Sportsplex.

Kim Hudye assisted in organizing the benefit function for her son Teddy who has been in a wheelchair for the past three years following a dirt bike accident. Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of coaching Teddy when he played for the Canora Cobras midget hockey team, and his accident was a day after our hockey windup. He was selling his dirt bike, and it was his last day. He was driving it across the field when the accident occurred.

Mr. Speaker, Teddy and his curling team, along with 11 others, participated in the fun bonspiel. Participants had to be a little creative, Mr. Speaker, each individual person standing behind him to ensure the wheelchairs were kept steady while using a stick to throw the rocks. The teams did not include sweepers. Due to the modifications, the scoring was similar to that of shuffleboard.

Mr. Speaker, the event is estimated to have raised over \$5,000 from sponsors and team entries. The winning three-person team comprised of Josh Gogol of Canora, Carter Birch of Regina, and Teddy Hudye of Kamsack. Both Josh Gogol from Canora and Ted Hudye are part of the First Steps in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in congratulating Kamsack and the organizers for hosting a fun and successful bonspiel. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Wait Times for Surgery

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve timely access to good quality health care, but increasingly Saskatchewan people are waiting longer and longer to access those services. A national report from yesterday saw Saskatchewan fall desperately short on surgery wait times compared with other provinces.

[10:30]

Just two years ago, Saskatchewan was at 100 per cent of the

benchmark for hip replacements, but now that's slid to 76 per cent. And for knee replacements, the province was at 99 per cent of the benchmark and again in only two short years that's plummeted to 61 per cent. And Saskatchewan, as a result, has fallen below the national average on several of these wait-time benchmarks.

In just two short years, Mr. Speaker, under the Sask Party's watch, surgery wait times are once again a very serious concern. They threw money at the problem, but they didn't make the changes to the system to make sure that access would remain sustainable. And now as a result, thousands and thousands more people aren't getting the health care they need.

Mr. Speaker, what went wrong? Why is Saskatchewan falling behind so dramatically?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we most certainly have invested in . . . We've invested mightily in our health care system over the last decade, Mr. Speaker, up 56 per cent in some 10 years, including a two and a half per cent lift, Mr. Speaker, in this budget — which is a very challenging budget, Mr. Speaker — on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. But in light of that budget we are still able to continue to increase our health care budget by some two and a half per cent, Mr. Speaker.

And we most certainly have done things differently here in the province of Saskatchewan. We have totally changed our entire . . . Mr. Speaker, we have changed how we bring physicians in from around the world, Mr. Speaker. We have invested heavily in the College of Medicine to certify and ensure that we can expand the seats at the College of Medicine to provide the services across the province, Mr. Speaker, including in our surgical centres.

And most notably, Mr. Speaker, we have introduced private surgery clinics here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So we have one line of individuals requiring surgery, Mr. Speaker. When they get to the front of that line, they either go to the public system or the private system, Mr. Speaker. There's been ample investment, Mr. Speaker, ample innovation, Mr. Speaker, and always a willingness to look at how we can do things better on behalf of the people across this great province.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people have invested a great deal in health care, and Saskatchewan health care providers do incredible work. However, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's management is resulting in more people waiting, resulting in people paying more and getting less. You know, it wasn't that long ago that we heard day after day from the members opposite right in this House, we heard about surgery wait times all the time, boasting about their success. And we've been waiting to hear more, waiting to hear what's happening now.

But lately it's been pretty silent, Mr. Speaker, because under the Sask Party, in less than three years the number of people waiting over three months for their surgery has grown by over

7,000 people. That's over five times as many people who were waiting in 2015. There's 4,500 more people waiting more than six months for their surgery — people in pain, not able to work, having a diminished quality of life. Mr. Speaker, that's 10 times as many people than those who were waiting in 2015. No wonder the Sask Party stopped talking about this. How does the Sask Party justify these unacceptable wait times? What concrete actions are they taking to address them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, as I said, with the investment that we have provided, over 50 per cent increase in investment over the last decade, Mr. Speaker, an investment in private surgical centres to complement the work that is happening in our public centres, Mr. Speaker. We have now performed over 69,000 surgeries, Mr. Speaker, in those private centres, Mr. Speaker.

And what this has resulted in, here are the results, Mr. Speaker. Compared to 2007, compared to when the members opposite were in charge of this file, Mr. Speaker, those waiting more than 18 months is down 87 per cent. Eighty-seven per cent, Mr. Speaker. That's 2,666 patients down to 343, Mr. Speaker. Of those waiting more than a year, down 79 per cent. Those waiting more than six months, Mr. Speaker, down 57 per cent, and those waiting more than three months, Mr. Speaker, that waiting list is down some 41 per cent. So that's almost 6,200 patients, Mr. Speaker, that are not waiting for surgeries that were under the NDP [New Democratic Party].

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, we see a government that likes to look to the past. But we're talking about today and today we want answers. In the last three years, more than 10 times as many people are waiting than in 2015. What happened? What happened? Why have the wait times got so much longer so quickly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as of August 31st of 2017, 80 per cent of patients received surgery or were offered a surgery date within three months of their booking, Mr. Speaker. This is highly ironic, Mr. Speaker, in this House that we stand in here day after day, Mr. Speaker, and we listen to the members opposite asking for more investment in health care, Mr. Speaker. Done. Two and a half per cent more investment this year, Mr. Speaker, and results in our surgery centres, Mr. Speaker.

They asked for more investment in social services, in corrections, in police, and in justice, Mr. Speaker, and then they come with a response, Mr. Speaker, that is utterly ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. It's ridiculous. They call for this investment and when the investment is made in education, right in our classrooms, in health care, Mr. Speaker, into our hospitals, into the people providing service, Mr. Speaker, to people across this province and into social services and justice, into our communities' most vulnerable, in some way, shape, or form, they say that investment doesn't count, Mr. Speaker. Only the NDP would come up with such a ridiculous accusation as that.

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

Government's Fiscal Management

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well we've got lots of bluster from the Premier but absolutely no answers for the people of Saskatchewan. And after wasting billions during the best years, they're not just hiking fees and raising taxes. They're expecting Saskatchewan people to get by with less, too. From the tens of millions they're still short in education funding, to cutting job-training programs, university grants, and even trying to take credit for federal funding for things like mental health, they still haven't fixed their bad management.

Mr. Speaker, even the Minister of Central Services admitted that the Sask Party's waste at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] is sucking up money that could go to our classrooms or other important services. Now, Mr. Speaker, with the GTH price tag of \$150 million and counting, doesn't the Minister of Finance agree that the money could be better spent educating our kids, training our workers, and helping the most vulnerable?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it was sort of a free-range question. Sort of went all over . . . The preamble was out there. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to zero in on a few of the facts that should be very important to the members opposite. We took a tour of the GTH last week. The members opposite were not able to go. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to renew that offer and see if I can't arrange for a tour so they can go out and they can meet some of the 8 or 900 people that are working at the Loblaw facility. And I'd like them to look those people in the eye and say, oh, this is wasted money having you have a job here. Well, Mr. Speaker, those are new Canadians and, Mr. Speaker, those people are taking up citizenship. And, Mr. Speaker, those people will be voting in the next election, and I know who they won't be voting for, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are over 860 full-time jobs there; 4,800 trucks move in and out of there every week. There is more work to do, more land to be sold, more development to be done when the bypass is completed. And, Mr. Speaker, those people should look over the jobs over there and they should say thank you.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Yes, it's too bad the minister chose a time when these members here were already scheduled for meetings. But we do definitely want to have a tour. Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Two thirds. Two-thirds, Mr. Speaker.

Now like so much of what they do, that answer is more about smoke and mirrors than about facts and transparency. Just look at their budgets, Mr. Speaker. Years ago, 2013, they were told to respect accounting principles and to include the pension accrual adjustment when they switched to summary financing. But at that time, when they switched to summary, the adjustment was a negative and would have meant an \$800 million hit to their forecast a year before an election. So,

surprise, they ignored the auditor and they kept ignoring the auditor until now.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you might be asking yourself, why now? Well through you to the Finance minister, will she admit that this sudden change of policy was less about following the rules and more about the nearly \$400 million that magically added to her bottom line this year?

The Speaker: — Recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, this government has been transitioning to summary financial statements and I know that's been a struggle for the members opposite to understand. The pension liability was a separate line but it was still in the document and the calculation could easily be done. It also has always been included. It has always been included in the Public Accounts. Mr. Speaker, it's included in all other provinces and by our federal government.

And, Mr. Speaker, any time that the member opposite asks questions, quite frankly she used the Public Accounts document that she did the calculation. So she always asks questions with it calculated in, and she asked for it to be put back in, Mr. Speaker. At Q3 of this budget we brought the pension back in line. We did a side-by-side demonstration of how it calculated if it was in or if it was out. Either calculation, we were still on track at Q3. There was an explanation given. And you know what the member opposite did? She was silent. She was silent because it didn't serve her purpose to say anything, Mr. Speaker. But now even though she's wanted it calculated in all along and asked for it to be in, now she wants to calculate it out and asked for it to be out, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Costs and Benefits of Carbon Capture and Storage

Ms. Sproule: — I really admire the eagerness of my colleague to get into the questions, Mr. Speaker, but I do have one more. Now I don't think anyone over here or anyone in Saskatchewan believes that the Minister of Finance didn't do a little happy dance when they figured out that trick at third quarter. It's probably the same . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — We're thinking this is probably the same happy dance that the folks are doing over at Cenovus, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Cenovus is the only customer of the \$1.5 billion carbon capture and storage experiment at Boundary dam 3.

CCS [carbon capture and storage] only works about 60 per cent of the time and falls short of its targets for carbon capture every year. And, Mr. Speaker, every time the Sask Party's project fails to meet the targets, Cenovus gets to collect a fine. This year it was \$5.5 million dollars, Mr. Speaker, \$5.5 million of ratepayers' money.

So a simple question to the minister responsible: will he admit that there is a clear link between these fines and the three SaskPower rate hikes, and then the over 10 per cent increase in the last two years?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite would know that SaskPower has announced just recently that Boundary dam 3 has captured 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. This is the equivalent of 500,000 vehicles being taken off the road. And, Mr. Speaker, Boundary dam 3, the carbon capture unit, has been running at 100 per cent capacity since December 19th of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, what the member opposite leaves out is the fact that, while yes there was a shortfall, the revenue for last year for CO₂ sales exceeded the shortfall by over \$7 million. In fact, since the unit has been up and running and selling CO₂, it has gained a net gain of more than \$20 million in the sale of CO₂, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is good news for SaskPower. And this is good news for enhanced oil recovery in this province, Mr. Speaker. And most of all, it's great news for the environment.

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

Funding for Mental Health

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about Saskatchewan people's money and the health and welfare of an entire province, and they're playing three-card monte. Well sleight of hand is not going to work, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan is below the national average for mental health spending. We have a devastating suicide crisis in the North, a growing number of people struggling across the province, and community-based organizations crying out for more funding so they can help. Mr. Speaker, instead of making excuses and taking credit for federal money, when will the Health minister admit there's a problem here and take real steps to help the Saskatchewan people who are suffering?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we do take this very seriously. We're very concerned about mental health. It's a priority. We're not taking credit for dollars that flow from the federal government. We've been very transparent about where that money comes from.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget, on new money there's about \$9 million coming from the federal government. Mr. Speaker, we appreciate every dollar. That's going to be added in addition to 2 million in new provincial money and \$275 million overall from the province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a number of new initiatives in mental health, a number of new programs, some exciting programs. The Children's Advocate had advocated for a program that's seen some success in schools in Alberta, as did the medical

students just a few days ago in this House, Mr. Speaker. We're going to be moving forward on that program. We're going to be hiring a significant number of new FTEs [full-time equivalent] to do with mental health services around the province.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the member asks another question because I'd certainly like to follow up on that. There's a number of new programs. We're very optimistic what that'll do, Mr. Speaker. We take this very seriously. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, over 80 per cent of the mental health funding they announced on Tuesday is coming from Ottawa. And the minister is wrong to pretend other ministries are awash in mental health dollars, which they've done in some of their media and news releases. Education is still tens of millions behind where it was before the last election. The Sask Party re-announces the same policing resources every few months in a different direction. And a rural helpline is no excuse to walk away from farmers and producers who are struggling with nowhere to turn.

Mr. Speaker, instead of rewrapping Justin Trudeau's funding and calling it their own, why won't the Sask Party back up their words with real action and, at the very least, at the very least, match the federal funding so we can start helping those in desperate need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, it seems that the NDP are the only people that aren't happy with the increased funding and the overall funding for mental health in the province. Mr. Speaker, the Children's Advocate tweeted this to the budget announcement:

Pleased to see some dedicated dollars to mental health . . . supporting our most vulnerable youth, looking forward to the pilot project of the Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools Initiative & reducing wait times to see our mental health specialists.

Mr. Speaker, that's the program I was speaking about earlier from Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, I would say this, Mr. Speaker. We very clearly in this budget outlined how important this is as a priority. This is a national issue, the issue for mental health spending. It's had a great deal of discussion when the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and I met with health ministers from across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I would say this: the member opposite should consider what she's asking for. She just said, why won't the minister commit to meeting the amount of funding from the federal government . . . to matching it, I believe she said. Mr. Speaker, in this budget, \$9 million from the federal government, which we appreciate, 275 million from the province. It's far in excess that it's been matched, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, my question was about new dollars for mental health. My question to the minister: will he commit to actually putting his money where his mouth is and match the targeted money from the federal government, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I very clearly indicated we far exceed the amount of funding from the federal government. Mr. Speaker, 275 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . So somehow previous money doesn't count, according to the NDP. They've always had a bit of an issue with accounting, Mr. Speaker. The member in the previous question clearly indicated, Mr. Speaker, they're very able to twist and spin and try to score some political points. Mr. Speaker, I've clearly indicated mental health's a priority.

As far as previous questions, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talked about surgical wait times. How about this, Mr. Speaker? There's a recent story in Global that says that while, unfortunately — and we're going to keep an eye on this and we're going to take action — our wait times have increased somewhat, Mr. Speaker, this story very clearly indicates, it says, "Patients in Saskatchewan have some of the shortest wait times in the country to receive elective surgery . . ." Mr. Speaker, overall they're talking about Saskatchewan being at the top. Not where we were under the NDP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Public Education

Ms. Beck: — Yesterday the Minister of Education claimed that boards and stakeholders are happy with his budget. He committed to ongoing dialogue and listening to his partners in education going forward. And as well he should, Mr. Speaker. He should read past the Sask Party spin and listen to what people are really saying about what the Sask Party's budget is doing to public education.

The Saskatchewan School Boards Association said, "The funding announced today only goes so far in terms of meeting the pressures being faced in classrooms across Saskatchewan." The STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] said, "With more students and fewer teachers, today's budget won't make it any easier to meet the needs of students."

Will the Education minister actually listen to what leaders in education are saying, acknowledge the shortfall, and fully fund our children's classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we are listening to educators. We are listening to teachers, we are listening to trustees, and we are listening to parents, Mr. Speaker. We committed \$30 million in this budget, Mr. Speaker, which will go to help resourcing classrooms, Mr. Speaker. It shows a

commitment on the part of this government to support children in the classrooms, Mr. Speaker. And I've committed to an ongoing conversation with all our partners in education, and I made that very clear that I consider them to be our partners in education, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to have this dialogue.

We know there's going to be enrolment pressures in the fall, Mr. Speaker. I have committed to school board trustees that we will have that conversation, now that we now have the numbers in terms of the projected enrolment numbers for the fall, Mr. Speaker. We're going to have a conversation about that and I've committed to that, Mr. Speaker. This government takes public education very seriously. We understand the importance of investing in public education, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to look at it.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we have a new Premier. We have a new Sask Party Premier. We have a new Sask Party Education minister. But this Sask Party budget offers more of the same Sask Party underfunding to our kids' classrooms.

They know that their offering of \$30 million doesn't even come close to fixing the damage that they've inflicted all across our province, but they're plowing ahead anyways with their short-sighted approach. They're failing to invest in our children. They're failing to invest in the future. And they're playing shell games with their insufficient offering of \$30 million. Can the minister tell this Assembly how much of his \$30 million offering will be in this budget year and how much will have to wait for next year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I made it very clear that the \$30 million, Mr. Speaker, is based on the school year, Mr. Speaker. Those funds will flow to the school divisions as they normally have, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well if they'd like the answer, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to give it. Mr. Speaker, the \$30 million will flow out to school divisions in the school year just like it normally flows out, pursuant to the formula, Mr. Speaker. That should come as no surprise to the member opposite. She is a former school board trustee. She will know how this works, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to have those conversations, Mr. Speaker, that the \$30 million will flow out to the school divisions pursuant to the school year under the formula, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Post-Secondary Education

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, post-secondary institutions have been left hurting as well after a budget that doesn't repair the damage of the cuts from last year, nor display an understanding of how difficult it is for students to make ends meet.

After last year's 6 per cent funding cut that led to program deferrals, tuition hikes, and dozens of full-time job losses, the U of R is saying that they have no choice but to look to the

chopping block again. And U of S [University of Saskatchewan] president Peter Stoicheff told reporters the recent 4.8 per cent tuition hike was a direct result of last year's budget cuts, the recent tuition hike on top of a workforce reduction of more than 100 staff at the U of S. These relentless cuts to our post-secondary institutions are pushing costs onto students and eliminating good paying jobs at a time when we need them most.

The Premier pretends to value education, but instead it's more of the same. Can't the Premier see the impact, the damaging impact, of these choices and what they're doing to universities and students?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member opposite for the question. We were able to hold the line on operating costs for the universities this year. And I would point out additionally to that that we were able to provide much-needed support to the College of Medicine, Mr. Speaker, in order to help them with their accreditation issues and, Mr. Speaker, at a time when we have an opening of the children's hospital which is so important to our province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I can quote from the tweet that was given out to us by Dr. Larry Rosia, the head of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic, whose students, by the way, have about a 90 per cent employment record in this province upon graduation, precisely because of their important relationships with industry partners, Mr. Speaker. And I'll quote from his tweet. It says:

Saskatchewan government's commitment to continue investment in Sask Polytech, other post-secondary institutions, is most welcome. Supporting efforts to provide students the best . . . [focused job] education, while ensuring employer and labour market needs are met, benefits Saskatchewan well into the future.

And I have numerous examples of how we're doing just that, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to further questions.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, in response to the budget, university students have said that they're going into greater debt, that they're being shut out, and that they see little hope for them with choices like these. And in response to those concerns about students working multiple jobs to make ends meet and to pay for school, the minister said she too had to work multiple jobs when she was in school, saying, "It was a tough road, but it's not a unique one."

Well my experience was the same as the minister's, but the times have changed since we were in university. The costs of tuition and housing have skyrocketed and more than outstripped the ability for students to earn that same amount of money.

Students across Saskatchewan don't need to have their experiences minimized. They need a budget that works for

them. Now they're staring down another round of tuition hikes. The budget has cut student support by \$12.6 million. This is the next generation of leaders, and we must act to give them hope. Why didn't the Sask Party budget invest the dollars that are so desperately needed by students and post-secondary institutions across Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well once again I want to thank the member opposite for the question, Mr. Speaker. And you know, it's very important that he talked about moving forward and having young people.

And you know, last day the Leader of the Opposition talked about planting a tree. Well let's talk about that for a minute, Mr. Speaker, and something important about our young people in this province. We have invested in a graduate retention program, Mr. Speaker, which 70,000 young people have taken advantage of in this province. And I would add to that, Mr. Speaker, that that member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, proposed to scrap it, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Allow the minister to answer the question. I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I mean that member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, proposed to scrap a program that 70,000 students in this province had taken advantage of upon graduation so they can establish roots in this very province. That's not planting a tree, Mr. Speaker, that's a forest.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Funding for Northern Highways and Infrastructure

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At her Finance briefing, the minister was asked why there were budget incentives targeted for the south and why there's nothing to spur growth in the North. And she claimed infrastructure dollars had helped make everyone better off. Are you kidding me, Mr. Speaker? It isn't northerners building the \$2 billion semicircle around the city.

And a critical piece of infrastructure that would help the lives of northerners has been left out of this budget. After a tragic plane crash that rocked the community of Fond-du-Lac last year, leaders tried to raise the alarm about the runway, calling for desperately needed improvements. But there wasn't a single dollar in this budget for this airport.

Fond du Lac Chief Louie Mercredi said that theirs is one of the shortest runways in northern Saskatchewan, despite the fact the size of planes using the airstrip continue to grow. They don't need a jurisdictional runaround; they need safe access in and out of their community.

When will this government get to the table with community leaders and create a concrete plan to widen and to lengthen the

runway at the Fond-du-Lac airport?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In this year's budget, Ministry of Highways has committed to \$61 million for northern roads and airports in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We are dedicated to that. In the last 10 years, we've invested over \$400 million in northern roads and airports in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

We are looking at airport expansion. We're looking at, in many communities . . . In fact, Mr. Speaker, I will be travelling and visiting every one of those airports in northern Saskatchewan here in June, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at construction costs. We're looking at all aspects of safety. We've looked at these concerns and we're addressing these concerns, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, nothing for the North. No meaningful investment for northern highways and infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. But do you know what the Sask Party government have money for? Two billion dollars for their 40-kilometre semicircle around Regina, but nothing for the North.

This year once again the Saskatchewan Party is reaching into the pockets of the people of Saskatchewan for \$330 million for the Regina bypass. This adds up to more than one-third of total highway spending this year alone. Mr. Speaker, there are so many projects that need investment, but when a third of the budget's going to one highway around Regina, there isn't much left over for the rest of us.

To the minister: why are there endless dollars for the P3 [public-private partnership] Regina bypass and the GTH, but nothing for northern highways?

[11:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Marit — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. We have invested over \$400 million in the past 10 years in northern Saskatchewan on roads and airports, Mr. Speaker. The Regina bypass is a \$1.2 billion project, Mr. Speaker. It's on track. It's on budget, Mr. Speaker. In fact we're ahead of schedule, Mr. Speaker. It's a major artery around the city of Regina. It's going to attract commercial investment, and we're going to expand it.

And the biggest reason we did that, Mr. Speaker, is safety. Since we've opened the bypasses east of Regina there has been no incidents in that area, Mr. Speaker. And saving one life is a major issue that we are dealing with in the Ministry of Highways, and safety is our number one priority, Mr. Speaker.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I'd like to table a report from the Chief Electoral Officer regarding the Swift Current by-election.

Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to move a motion regarding a leave of absence.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to move a motion regarding a leave of absence. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Leave of Absence

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move:

That a leave of absence be granted to the member from Regina Rochdale from Monday, April 16th, 2018 to Thursday, April 19th, 2018 to attend the Commonwealth Women's Forum in London, United Kingdom on behalf of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved:

That a leave of absence be granted to the member of Regina Rochdale from Monday, April 16th, 2018 to Thursday, April 19th, 2018 to attend the Commonwealth Women's Forum in London, United Kingdom on behalf of this Assembly.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Well thanks, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 212 through 220.

The Speaker: — [Inaudible] . . . 212 to 220.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

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

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking in favour of the budget, but I will not be speaking in favour of the opposition's amendment.

Before I begin delving into talking about the budget, there is some people that I would like to acknowledge. I'd like to thank my family and my friends who have been so supportive and encouraging me to seek public office and to continue to represent the constituency of Regina Rochdale. It's a commitment that one has to make, and I did it with wholehearted agreement from my family and my friends, and I appreciate that kind of work.

It's not always an easy choice to seek public office. But as my role of Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians of Canada, one of the things we're asked to do is to encourage more women to seek public office, because ensuring that we have more capable, competent women sitting at the decision-making table, good decisions are being made.

This past week we had a very capable, competent, female Finance minister present her budget. And I have to commend our Minister of Finance for the ongoing work she has done with serving her community, but also within her role as Minister of Finance. It has been a very, very difficult week for the minister in regards to the tragic accident that happened in Humboldt, and yet she persevered. She dug deep, and she brought forward a very concise and well-planned budget, and we have to thank her for it.

A good friend of mine, Willard Larson who coached many teams in the city of Regina once said to me, Laura, sometimes you've got to play hurt. Well that's exactly what our Finance minister had to do because she was hurting very deep inside because these were close friends and constituents that were lost, and the whole community has been shook and the whole province has been shook.

Our family had our own . . . On March the 15th, 1989, a very similar tragic accident happened for us in that our son, with two of his friends, were on the way to a sporting event and were killed in a horrible accident. So this week has been just like having that band-aid ripped off all over again. And so I can understand, and I can really sympathize with the family members whose . . . The young boys and now a young woman have lost their life. Because they will never grow old to us, they will always be our kids. And that's something we can never forget.

So I am so proud and so pleased that we have such a capable Finance minister who was able to dig deep, stand up in the House, and present the budget.

One of the interesting things is that the opposition tweeted out, on April the 10th, 2018, "Spending more on social services, corrections, policing, justice and health care does not represent an investment."

An Hon. Member: — Wow.

Ms. Ross: — Exactly. One of my colleagues just said, wow. I've got to say, Mr. Speaker, they are really out of touch because what better way to spend taxpayers' money than on services for people of Saskatchewan. Yes, you know, putting forward a budget with a plan, and it's called *On Track*, really sends a clear message.

I have a quote here from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, the CEO [Chief Executive Officer], Steve McLellan, who sent out a quote that said, "Without a plan, getting a balanced budget would not be achievable. We are pleased that this 2018-2019 budget has a clear plan that is working towards that balanced budget."

Mr. Speaker, tough decisions had to be made. On this side of the House, we're fiscal conservatives, but we have a big heart, and committing to ensuring that people of Saskatchewan are being well served is our main objective. As a fiscal conservative, we do not go into budgeting like the Liberal Trudeau government with their sunny ways. They absolutely have no concept of ensuring that a balanced budget is in sight. In fact, when they ran in that last federal election, they promised to not balance the budget. That absolutely has long, devastating consequences for the country.

In Saskatchewan here, we have a plan. We sat down, we rolled up our sleeves and made decisions. Tough decisions, but decisions based on ensuring that we get to balanced budget because, Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility to not just the residents of today but to future residents to ensure that we have the books in order. So I must say, Mr. Speaker, we ensure that there's a plan and that we stick to it.

A good friend of mine, Corey Lueck, in 2007 when we formed government, he wrote a really interesting song called *We're on the Right Track*. And it's about Saskatchewan, and I must say that the budget that's called *On Track* is exactly what the theme of his song is. The theme of our budget is that we are on the right track for people of Saskatchewan. People of Saskatchewan elected us to ensure that we plan for the future, and that's exactly what we are doing.

We have some of the members of the opposition say things like, well you know, we don't care about northern Saskatchewan. Couldn't be farther from the truth. You know, the children's hospital is a good example. It is located in Saskatoon. It is accessible to everyone in Saskatchewan, but really it has the ability to service our northern communities. Because, Mr. Speaker, before that we did not have a dedicated children's hospital and, because of that, we had to send our children out of province.

So committing more funding to ensuring that our children's hospital will be completed on time is a commitment to everyone in Saskatchewan, to every family member because we all have children coming up within our family. So I commend our

government for making sure that that kind of commitment is in place.

Sometimes, you know, we don't think that our budget resonates with everyone or that they, you know, they come, they listen to it, and then they go away. But we had the opportunity to see people who were deeply moved. The hearing loss screening program for babies born in Saskatchewan hospitals, the executive director from the hearing loss program had tears in his eyes. He had tears in his eyes because of this kind of commitment. This is what we mean by having long-term plans because every baby should have the ability to have their hearing tested to ensure, if there is any issues, that they will receive care promptly.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we present a budget, sometimes people just think about the numbers. We don't just think about the numbers. We think about the people. We think about the lives that we have the opportunity to make a major impact. So I commend everyone who sat around that budget decision-making table and said, this, this is what we have to invest in. This is investing in our children. This is investing in our future of our province. And I must thank our Finance minister for ensuring that programs such as this brought forward, that our Health ministers, they put that on the table and said this is something that we need.

So, Mr. Speaker, each and every one of us has the opportunity to talk to our constituents and find out what resonated for them. And so having money invested in our province, in our city here of Regina, the mayor of Regina was pleased with the budget this year and said that we are putting forward a plan that they can work with. That's the important thing.

Sometimes people say, well there wasn't a lot of noise around this budget. No, because in fact people understood that when we put forward a plan, a budget that was called *On Track*, we are on track, Mr. Speaker. People in Saskatchewan expect us to have a budget that resonates, that meets their needs. Everybody doesn't get everything they want, and we understand that. But, Mr. Speaker, when we have to make the choices, we make the tough choices, but we make the right choices because they will have lasting impact on everyone.

And you know, the Saskatchewan Construction Association also stated, and I quote, "Finally, for a budget based on private sector growth, the government has done an excellent job of staying out of the private sector's way on the road to growth." Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we want. We want to continue to ensure that Saskatchewan grows because it is through growth that we have the . . . for everyone to be able to ensure that we have a good quality of life. So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, our government is in touch with people. We humbly asked for their support. They gave it to us, and we are humbly providing them with good governance.

[11:15]

And so, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I'm so disappointed in the opposition's response to a budget that is based on fiscal prudence but also spending on people — spending on social services, corrections, policing, justice, health care. This is investments for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I

wholeheartedly support the government that is on track for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And it's a tough act to follow my colleague from Regina Rochdale, so I'll do my best to match her eloquent words that she has said about the budget that we presented this week.

I know, Mr. Speaker, it's a lot different speech that we're giving today than we gave on Monday, and our hearts are with Dayna Brons and her family as there's another day of remembrance that we're going to have our flags at half-mast for one more day. And I hope that's the last condolence motion that we have to move in this House for a very long time because we've moved too many in the short amount of time I've been in this Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, as is common with these speeches, either be it talking to the budget or to the Throne Speech, I'd like to thank a few people before we get under way going through the budget. I am honoured to represent the people of Regina Walsh Acres. It's been eight years now, and actually as a staffer this is my 10th budget being in this Legislative Assembly and then the House. And I started as a staffer in 2009 so it's kind of a decade of budgets, so it's an interesting little time to be here.

And we've gone through a lot of different budgets but I want to say that I'm proud of the work our new Premier and our new Finance minister have done so far. And treasury board, they worked very hard. I know both sides went through leadership races and we have a new Opposition Leader, a new Premier, a new Speaker. Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new role. It's a pleasure to see you in that chair. And the treasury board did a lot of work. We had some changes within this process of treasury board and it's come out as a budget that really does represent I think where the people of Saskatchewan want their government to go.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll be speaking from the point of the citizens of Regina Walsh Acres. And I always want to be, first and foremost, keep their concerns in the back of my mind because it is an honour to be able to stand in this Assembly and represent the people of Walsh Acres. And that's something that we'll never take for granted. And we always humbly stand here to give their point of view towards what . . . We're going to get feedback and it's not always positive. I'm not going to sit here and say we haven't had negative feedback on budgets before, Mr. Speaker, but that's what you do in government. You make decisions that you think is best going to serve the whole province going forward.

Secondly, I'd like to thank our constituency assistant at Walsh Acres. Heather Howell-Shiplack has been with us for the whole time as MLA so she is a trooper, one might say. We get along very well in our office, and I just want to thank her for the amazing job she does responding to our constituents. She has been great. She has just a great personal touch about her. She knows how to speak with people, bring them down sometimes. Not all calls are positive in Regina Walsh Acres. We get the odd person calling in that has some issues with what the

government has done, and Heather does an amazing job with the people, with constituents that call in. And I just want to . . . can't thank her enough.

And she's been a great supporter of ours, and she's actually kind of part of the family when she's . . . been together for so long. Our kids love her and Auntie Heather they call her, and she loves going into our constituency office. And the kids go, Mom and Dad, can we go and see Heather's office? So she has her convinced that it's Heather's office; it's not dad's office. And I think that's a good way to look at it because I sometimes really think it's Heather's office as well.

Mr. Speaker, it's been amazing experience being in this Chamber for eight years. And our family's gone through a lot of changes. We now have three kids. And as a father, you look at budgets very differently, Mr. Speaker, and you look at what you're going to do into the future. I know that the members opposite . . . And I commend them; they're champions for education. But on this side of the House, we prioritize education as well. Larissa and I talk about often what we're going to do and where our kids are going to go to school. And we want to make sure there's the best possible public school system available for them and for all kids across the province.

And I think when you look at education, you look at the equality of opportunity. And I think that's the picture we want to put on the lens, is giving each kid opportunity to have access to good education. And that's what I think this budget does. It puts in the commitment of our new Premier into the \$30 million added to education, and that shows our commitment.

As the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] president said, Mr. Davidson, "[Shawn] Davidson said boards see the efforts made this year to reprioritize funding for education as critical to supporting continued progress in the area of student achievement." And I think when you get a president of the SSBA to say that . . . And I've known Shawn for a while, and we talked after the budget and we had a candid conversation. And he said, you know, it's nice to see the reprioritization of education. And I think that's something we can take back to our constituents and realize we are looking at doing as much as we can for education, Mr. Speaker.

You know, on education, I'd like to talk about infrastructure in Regina over the last couple years since we've been in government. We've really built in Regina. The Regina schools have been built. There's three joint-use schools, Harbour Landing, Greens on Gardiner, and Rosewood Park, for \$82 million. Arcola School replacement, \$17.8 million. Campbell Collegiate structural repair/restoration, \$26 million. Ecole Connaught replacement school, \$21 million. Douglas Park School replacement, \$19.9 million. Scott Collegiate replacement school, \$31 million. The Seven Stones replacement school, \$20 million. Three new joint-use schools at \$55 million. And the Sacred Heart replacement school at \$27 million — that's an estimate.

And, Mr. Speaker, I heard the member from Elphinstone say, "Hear, hear." And he should be relatively happy with the schools because when you drive down Elphinstone, there's four — four? — three new schools going down Elphinstone Street — the māmawêyatitān centre, Sacred Heart. And I think that

that's something that shows a commitment to our education in Regina, is the infrastructure that we've put forward for education in Regina over the last decade since we've had the privilege of being in government, Mr. Speaker.

And this government takes a few things into consideration. It controls spending, which I think we're one of the only governments in the Dominion of Canada who's really focused on controlling our spending as a government entity, Mr. Speaker. And I think that is incumbent, when I put a lens on it as a parent, is I don't want to kick the can down the road and put debt on to our kids. I know other governments are looking at doing that across the country and the federal government is really okay with layering debt on to our future generation, Mr. Speaker. But it's something where I don't want to be writing cheques that my kids are going to have to cash.

So I think when it comes to this budget, one of the things that I appreciate the most is the time and effort all of our ministers took into looking at how we can control spending in each of their ministries. And I appreciate all the ministers taking the time and saying what are their priorities. And this budget lays out what our priorities are. It's delivering high-quality services for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it does that by record investment in health care which includes universal coverage of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] drugs. The new psychiatric facility, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, will open this fall. That was a hundred-year-old facility, Mr. Speaker, and the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford and Lloydminster and The Battlefords were tremendous champions in making sure that that facility got built and got opened in a timely manner. And you know, you may not believe it but I think it was the bright and sunny disposition of our member from Cut Knife-Turtleford that really pushed that. He's just a little ray of sunshine all the time, and I think that's what helped get this done, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the important things that as a parent and having . . . We have three children under four. We've got a four-year-old, a two-year-old, and a one-year-old. And the new hearing loss screening program for babies born in Saskatchewan hospitals is something that the member from Regina Rochdale said so eloquently that there's tears in the eyes of the people that had championed this cause.

And I think when you go through the budget and look at some of the initiatives that we've put money towards, it's towards some of our most vulnerable people, and babies and some of our most vulnerable. I think that's something that we can take to our constituencies and constituents and say, this is some of the people that we prioritized. And I think they're going to be okay with that, Mr. Speaker. I think they're going to be okay with that.

Mr. Speaker, a funding increase for foster families, caregivers, and community-based organizations. Community-based organizations across our province do amazing work with the resources they have, Mr. Speaker. And to be able to add money to those budgets is so important because they look after some of our most vulnerable in care homes. And, Mr. Speaker, to have a better quality of life for our most vulnerable is something that

government should be looking at putting investments. And when there is limited investments that we can do now, doing investments with the most vulnerable in our society is something that we should do as a government each and every time and whenever we can.

We always wish we could put more money into initiatives like this, Mr. Speaker, but to do it and to invest the money that we have into these initiatives is something that once again we can take to our constituents. And they're going to understand what we're looking at and where we're going because we have a plan and it's on track, Mr. Speaker. I think that's something the people of the province are really appreciative of, is having a plan to get to balance and that plan being on track, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of new funding, a new funding in a new group home that the member from Cumberland should appreciate, funding for a new group home in La Ronge. And I just think that's something that is very needed up in the North. I have a little special place in my heart in La Ronge, Mr. Speaker. I lived there for a little bit so I am happy to see that this new funding for a group home in La Ronge as well.

Mr. Speaker, infrastructure supports safety and growth. The twinning and passing lanes projects on highways 6, 39, 4, and 7 ensures that people can travel safely around our beautiful province in summer. Spring may be coming someday, eventually I think hopefully, and I know people are going to hit the road more. Investing in the infrastructure of our highways to ensure people can travel safely from destination to destination is something important for our government as well.

Mr. Speaker, 4.9 million new funding to help keep rural residents safe through rural crime strategy. Mr. Speaker, this is something that has come up across many of the conversations we've had. And the member from Cut Knife and I know the member from Lloydminster had a big town hall gathering of 5 to 600 people talking about rural crime across our province. And this is an issue that we have to take very serious and on this side we do take that issue very serious. And I think that is something, where we showed investments in a budget where we're trying to control spending but investing \$4.9 million into rural crime reduction is something that's very important to us, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, once again keeping our economy strong is the focus. But we always have to finish the statement of "keeping our economy strong" so we can invest in better lives of people across our province — keeping our economy strong so we can invest in the most vulnerable across the province or in health care, in education, in social service, Mr. Speaker. So we're increasing funding for Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership to support increased export activity.

There's new tax incentives, Mr. Speaker. And these are something that are going to be very interesting for our budget and ensure we keep our economy strong and grow jobs across the province, is the new tax incentives Saskatchewan value-added agriculture and Saskatchewan technology start-up to support investment and job creation and productivity. Mr. Speaker, the incentive program to encourage mineral exploration, grow and diversify our mineral sector, Mr. Speaker, this investment is projected to help create more jobs in

the North. We know that there is 800 job losses in the North, Mr. Speaker, and this is one of the examples of what we're trying to do to help grow the economy in northern Saskatchewan as well.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, some things very important to myself as a father of three young children is to return to balance in 2019-2020. There is a three-year balanced budget plan that remains on track for the Government of Saskatchewan. And I think that's something that we need to continue to look at and to control our spending and look at how we can increase revenues, Mr. Speaker. And to keep this budget balanced is something that we find is important on this side, which is a stark contrast to I think what the members on the opposite side, after their leadership race, are looking at — the fact that their new leader has committed \$2.5 billion of commitments in the leadership campaign with no plan to pay for them. \$2.5 billion each year is impressive to commit to funding that with no idea how they're going to pay for it, except maybe what 75 per cent of the residents of Saskatchewan don't want, which is a carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that those nine members are on the wrong side of the issue of the carbon tax boggles my mind. Each and every day they sit there. I think at some point in time they are going to have to have a serious conversation and realize that there's not one person in this province that wants a carbon tax other than the nine members over there.

You know, when we've committed to not . . . I'm not sure if I saw this or not, but I think when we committed to not implementing a carbon tax, maybe one or two of them actually clapped their desks over there. I think they did slap their desk in agreement, one or two. I think it was an involuntary reaction, but I think subconsciously a couple of them may have that conversation in their caucus where, you know, we may be on the wrong side of this carbon tax. I think maybe the member for Rosemont might be one of them. He's a pretty smart guy and I think maybe he may not have been so quick to jump on the carbon tax bus, Mr. Speaker, but he may get thrown under that carbon tax bus here right away.

[11:30]

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to stand in my place and have the conversation and speak on behalf of the people of Regina Walsh Acres, and I'll continue to do that, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to say that as long as I'm able to stand in this Assembly, I'll always vote against the carbon tax when it comes because it makes everything more expensive. Everything that people need, it makes more expensive. That's why, as progressives, as they like to call themselves — which I don't know why they call lefts progressives, which is another conversation — but as progressives they're trying to put on a carbon tax that hurts the most vulnerable, makes everyday staples more expensive. So why would they want to champion something that hurts the most vulnerable people in our society?

But, Mr. Speaker, I do think maybe it'll be this summer. Each side has caucus retreats so maybe this summer. I think they might get together and say to their new leader, perhaps we're on the wrong side of this. And I'm hoping in the fall maybe we can have a motion together and go and put forward a united voice to the federal government, the federal Trudeau Liberals, and say

Saskatchewan will never have a carbon tax for the people of this province. And I do believe that hopefully that come-to-Jesus moment happens this summer for our hon. members across the side, and I hope they get on board and do respect what 75 per cent of the people of the province want, and that is not a carbon tax. They don't want a job-killing carbon tax. They don't want a carbon tax that makes everything more expensive, everyday items for everyone in our province, Mr. Speaker.

But I'd like to finish with saying I appreciate what our Finance minister had to go through on the day that she delivered the budget. It was a very tough day for her. I know she has a lot of emotions and a lot of ties back home to Humboldt. And for all of us in this Assembly, I want to say we'll continue to be Humboldt strong and thank the Finance minister for her great work in treasury board. And I will be supporting our budget this year and am proud to do so, to control this spending and make sure that we have . . . we're on track to control spending and have a surplus budget in next year. And I'm proud of our team. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well it's with pleasure that I rise and add my voice to the budget debate under the new leadership of a Premier of Saskatchewan, under a new Opposition Leader, and a new Lieutenant Governor. And personally, Mr. Speaker, I give my sincere congratulations to you for being elected as Speaker of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, and you'll bring your hard work ethic and your integrity and your charm to your duties. And we have faith that you will bring logical decisions on behalf of all of us.

And I would also like to congratulate my colleague, the hon. member from Humboldt, the Finance minister, on her role in our budget as well as being the first woman in the government to give a budget and making history. So I'm proud and humbled to be in her government. I'd also like to thank the officials for their long hours of thought and work put into the budget.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add my voice with countless others and offer my condolences to the families and friends of the young men and now the young woman who lost their lives in the tragic events of April 6th. I'm not sure what could prepare parents for such a heartache as this and how to find some sense or solace out of this loss. But the Humboldt Broncos lost a large part of their family, and the whole province and nation is grieving and sending condolences.

So as we deal with this, we work on our Saskatchewan strength and spirit and will continue on as the rest of our province wants us to. So I'm inspired by all the stories and the coming together in the last few days, the stories of generosity and hope. And so I'm inspired to continue on with my constituents, and as we all have to in this House, work on our budget and think about other people. So we are Saskatchewan strong, and I'm confident we'll continue. So thank you for that moment, Mr. Speaker.

So as the people look to us for resources and co-operation and good governance of their finances, I can't help but think of my own home area and the people I represent and work with, all the RM [rural municipality] councils and reeves and mayors who

were also elected by their communities and peers.

The local government structure of Saskatchewan Rivers consists of two towns, nine villages, two resort villages, Waskesiu and Prince Albert National Park; eight RMs; four First Nations; eight local and regional parks including Candle Lake Provincial, Emma, and Anglin recreation sites; Great Blue Heron Provincial Park; Sturgeon Lake, Big River, and Morin Lake regional parks. All these communities are supported by our budgets.

No tax rate increases on education property tax and no increase on provincial sales tax rates. So our government supports all these people. Fourteen million for the urban connector program and over 12 million for Clean Water and Wastewater Fund for municipal support. For our rural municipalities, over 68 million will be received to help support all those families in Saskatchewan Rivers and across the province.

Our local education governance is the school division Sask Rivers No. 119 and North East No. 211. Sask Rivers schools dot the landscape from Big River through to White Fox, and our dreams for our future generations will unite us and a new day dawn giving us more light. This budget helps the people of Saskatchewan, the students, and the teachers. Life is brighter.

Our budget supports Saskatchewan students and the education staff, leaders, essentially in every community across the province. This budget allows the excellence of our education system to continue, and I'm constantly amazed at the remarkable things that teachers do in education in our schools. Saskatchewan has some of the best teachers in our country. They taught me, they taught our four children, and now five of our eight grandchildren have entered the school system. And that's something worth enhancing and protecting. This budget supports our children and their quality of education.

Several times a year, I go out to my rural schools and I speak to the schools' classrooms and the students. And last year I went to Spruce Home, Choiceland, and Big River schools, and I met incredible and dedicated teachers, such as Mrs. Kurbis and Mrs. Paterson, who are preparing students for career choices, shaping their lives, and illuminating our future stars in our great province. These leaders . . . These teachers can be found in every school, every rural community across the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers, and I say thank you to them for a job well done.

I feel this budget gives support systems to our educators and the tools needed for preparing the next generation. This is a budget plan that puts people first — students and teachers — a plan that invests in Saskatchewan and what matters to people. Balancing the future with sound fiscal management, we are helping students get ahead with a good start, and we're on track. We're supporting libraries, continuing operating funding with 11 million, over 15 million in continued funding for KidsFirst, and increasing operating funding of over 30 million over last year's school year. So, Mr. Speaker, we are on track.

Agriculture is very important in the economy and livelihood of many in this province. This budget and government recognizes investing in research and innovation helps ensure that Saskatchewan remains a competitive and world-class

agriculture research hub. Saskatchewan and farmers benefit from the knowledge and tools developed by research.

Earlier this year, federal and provincial Agriculture ministers announced over 6 million in funding for 24 livestock and forage-related research projects through Saskatchewan's Agriculture Development Fund. Through ADF, projects include researching new vaccine strategies to help prevent pink eye, which will help mitigate economic cost to Saskatchewan cattle producers. In the days of only the white-faced Herefords, I remember the many summer days of riding pasture checking and treating numerous pink eye cattle victims, which was time-consuming as well as costly. And my fellow cattle ranchers here in the legislature, as well as across Saskatchewan, will empathize with me and congratulate the government on this much-needed and appreciated initiative.

Also new knowledge of DNA [deoxyribonucleic acid] paternity and genomic program information will enable beef producers to make better breeding decisions in their herds. For those of us who choose to export, develop, market, and sell their herd genetics, these are more tools for improving the quality of beef and better choices for the global market.

The agriculture development funding is part of the over 26 million the government has committed to in agriculture research. Funding is provided under the federal-provincial-territorial initiative, Growing Forward 2. In early 2018, governments and partnership announced over 7 million for 30 crop-related products. Good news for agriculture producers and the upcoming younger generations of farmers growing their farm operations in viable and successful businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the Northern Fringe Marketing Club located in my community is a group of farmers who work together educating themselves about innovative ideas and support each other in their farming practices. And they'll be very happy to hear their government's initiatives towards new agri-food innovation, creating new opportunities for farmers, and creating jobs in the value-added food processing sector.

Saskatchewan's value-added food processing sector has grown tremendously in the last decade and now includes 300 companies that export 4 billion worth of goods annually and employ 5,000 people. Earlier this year, Saskatchewan celebrated the grand opening of the new Agri-Food Innovation Centre that will diversify the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre's capacity to develop and process food products.

Our budget demonstrates the importance of agriculture by investing over 378 million to the agriculture sector, ensuring Saskatchewan producers will continue to work and feed the world.

Our budget continues to track the environment and keep our beautiful Saskatchewan Rivers constituency a great place to live, work, and raise a family, as we also aim to attract tourists — tourists of families, hunters, and people from around the world — who enjoy our pure water and our beautiful forests. Our government will continue to manage the health of Saskatchewan environment in a respectful, responsible, and

enforceable manner that balances growth and sustainable development as we harvest the forest and protect the forest with fire management and forest service.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan government continues to raise awareness about the risk posed by aquatic invasive species, or AIS. And in 2017 we significantly reduced our AIS preventive efforts on a number of fronts. Education and awareness continues to be a focus for the ministry. News releases, articles, magazine columns, public service announcements, and additional signage have all been part of the efforts to raise awareness. And in 2017 the ministry engaged stakeholders such as the SWF [Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation] to participate on a task force to coordinate preventive efforts across the province.

Last year the ministry also boosted its watercraft inspection efforts. And ministry staff completed more than 1,200 watercraft inspections and, through our partnership with the Canada Border Services Agency, provided invasive species information to approximately 900 watercraft owners who entered Saskatchewan from the United States. In total, more than 2,000 watercraft entering Saskatchewan across federal and provincial borders underwent AIS screening in 2017.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we continued to monitor for zebra and quagga mussels in 2017 with the help of other government agencies. And our monitoring program plays a critical role in our overall strategy providing the opportunity for early detection and allowing us to quickly respond to any potential introduction of contamination. We all need to do our part to stop the spread of these invasive mussels and the ministry is asking residents, cottage owners, and municipalities to participate in the 2018 adult invasive mussel monitoring program. And I encourage all of you to take part and help the province further expand its early detection network as you enjoy our beautiful provincial and regional parks in Saskatchewan Rivers and our province.

[11:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, another initiative the ministry announced in 2017 was the launch of a new mobile application called Saskatchewan Co-operative Wildlife Management Survey. Now this app allows anyone to record wildlife observations for species such as moose, elk, deer, and select game birds, and it's compatible with Apple and android smart phones. So as I drive the highway — and I know I'm always on the alert for deer and that one moose that is waiting for my car — I think this new tool makes recording and reporting wildlife observations much easier than manual tracking. So this tool will help, the new Co-operative Wildlife Management Survey app; you can get it on Google Play or the Apple Store. So wildlife sightings provide important information on population growth and survival for big game and upland game birds, and I encourage everyone to get involved.

Now for those of you that are ardent hunters, I refer you to the 2018 winter edition of *Big Buck Magazine* where my son-in-law, Chris de Villiers, graces the cover with his white-tail buck. Now he told me as he sat down in the forest — it was in the general area of Prince Albert; we can't say where exactly — he paid his respects to this beautiful creature he

realized was very massive. So Chris has become one of the top 10 in Canada for this white-tail deer that he shot, and he's getting a full body mount of this deer with a score of 222, if that means anything to you hunters. So he's going to have this full mount in his hunting room. Yes.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the strong partnership and good work of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation which has helped our government make progress in so many areas for the people of Saskatchewan who enjoy being in the wildlife and the forest.

Now in regards to the Health budget, which is a robust 5.36 billion investment in people, I was speaking with some families whose children have experienced hearing loss and they were previously asking for a newborn screening program. I'm so pleased to announce in our Health budget we have established a universal newborn hearing screening program to screen babies born in Saskatchewan hospitals. And it's the right thing to do and our government is on track to helping Saskatchewan families.

Another Health budget investment for the people of Saskatchewan is a 2.8 million for individualized funding for children with autism spectrum disorder. This provides parents with more flexibility for access to various services to suit their individual children's needs, and these families in Sask Rivers constituency will be given a better quality of life due to this funding. So again we are on track.

Also in the Health budget, there's a 250,000 increase to provide vision loss rehabilitation service and equipment to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have a quote from Nairn Gillies, executive director, Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. She says:

They save lives by providing early screening. They save lives here because we have deaf kids who are lifelong for the rest of their life going to be in mental institutions or mental health facilities because they didn't have access to language from their early age.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my daughter, who is a speech pathologist in Saskatchewan, also added her voice to the positive reactions and comments coming in. She said, "Good job, Mom, on your government's budget. This will save tons of money in rehab. Better hearing outcomes when deafness is caught early." We are on track.

As we have seen in the past year, mental health in our province, even nationally and abroad, is in need of services and support. In our budget, our government is committed to improving the response and services needed by individuals by increasing support to services across all government ministries. And in total our government will spend 367 million on mental health supports. The 10-year mental health and addiction system plan guides the priority areas for addictions, investing in mental health in our province.

Our government has come to my region and talked about addictions, so I was quite happy to see there will be more services in Prince Albert area and the North, and we'll provide specialist consultation services to medical health professionals.

So by listening to communities in need of better health, our government also increased mental health first aid courses to better equip front-line staff to recognize and respond to crises, and individual communities will receive management tools to help plan their supports.

Some of our communities have been experiencing crime in smaller centres and farms right across rural Saskatchewan, so our government has responded to those in need and created a protection and response team after consulting with groups in 10 communities and 58 stakeholders. My neighbours in communities in Saskatchewan Rivers, which is comprised of mainly small villages and rural areas, has spoken with me regarding concerns about crime and safety. And our budget will provide full funding to the protection and response team, launching a dedicated safer communities and neighbourhoods unit in Prince Albert.

So this budget includes a 4.9 million to help fund additional 30 police positions, reassign 10 RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] positions, and complete Saskatchewan's first rural crime innovation challenge to alert landowners about irregular activity related to this property. So this budget is about security for tomorrow and planning for prosperity today, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to live in the best province with enduring values — community, co-operation, and compassion — working together for the greater good. After reaching out to Saskatchewan people, our government responded to their needs. The quality of life we experience today means preserving quality of life for tomorrow needs as well, and this budget prepares us for a better tomorrow with accessible programs but security for the vulnerable.

Our Saskatchewan citizens have told us they want more resources and less duplication. So with careful management, all will be considered in preparation for our new fiscal realities. Our partners face difficult choices also while protecting core service and programs that make our great province a good place to work, live, and raise your family.

Through co-operative efforts of Saskatchewan people and sound financial management, our government and province is providing our quality of life. Our government will continue to meet our challenges. This will not divide Saskatchewan people but unite us and keep us on track for future generations. In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget but not the amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise and join in the debate on the budget. Mr. Speaker, I would just point out right at the start that I think our Finance minister did an outstanding job through the entire budget process and especially this week under very difficult circumstances for her.

Mr. Speaker, often at this stage in the budget debate members, colleagues will take the opportunity to speak about family, to speak about office staff, and I'm going to be no different, Mr. Speaker. I'll do that at different points throughout my remarks this morning.

But before I begin, I just want to add, as several of my colleagues have done, some comments about the Humboldt Broncos tragedy, Mr. Speaker. There's been an outpouring of support from across the entire province to the entire community, to all the families who've lost loved ones and all the pain that they're suffering, Mr. Speaker, and my community of Rosetown is no different. I'd just like to mention a situation that had happened there, Mr. Speaker.

This week, Rosetown is hosting the Allan Cup. The Allan Cup, for those who aren't familiar, is supremacy of senior hockey in Canada. It's, I believe, 109 years old, is an outstanding tradition. Rosetown is very honoured to be hosting that this week, Mr. Speaker. So earlier in the week during the opening ceremonies, there was a ceremonial puck drop, and there was a moment of silence for the Humboldt Broncos. Well, Mr. Speaker, one of the Rosetown Red Wings is a former Humboldt Bronco and he wore his Humboldt jersey during the opening ceremonies. It was, I understand — I was here; I wasn't able to be at home — but I understand it was a very moving tribute to the Humboldt Broncos, Mr. Speaker, and our heart goes out to that wonderful community. The entire province is grieving for them, Mr. Speaker.

I'd mentioned about office staff, Mr. Speaker. To start with, I listened to the very eloquent remarks of my colleague and good friend, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, yesterday, and he mentioned that our two offices work together very closely. It's like one big staff is what it's like, Mr. Speaker. And he mentioned them, but I feel like I need to mention them as well. Selena Beahm, Cheryl Verhelst, Elias Nelson, Brett Boha, and Christopher Thresher in my office do an outstanding job, both for myself and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health. And in his office, Jessica Tessier, Whitney Kelsch, McKenzie Kibler, and Brayden Fox. Again, the minister mentioned all of them yesterday, but I certainly want to thank them as well, and I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention my constituency assistant, Kathie Parry, in Rosetown.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to keep an eye on the clock. There's a number of items that I would like to discuss today, pretty far ranging. There are some areas of the budget that are near and dear to my heart, but where I want to start is with health care because that's the file that I have the privilege of representing as Minister of Health. So I'm going to start my comments there, and see how far down the road I get before I decide what other topics I'll discuss, Mr. Speaker.

But I think where I'd like to start, when we're speaking about health care, is on some health challenges that were recently experienced by a member of this Assembly. I mentioned the Minister of Rural and Remote Health earlier. He's not only a colleague. He's become a close personal friend. And he mentioned some of the challenges he's faced recently in his comments, so I don't think he'd mind me speaking about it. Over the past year or so, he's been battling colorectal cancer. He went through a difficult number of months and it's so good to see him here and healthy in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, one thing I want to mention about him — he has a number of great attributes, some not so great, but most great attributes, Mr. Speaker — he has a tremendous work ethic. He has a great sense of humour, and, Mr. Speaker, on the sense of

humour, I'll tell you how incredible this man is, even in the most trying times. He'd continue to go to work even when he shouldn't have been, when he was taking chemo, and I just have to share an anecdote from something that happened last year.

The minister and I met . . . The SMA, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the doctors in the province if you will, were having . . . They have a conference twice a year and it's fairly traditional that the night before the conference the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and the Minister of Health meet with their executive. So we had a supper meeting and a meeting that night. It was a very good meeting. And then the next morning I was scheduled to give a speech to the assembly and then do a question-and-answer session.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, because he was taking treatments at the time and he had some tests the next day, he wasn't able to stay for the conference. But he still made the effort to be at the meeting the night before, and then he left. The next morning I was getting ready to speak to the assembly. And I would put it this way: the doctors in the province, tremendous group of people and don't mince words. If they're not happy about something, you know it. And the expectation was there was a few things they were going to be unhappy about, and they were going to let me hear about it.

So that morning I'm getting ready to go to the conference and give the speech and do the question-and-answer, and I get a text from my friend and colleague, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health. And it says this: "Once again I'm sorry I can't be there today. I have to get some tests done. I'm getting a colonoscopy. I'm not sure which one of us is going to get it worse today." Mr. Speaker, I shared that text. I read it to the doctors and luckily, Mr. Speaker, the doctors in this province do have a sense of humour, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, on to the budget and specifically the health care. Again, like I said, I'll keep an eye on the clock and see there's some other areas that I wouldn't mind speaking about. I come from the municipal sector. I had the privilege previously of being the Minister of Government Relations. There's some topics there I'd like to discuss.

But, Mr. Speaker, on health care: a record \$5.7 billion this year in various areas of health care, I think, right at the start shows us how important this government considers health care.

So to touch on some of the specific health care budget highlights, I think the one I'll start with, Mr. Speaker, is one that came up in question period today. It was on mental health. It continues to be a priority for us, Mr. Speaker. It's very front of mind, not just in Saskatchewan, but right across the entire country. At the recent federal-provincial-territorial Health ministers' conference that the Minister of Rural and Remote Health and I attended in Edmonton, it had significant discussion.

It's generally understood by all the ministers, and I think most people, that you can't really have physical health if you don't have mental health as well. They go hand in hand, Mr. Speaker. So it's extremely important. So that's why the Ministry of

Health is investing \$284 million in mental health this year, which is a 58 per cent increase since we were given the privilege of forming government in 2007.

So this topic, as I said, is very important. So I'd like to give some breakdown on this, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to take a couple minutes and go to some of the budget information that was passed out to the media on budget day earlier this week. So where we're at financially is simply this: the province, last year budget expenditures were about \$275 million in mental health. That's been increased by \$11 million this year, Mr. Speaker.

There are sort of three tranches specifically that programs are going to be expanded or new programs are going to be offered for mental health support services, Mr. Speaker. The first one is improve mental health and addiction services for children and youth. There's about 4.6, \$4.7 million new money that's going to be spent there. And where that's going to go . . . Going to read through a few of these points, Mr. Speaker, just because I think they're very, very important. That's going to be funding for new child and adolescent specialist positions to reduce wait times, increase capacity for diagnosis and treatment, and improve services and supports for children, youth, and families.

There's going to be a pilot project which is modelled after the mental health capacity-building initiative that's currently operating in Alberta. That came up in question period today as well, Mr. Speaker. It's to better engage high-risk youth in prevention and intervention programming and, Mr. Speaker, that was mentioned as well that that's been advocated for by the Advocate for Children and Youth, and it was also raised when the medical students from the University of Saskatchewan attended the Assembly a couple weeks or so ago, Mr. Speaker.

There's also going to be implementation of a target physician training program to improve the capacity to assess and treat child and youth mental health conditions in Saskatchewan. This will assist in reducing wait times for child and youth psychiatry services — very important, Mr. Speaker. There's been some unacceptable wait times in Saskatoon in particular and we're working very hard to improve that.

We're also going to continue expansion of suicide prevention efforts through implementation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's suicide prevention demonstration project.

I mentioned there's sort of three main tranches. That's the first one. The second one is to enhance access to community health and addiction supports which is about \$5.2 million, Mr. Speaker. Key to this one is we'll be hiring in the neighbourhood of 40 new FTEs for the development of multidisciplinary community recovery teams. Those community recovery teams will be in eight communities around the province and they'll provide client-centred support to individuals that have complex and persistent mental illness. Mr. Speaker, we're hugely optimistic about where that's going to go. We're very optimistic about the benefits that we're going to see from that.

Also under that tranche we're going to improve the response to individuals with crisis mental health needs through the expansion of police and crisis teams. They're referred to as PACT [police and crisis team] teams, Mr. Speaker. In the areas

that we have been using them, all the professionals are very impressed with the results that we've been seeing. They'll be expanded into communities of North Battleford, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to expand addiction medicine services to address service pressures in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan, and to provide specialist consultation services to physicians and other allied service professionals. And we're going to increase access to mental health first aid courses in communities across Saskatchewan, and better equip human service sector staff to recognize and respond to mental health crisis.

The third tranche — that was the second one, Mr. Speaker — and the third and final tranche that I would say kind of encompasses where we're targeting this money is improve mental health service delivery, about a million and a half dollars there. And what we're going to do, there'll be three main components to that. We're going to expand online mental health services across the province through dedicated clinical positions and development of new online supports. We're going to improve outcomes through the implementation of a provincial mental health and addictions client record and clinical planning tool, and provincial implementation of outcome management tools to improve client outcomes and support clinical supervision and community needs planning. So what all those do, Mr. Speaker, that's where the new \$11 million is going to go.

So to give you kind of an overall picture of where all the funding is right now, Mr. Speaker . . . And I also want to speak to the issue about the Canadian Mental Health Commission and their general target that provinces should spend about 7 per cent of their health budgets on mental health. I'm going to give you an overview of where the province is on that.

So as I mentioned earlier, we're spending in total, including the \$11 million, a little over \$284 million this year specific to mental health. There's other areas as well. There's, I think, about \$46 million specific to addictions, which sometimes, Mr. Speaker, is a little hard to differentiate because, not always of course, but frequently mental health and addictions, the programming kind of crosses over and you're helping the same people in some instances. So, Mr. Speaker, where we're at in that case is the \$284 million as a percentage of the health budget puts us at about 5.3 per cent. So clearly we're going to keep moving towards the 7 per cent.

But something else I'd like to mention, Mr. Speaker, is that mental health spending isn't only in the Ministry of Health. There's also a number of areas in other ministries that we spend. In Social Services, there's about \$31 million. In school divisions, K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] mental health resources is over \$30 million, is spent there. Central Services, about 12 million; integrated justice services is 4.4 million; Corrections and Policing, 2.4. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

Just one example that tends to not be front of mind for people because they always expect mental health services to be funded out of the Ministry of Health. In Agriculture, the Farm Stress Line, Mr. Speaker, very clearly for mental health services — not funded through the Ministry of Health but funded through

the Ministry of Agriculture because we feel that that's probably where it's most appropriate to be, at least at this time.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I think that shows the commitment that this government has to increasing mental health services and of course all health services in the province. There's probably nothing more core to this government than health services.

Mr. Speaker, on to some other items that are sort of new or expanded in this budget that I think are very near and dear to many people in this room. Autism services, Mr. Speaker, the introduction of individualized funding for children with autism represents fulfillment of an election platform commitment from the last election. So what we'll be doing, Mr. Speaker, starting in this budget year, children under the age of six will be eligible for \$4,000 in funding toward whatever services best suit their needs. Mr. Speaker, this amount and the coverage will increase in the out years toward an eventual goal of 15 to \$18,000 for children under six and \$4,800 for school-age children.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is very important because the \$2.8 million targeted for that, that's going to benefit an anticipated 700 children with autism in this province, Mr. Speaker, a very well-received program that I'm very pleased that it will very soon be kicked off.

Mr. Speaker, another item, HIV. HIV is a terrible disease. It affects people, their friends, their families, and our communities. Mr. Speaker, over the last number of years we've taken steps to try to correct the exorbitantly high rate of HIV in this province. That includes working on prevention. We've increased testing substantially, Mr. Speaker, and of course treatment. The drug plan had already, previous to this budget, had already covered over 90 per cent of prescription drugs for HIV. But, Mr. Speaker, despite these efforts, our HIV rate in Saskatchewan is far too high. It's the highest in Canada and something absolutely needs to be done. So to act on this in this budget we're going to see, Mr. Speaker, universal coverage of HIV medication for everyone in this province. We're also going to provide increased funding to AIDS Saskatoon and the Westside Clinic in recognition of their good work.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize there's other CBOs [community-based organization] doing good work. In out years we'll certainly look at that. Mr. Speaker, as I said, the HIV rates in this province are just far too high and we're optimistic that these two new steps that we've taken, along with existing steps, will certainly help to rectify that situation.

Another item that I think is very important: \$523,000 is being invested in a universal newborn hearing screening program. That's for babies who are born in hospitals in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. This will support early detection of hearing loss. My colleague the Provincial Secretary, who spoke just before me, had read a couple of quotes from Nairn Gillies who's the executive director of the Saskatchewan Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Mr. Speaker. So I won't go through the entire quotes, but I'm going to pick a few points out of this because I think this just goes to show absolutely how important this new program is going to be for some families and for some babies, Mr. Speaker.

Here's parts of the quotes that Nairn Gillies . . . And I had an

opportunity, by the way, to speak to him on budget day after the budget. And I don't think he'll mind me saying this, Mr. Speaker: he was somewhat emotional. He couldn't impress enough on how absolutely important this new program was going to be. These are parts of some of the quotes, some of the comments he made:

This was the best budgetary thing that could ever happen in the province, in my opinion. From the time they're 25 to the remainder of their life, for a few dollars in the front end to screen them, give them access to language, and get things going, kids end up with a bachelor's degree instead of being a ward of the state. This is gigantic for us. This is huge.

And he went on, Mr. Speaker, in another quote, and he said:

They've saved lives by providing early screening. They've saved lives here because we have deaf kids who are lifelong for the rest of their life going to be in institutions or facilities because they didn't have access to language from the early age.

Mr. Speaker, I knew this was the right thing to do. I was very excited about it, but after I talked to Nairn on budget day I'm even more excited about it. I think this is going to be, as in his words, huge. It's going to be life saving and, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of our government for implementing this.

So, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned I'm mindful of the time so I probably won't delve into some of the other areas, but there's just a few things left that I think is important that I do want to say.

Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating that virtually every day in this House the members of the NDP will criticize government and they'll demand more spending. They'll demand more spending on social services. They'll demand more spending on justice, Mr. Speaker. And they'll demand more spending on health care.

And so what did the NDP do on budget day, Mr. Speaker? On budget day they tweeted a couple of tweets. Some I think have been read before by other colleagues. But, Mr. Speaker, I think it bears repeating because, Mr. Speaker, to me it's nonsensical. These are two tweets that came from the NDP on budget day. The first one says, "Increased spending on social services (+\$63 mil), corrections & policing (+\$30 mil), justice (+\$9 mil) and healthcare (+\$137.9 mil) . . ."

Mr. Speaker, these are all the areas of government that the NDP had been demanding funding increases to for months, and Mr. Speaker, there's funding increases in all those key ministries. And what did they say this means? They said it means ". . . more people are slipping through the cracks, when we should be investing in keeping people from slipping through the cracks in the first place."

Mr. Speaker, the second tweet said this: "Spending more on social services, corrections, policing, justice and health care does not represent an investment." Go explain that, Mr. Speaker. I can't. That makes no sense to me. So after weeks of calling for more spending in those very areas, Mr. Speaker, now they're criticizing the fact that we have actually done that.

We've increased spending in those very areas that they were calling for. They actually said that increased spending for health care is evidence that people are slipping through the cracks.

[12:15]

No, Mr. Speaker, it's not. What that means is, it actually means we're committed to the best possible health care for the people of this great province. And it means this province is growing under this government, something it never did under the NDP. It means this province is growing and there's more people that have needs from our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's the NDP's job to criticize the budget, but to criticize increased health funding is absolutely ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, it's not only their job to criticize; it's also their job to be reasonable and to offer alternatives. Mr. Speaker, so far this week they've done neither.

So yesterday the Leader of the Opposition — I think it was the very first question in question period — he commended the government for, and I quote, "some good decisions in . . . [the] budget." He commended us for full coverage for HIV medications, which I just spoke about, Mr. Speaker. He commended us for funding for autism, which I've also just spoke about. And he commended us, and I quote, ". . . to see this government take a step towards greater treatment, greater support for mental health." And he said again, "These are all positive things."

Now we appreciate those comments, Mr. Speaker. It was very good of him. The problem is, they came just hours after the NDP criticized the government for increasing health care spending. Those programs that we just listed, those programs cost money. And the inconsistencies I believe from the NDP, Mr. Speaker, will not be lost on the good people of this province. They're far too smart for that.

Mr. Speaker, during the recent NDP leadership race, the Leader of the Opposition released his platform, a platform with many, many expensive promises. Mr. Speaker, I think it's in the range of two and a half billion dollars per year, that platform and promises. And so now I guess he's going to pay for that, Mr. Speaker, with increased deficits and a carbon tax I guess, Mr. Speaker. That's his plan for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked a great deal about health care today. Mr. Speaker, every day in the province of Saskatchewan thousands of prescriptions are written for the benefit of citizens of Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP's plan for Saskatchewan is a prescription for disaster. Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the amendment but I will very proudly support the budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to stand today to add my remarks to the budget of 2018-19. Surprisingly enough, Mr. Speaker, it's been just over two years since the last general election and I am incredibly honoured to represent the constituents of Prince Albert Northcote. Like other members in this Assembly, we have the opportunity to meet so many

incredible community members and attend events that are so very special.

Prince Albert is a beautiful city with all the amenities needed, and its proximity to the beautiful lakes that are nestled in the forest fringe is just amazing. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is the residents of Prince Albert that make it the most wonderful place to live. People in Prince Albert are friendly and dedicated to their community. Whether it's the arts or the sporting community, everyone pulls up their sleeves and helps to make many events in Prince Albert a success. I love the fact that there is always so many different things to do in our small city.

Mr. Speaker, it would not be possible to fulfill these duties without the support from family. I'm very fortunate to have my partner, Darren. He goes above and beyond to take care of the family, and he's a wonderful dad, stepdad, and grandpa. Papa is what the grandchildren like to call him. Mr. Speaker, my daughter Melissa is extremely engaged with the regular proceedings in this Assembly. In fact she indicated to me that she records the proceedings so she doesn't miss an opportunity to watch me in question period or participate in bill debate. Therefore I must give her a shout-out occasionally because I know that she is watching.

But, Mr. Speaker, I am so very proud of Melissa. She works so hard in university with her goal of becoming a social worker, and also works at Ranch Ehrlo as a youth worker, and she enjoys her time with the youth there. She does all of this while raising a dynamic young man, full of personality, and finds time to stay engaged and involved with her family and friends. I'm very fortunate to have our children and grandchildren all close to home, and Darren and I are very dedicated to Prince Albert and want to make sure that Prince Albert is the best place to live and raise a family. This is what motivates me with my work in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to see that there was very little provided in this budget that will address the genuine issues in Prince Albert. Even though residents of Prince Albert have been advocating for a second bridge, there was no mention of that being an investment. Mr. Speaker, the residents of Prince Albert want two river crossings because if anything happens to our only bridge, we would be in a state of crisis. We are very fortunate that no crisis has happened to date, but there has been times when the bridge access was compromised due to accidents or damage to the bridge, which resulted in very long wait times. If an emergency vehicle needed to get through, it would be a real issue. And, Mr. Speaker, I wish we could stop making this a political issue and make it a real issue, and get this major infrastructure accomplished.

Another issue is that Prince Albert does not have a safe route, good routes. Most major centres are working to have routes away from residential areas and city centres in case a major accident happens. To access the bridge in Prince Albert or to get north of the river, you have to travel through the city by residential homes and our city centre. If there was an accident that involved the dangerous goods, this could potentially be a tragic situation. But this government continues to completely ignore this important infrastructure issue.

Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert is the hub for much of the northern

part of the province. When residents need to have their medical needs addressed, they often come to Prince Albert. Our hospital has long wait times and overcrowding is an issue. The Premier knows full well the issues at the Victoria Hospital and promised a new hospital for Prince Albert when he was campaigning. Well, Mr. Speaker, I see nothing in this budget for a new hospital. I want to see this Premier be good to his promise and start immediately with the construction of a new hospital in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, due to multiple cuts to funding, Prince Albert's mobile crisis unit had to cut their weekday daytime hours. Instead, crisis issues are now being downloaded to other agencies such as the emergency room at the Victoria Hospital and city police. Crisis workers with the mobile crisis are specifically trained to deal with these crisis situations, and I was hoping to see more funding provided to mobile crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I learned that the PACT [police and crisis team] program was expanded to North Battleford, Moose Jaw, and Yorkton. And while this is wonderful news for the communities to have this program, I think this program would be excellent in Prince Albert as well. We know that this program has shown excellent results in Regina and Saskatoon, and I was surprised that it will not be implemented in the third largest city in the province.

We have seen such success when police and the health region work together to provide services, and that situations are resolved in a more sensitive manner when trained, registered social workers attend to help clients that have mental health concerns.

Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert, it's not uncommon to see police officers sitting at the mental health outpatient or in the emergency room at the Victoria Hospital to help ensure that a client receives services. They are often waiting hours, Mr. Speaker. This puts more strain on protective services in the community and costs the municipality a lot. I would really like to see this government reconsider and place some funding for a PACT team in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, mental health is a real issue in our province but especially in Prince Albert, in the North where suicide rates are higher than the provincial and the national norm. The federal government is doing their part with providing funding but this province is not being transparent on how that money is being invested.

Also this provincial government needs to start investing in real action and programs. Wait times are unacceptable and need to be addressed. Children should not have to wait months to see a counsellor. Services need to be available when they are needed, and I hope this government starts investing in that now. As the Children's Advocate said:

Our kids are crying out for our help. And as they cry out for help, they're literally dying as we stand by and wait for tragedy to happen. Let's not wait for the next kid to die.

Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert has a high unemployment rate, and we need to have some opportunities available to stimulate our economy. The mayor of Prince Albert indicated that his main

points of contention with this budget was that there was a lack of details on funding announcements and the lack of solid programs aimed to getting people back to work. He said, "We understand when the economy is down we all suffer, but at the same time we've got to get our people back to work."

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing in this budget to help with employment, but instead 2.9 million was cut from programs that help people get back to work. We need to be making smart investments now to grow the economy, create jobs, and protect the most vulnerable over the long term.

Mr. Speaker, PST [provincial sales tax] is always a contentious issue, but this government should have considered removing the PST on construction projects. New home starts are one of the fastest ways to get a number of people back to work in good paying jobs. And the addition of PST on construction materials has discouraged people from investing in new homes or renovation projects. Construction companies have been feeling the decline in services which has created higher unemployment rates.

Mr. Speaker, even the previous premier of this province and former leader of the Sask Party had some strong words to say about the PST, and I quote, "In my view, government should avoid doing dumb things, and charging the PST on the same vehicle over and over again seems pretty dumb." Mr. Speaker, that's a very valid point. I wonder how he feels about this dumb move by this government to remove the PST exemption on used vehicles. This was a campaign promise made in 2007 election and now one broken under this new Premier.

Also, Mr. Speaker, cutting the PST on energy-efficient appliances makes no sense. It seems like a backwards move. We should be encouraging people to choose energy-efficient appliances, expand government support for individuals that are looking at being more conscientious on climate control. There should be more incentives for energy efficiency, not less.

In the previous budget, Mr. Speaker, we've seen a lot of PST exemption removals like the PST exemption taken away from children's clothes impacting families that are already having a hard time making ends meet; and the reversal on PST exemption on home and vehicle insurance. This has been difficult on many homeowners and landlords who indicated that this is going to impact rental costs. Another hard hit for people struggling to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, there was an increase to the Social Services' budget, but that is due to the utilization rates going up. More people in our province are struggling, but there is nothing in this budget that will address that. Instead this government decides to take more money from people that have very little by eliminating the rental supplement. Rent is not going down. In fact, many rental rates are increasing because property taxes and utility rates are increasing. Taking from the poor to pay for the Sask Party mismanagement is the lowest of the low.

Mr. Speaker, the senior population is growing in this province, but this government is not investing in services that they need. There is very little in this budget for seniors. Nothing to address the excessive cost of prescriptions, the increased costs of living, long wait times for long-term care, and mental health supports

specific to seniors' mental health, and no investment in a seniors' advocate. We need to do a better job looking after our seniors, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honour to be on the Human Services Committee when we were tasked to present recommendations about improving organ donation in the province. Saskatchewan has some of the lowest rates of organ donation, and recommendations that were put forward would improve these rates. Mr. Speaker, I did not see any money for improving organ donation in this budget. This government needs to start making this a priority.

Mr. Speaker, I've been enjoying my role as the critic for municipal relations. In this role I have had the honour of meeting many of the first responders that work hard in this province. Every day emergency response personnel attend emergency situations, but this past year a few major situations happened that come to mind, and we are so grateful for everything they do. But, Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation to take care of these emergency personnel and ensure that they have the supports that they need when they need them.

[12:30]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to see this government look at providing more services to support volunteer workers. I think we must do a better job with ensuring that mental health services are available immediately when someone reaches out. The situations that these brave men and women experience is difficult to manage, and we have an obligation to ensure that they are taken care of.

Mr. Speaker, this government is off-loading expenses onto municipalities that residents will ultimately pay for through higher property taxes and utility rates. The Sask Party budget does not fix the grants-in-lieu mess that this government created last year. But instead they have downloaded the problem to municipalities across the province who now have no choice to take that to the ratepayers. Also, Mr. Speaker, freezing the municipal revenue sharing for two years at the lowest level in years is unfair. Municipalities deserve to have their fair share of the expanded PST revenues. How is it fair to have the municipalities pay more but get less?

The Finance minister indicated, "Due to the recent expansion of the PST base, the one-point municipal revenue-sharing formula will be revisited." This government should honour their agreement with municipalities and continue to provide the one point of the PST to them. The expansion and increase of the PST has impacted municipalities and community members and they should benefit from this increased revenue as well.

The population in the province, Mr. Speaker, has increased and urban municipalities have faced the responsibility to provide services and increase their infrastructure in their communities to accommodate for this. Municipalities stepped up to the plate and now the province needs to help support them and step up as well.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is titled *On Track*, but should be named, much of the same. More people are struggling which has resulted in an increase of social assistance applicants. There

is little to no support for municipalities and people are paying more in taxes and getting less for services. This budget is more of the same from the Sask Party. It's short-sighted and offers no leadership or long-term plans to invest in prosperity. My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana described this budget perfectly. It has no hope, no plan, no inspiration, and shows no leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage members across to use critical thinking when they study the budget. Talk to your municipal leaders in your community. Talk to educators in your community. Talk to the front-line workers in the health centres. Talk to your community-based organizations. Use your critical thinking abilities and vote for a budget based on what is the best decision for residents in your constituency and know that that answer, that this budget will not improve the lives of the people you represent.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this budget, but I'll be supporting the amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, while it's a pleasure to stand in this House today, I'm thinking about the Humboldt Broncos and the families involved there, and wish to offer my condolences to all those who lost their life and to their families. I know what kind of tragedy this is and I'm especially empathetic with those that are injured from this accident that . . . And I know that their lives will be changed from last Friday onwards, both for the individuals involved and for their families.

Past Tuesday was the 20th anniversary of my son's accident, so I know the impact it can have on your family, but as well that there are lots of successes to be had after that point. So those that were injured need to think about what they're going to do into the future. My son got a degree in computer science and has a very good job today because he applied himself regardless of his injuries. The fact that he's a quadriplegic did not hold him back.

So those that were injured in this accident now need to focus, not on what their hopes and dreams may have been in a hockey career, but what they are going to do now and into the future. The Premier has indicated that the supports will be there for those individuals that survived and for all of the families involved, whether or not your person on the bus survived or not, because they're all going to need support.

You know, we talk about in Saskatchewan that . . . or I should say, people talk about the six degrees of separation, and in Saskatchewan it's not that far. Logan Boulet, when I heard the name on the radio first, I thought, I wonder if there's any connection to the Boulets that lived in Alida. It turns out that Rollie is his grandfather. Rollie was the UGG [United Grain Growers Ltd.] agent in Alida, later went to work for Mobil Oil, as did I, and we worked together out in Alberta. Sunday morning I get a text from my sister-in-law who lives in Lethbridge, and Logan's mother taught my niece rugby at the university. So all of us have a connection with somebody.

And I think we need, and I know I've talked with the Minister

of Health . . . So my sister-in-law is trying to lead the parade online for organ donations. And I've talked to the Minister of Health about this, what we can do further to assist in that area. Enough about Humboldt. I wish them well.

So last week I'm home for the Easter break from the House and I go to the RM supper that was in Alida, and the Minister of Highways is there. And part of this budget deals with construction of highways across this province. The Minister of Highways was there to not necessarily inaugurate but to confirm that the Ministry of Highways has entered into a partnership with the RM of 32 to rejuvenate Highway 361 from Alida to No. 8 Highway at Storthoaks, and further that they would rejuvenate the Highway 318 from Alida four miles south. The Highways ministry is paying 70 per cent of the cost and the RM is paying 30 per cent, and then the four miles going south from Alida will revert to the municipality and become a super grid.

Now I wish the Ministry of Highways would carry on with what the RM is going to do because the RM is going to pave that four miles as well as another six on the 601 grid. So we'll have a paved road paid for by the municipality — the 601 grid — from the north side of the municipality right through to the south side, which is great for us.

But all those years when I stood in this House as a member of the opposition, I would raise those highways with the member for Athabasca when he was the minister of Highways, and they completely ignored all of the highways in my constituency. These two highways plus No. 47 north from Stoughton are the worst highways in my constituency and we are actually working on them. Although I can tell a humorous story, if you would like, about the current Minister of Health when he was the minister of Highways.

So I showed him a picture of a highway and I asked him when he was going to fix this highway. And he looks at me — and it's a dirt road, which is what 361 and 318 are — and he says, where is that? And I said it's Africa, but the point is you didn't know that. He thought it was a Saskatchewan highway, because that's what the highways were like under the NDP. So I would like to thank the Minister of Highways and the Minister of Finance for providing some assistance to support those two particular highways in my constituency.

Also when I was home last week, I got a phone call from the Redvers Activity Centre, and the Redvers Activity Centre provides a centre for clients that are challenged, and they also run five group homes, a new group home of which was built by this government. And they wanted to talk about a situation of their employees and how they relate to their clients and the difficulties they were having in retaining employees. They had a 41 per cent turnover last year, going from the group homes to the Ministry of Health.

Well in this budget, Mr. Speaker, there is an increase of \$10-plus million to third-party groups like the Redvers Activity Centre to better support their employees and to provide training for their employees so that they can continue to provide continuous care to the clients of group homes across Saskatchewan. And this is very important. This is the second or third time we have increased the funding for salaries for the

employees within those group homes, and it was decades prior, under the NDP, that that didn't happen, Mr. Speaker.

So we are showing that compassion to people in the province, those that need our help, that are not able to necessarily support themselves. But the best thing I like about the Redvers Activity Centre is that their clients, where they are capable, are placed in jobs around the community. So they are not just someone who is stuck in a group home but they're out working in the community. They are part of the community. And everybody in the community accepts them the same as everyone else in the community. They are fully functioning participants in the community. And the Redvers Activity Centre doesn't just draw from Redvers. It draws from all of southeast Saskatchewan for their clients. So I would just like to send out a bouquet to the Redvers Activity Centre in particular, but also to the other group homes around the province that provide services to those less fortunate in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, the budget is about the economy. It's about how well Saskatchewan is doing within the economy — what we pay for, what we tax, what we promote, Mr. Speaker. But we're facing headwinds. Not just the headwinds of the reduction from \$150 a barrel of oil down to 20-some dollars, and now it's back up a little bit, but even that back up a little bit is discounted because we cannot get our products to market.

[12:45]

You know, we see currently British Columbia trying to block our access to tidewater. This, Mr. Speaker, is clearly a crisis for Western Canada's industry. We see not just our oil being denied access to markets but we see our grain products not being able to move. We see our potash products being hindered, Mr. Speaker. So when we try to ship west, whether it is in pipelines or rail, we are hindered by those . . . the province of British Columbia when it comes to shipping.

NDP governments, Mr. Speaker, in British Columbia and in fact, with this difficulty between actually two NDP provinces, Alberta and British Columbia, we see the injection into that of the NDP federal leader who says, oh we need to be talking to each other; we need to send this to the Supreme Court. How many years does it take something to get through the Supreme Court? It can take decades, Mr. Speaker. Clearly he has no desire to have this resolved, Mr. Speaker.

If we look to the east, we see that Quebec did exactly the same thing that British Columbia is doing now. They blocked the access to the east, to tidewater, of products coming out of Western Canada, including Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, clearly these provinces who block the economies of other provinces are being un-Canadian, and that needs to be recognized.

So when Quebec blocks our resources from reaching tidewater and still demand that we continue to pay them equalization, they need to understand that the lack of our sales is going to diminish what they receive in equalization. I'm not sure that their publics understand that, but they need to, Mr. Speaker.

You know, BC [British Columbia] and Quebec both were saying, well we want to block these products because they're

not environmentally sound; they are pollutants, that they are polluting the environment. Well, Mr. Speaker, when British Columbia produces items and ships it east, either on trucks or trains, they are creating CO₂ as they pass through Saskatchewan. So why should we allow them to pollute our environment? Maybe we need to stop and think a little bit about preventing them from polluting our environment.

When somebody unloads a ship in Vancouver and won't allow us to load a ship in Vancouver, maybe we need to say to the shippers, no, you cannot bring your CO₂-spewing vehicles and trains into Saskatchewan. We need to say the same things to Quebec. All those cars they produce in Quebec, not only do they spew CO₂ when they come through Saskatchewan, but the actual vehicle is putting out CO₂ as well. Maybe we need to block all the shipments out of Quebec as they approach our border. But if we do that, how are we going to ship our products? Clearly already CP [Canadian Pacific] and CN [Canadian National] are having a great deal of difficulty shipping our grain.

But we have access to the South, Mr. Speaker. We have a line crossing in the member for Estevan's constituency at North Portal, right on the border of my constituency as well. We have another line that crosses the US [United States] at Northgate. Needs a little work perhaps to get a train there, but it can be done fairly easily. But CN and CP are doing everything they can to block our shortline rails from shipping products out of Saskatchewan.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the federal government is not interested in enforcing their own laws. So why do we in Saskatchewan continue to be Boy Scouts and follow the federal law on the railroad Act? Let's start using our shortlines, run them over CP and CN lines, and get our products to market. Let's start shipping our products through Seattle and Portland, or New Orleans. Ship them down. Ship it down the Mississippi River by barge, which is the cheapest actual way to get it to tidewater. Mr. Speaker, we need to start thinking about these kind of solutions if people like the NDP in British Columbia are going to block our economy's access to the world, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I thought at one time that — I still think it, actually — that the US as a jurisdiction is in serious trouble. I can see within 50 years that the US could break up into five separate jurisdictions. I was just reading online that there is now a petition circulating in California that has 640,000 signatures. To put it on the ballot they only need 345,000. They have 640,000 to put on the ballot the question of whether or not to split California into three separate entities and secede from the United States.

That is the start of it. I think it's North Carolina that just had a motion presented to their House of Representatives to secede, to allow the state to secede from the United States. And the interesting part about that, Mr. Speaker, is that in 1860 North Carolina was the first state to vote to secede from the United States and obviously created the American Civil War.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we think that these things are far-fetched, they're not that far because there is no longer a commonality of interest in the US. New York and Texas and California no longer have the same interests. And I thought

Canada, we would be immune to all of this. Well, Mr. Speaker, after observing what is going on in Quebec, what was going on in Quebec, I don't think we're that far behind where the US is at. We are approaching a constitutional crisis.

You know, I was reading on my Surface Pro here earlier today a column by Mark Bonokoski of the *Toronto Sun*. Now *Toronto Sun* is not normally thought of as an unfriendly newspaper to the Liberal government. You know, if you were to ask where the *Toronto Sun* is in the political spectrum, they would likely be under the Liberal column . . . Well I know the member opposite from Regina Elphinstone doesn't agree with me because he thinks they're actually a part of the NDP process, but I would put them more in the Liberal camp.

So Mark Bonokoski's headline yesterday was, "When the going gets tough, Trudeau gets going." Mr. Speaker, as we find out today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is off to Peru for a conference rather than dealing with the issues in this country that are destroying the economies of Western Canada. To further quote Mr. Bonokoski, he says:

When things get rough on the home front, he [meaning Mr. Trudeau] flies off to another far-away place . . . he flies back to Ottawa, reloads his Louis Vuitton . . . [luggage], and flies off again.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see how the federal Liberal government takes this crisis in Western Canada. They don't take it as an issue at all. I watched the news conference after the emergency cabinet minister meeting in Ottawa, and Minister Carr, the Natural Resources minister, comes out, says a few words that yes, we're taking it seriously; we're looking at it. Oh and by the way, I've got to catch an airplane. Goodbye. And runs out. You know, even hear the reporters say, what? Really?

You know, so that's how serious the federal government is taking this . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. My colleague mentions a former NDP minister who ran for the elevator when a tough question was asked him in a scrum . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Well and another colleague says it really wasn't that tough, but he ran anyways. So you know . . .

But the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister for the Environment were both there, and all of a sudden they both had to catch an airplane right away. You know, couldn't answer any questions.

You know, so the federal government is obviously not taking this issue seriously. This has the potential to be a constitutional crisis in this country and needs to be taken seriously. The federal government can no longer just talk. They have to act. And they have to act in the interests of the economy of Canada, not to protect the NDP government in BC or to protect their . . . Trudeau's mantra that this is 2015 after all.

This is a crisis that is seriously impacting the economies of Saskatchewan and Alberta and Manitoba, and it needs to be resolved. We can no longer wait. And we have been waiting and waiting and waiting. We can no longer wait for the federal government to literally get off the pot. They need to do something.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we cannot ship our products east or west, then we need to seriously think about shipping them south or north. We could go around Alberta and British Columbia and go through the Northwest Territories and the Yukon and put our oil and potash and grain into the Gulf of Alaska and ship it around the world. Mr. Speaker, we don't need to have British Columbia. We want to have British Columbia. We want to have access through there, but we don't need to have access through there. So unless the people in British Columbia want to start eating all that fruit from the Okanagan Valley, if they want to stop digging coal in northeast British Columbia and not ship it around the world, if they want to shut down their oil industry in northeast British Columbia, shut down the Peace River grain growth, Mr. Speaker, they can do that to themselves. But they cannot, should not, be able to do it to the rest of Western Canada, Mr. Speaker.

So if the federal government is not prepared to step up and be held accountable, then we need to take control of the railroad systems in Saskatchewan, develop the crossings into North Dakota. I just saw a statistic from the US today that 84 per cent of North Dakota's exports are to Canada. So it's going to have a major impact on parts of the US as well. So we need to be able to ship our products south to Seattle, to Portland, to New Orleans, Mr. Speaker, and get our products out of Saskatchewan as we rightfully should be able to. We should be able to do that as Canadians. But if we can't do it as Canadians, we still need to do it.

And I still have 10 seconds to go, Mr. Speaker, and I've got enough words to actually do that. So, Mr. Speaker, if the people of BC don't want fuel and stop getting it from across the border, Mr. Speaker, they've got a pipeline running from Blaine, Washington to Vancouver and they need to shut it down. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Well I certainly hope the folks at home were tuned into that riveting debate speech from the member from Cannington. It now being 1 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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