



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

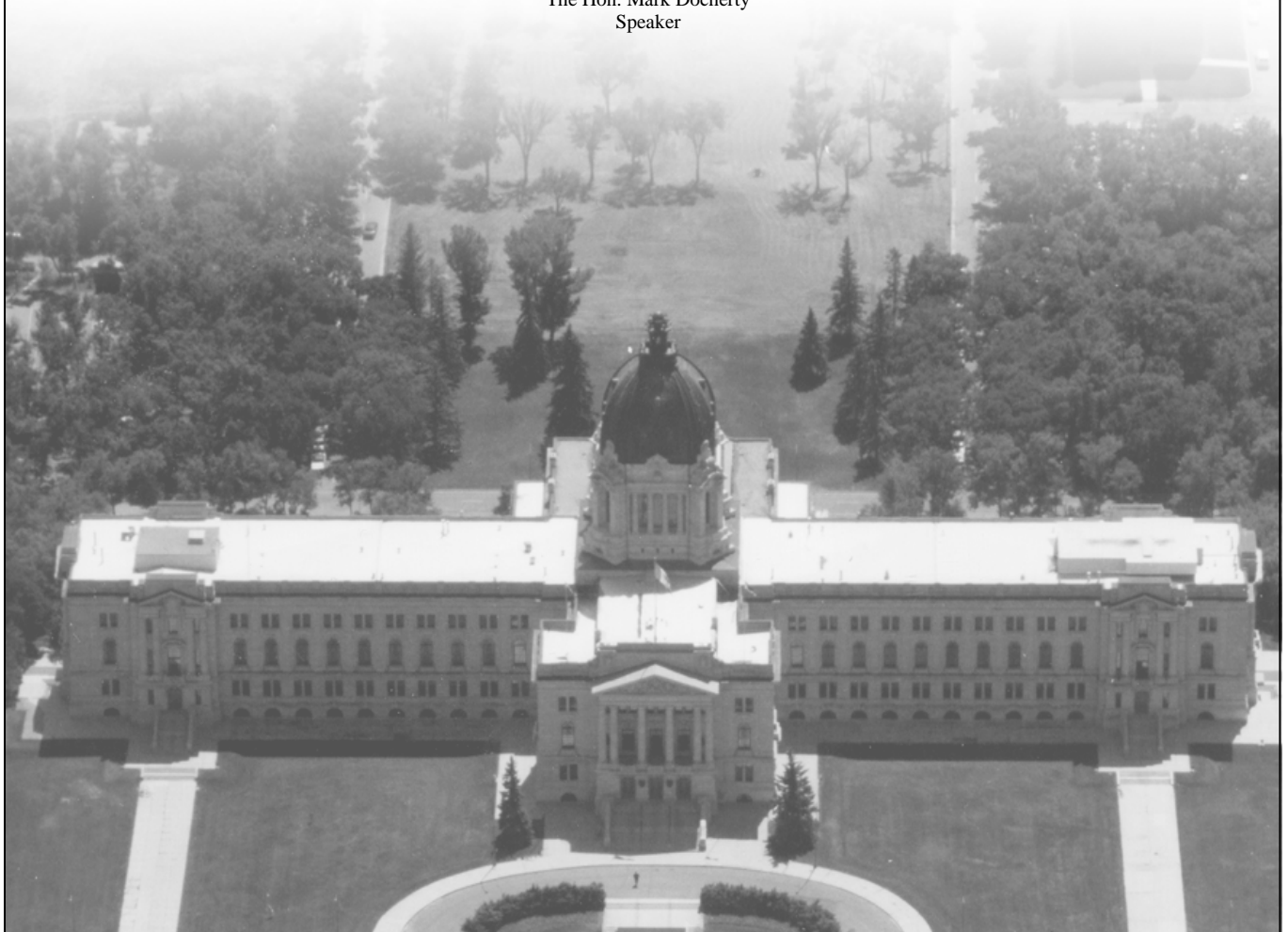
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

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

<b>Beaudry-Mellor</b> , Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)	<b>Lawrence</b> , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)
<b>Beck</b> , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>Makowsky</b> , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
<b>Belanger</b> , Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)	<b>Marit</b> , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
<b>Bonk</b> , Steven — Moosomin (SP)	<b>McCall</b> , Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
<b>Bradshaw</b> , Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	<b>McMorris</b> , Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
<b>Brkich</b> , Hon. Greg — Arm River (SP)	<b>Meili</b> , Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
<b>Buckingham</b> , David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	<b>Merriman</b> , Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
<b>Carr</b> , Lori — Estevan (SP)	<b>Michelson</b> , Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)
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<b>Cheveldayoff</b> , Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	<b>Morgan</b> , Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
<b>Cox</b> , Herb — The Battlefords (SP)	<b>Mowat</b> , Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
<b>D'Autremont</b> , Dan — Cannington (SP)	<b>Nerlien</b> , Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
<b>Dennis</b> , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	<b>Olauson</b> , Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)
<b>Docherty</b> , Hon. Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)	<b>Ottenbreit</b> , Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)
<b>Doke</b> , Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	<b>Rancourt</b> , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)
<b>Duncan</b> , Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	<b>Reiter</b> , Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
<b>Eyre</b> , Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	<b>Ross</b> , Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
<b>Fiaz</b> , Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	<b>Sarauer</b> , Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
<b>Forbes</b> , David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)	<b>Sproule</b> , Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
<b>Francis</b> , Ken — Kindersley (SP)	<b>Steele</b> , Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
<b>Goudy</b> , Todd — Melfort (SP)	<b>Steinley</b> , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
<b>Hargrave</b> , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Stewart</b> , Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
<b>Harpauer</b> , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	<b>Tell</b> , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harrison</b> , Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Tochor</b> , Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)
<b>Hart</b> , Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Vermette</b> , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Heppner</b> , Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Weekes</b> , Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Hindley</b> , Everett — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Wilson</b> , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
<b>Kaeding</b> , Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon</b> , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Kirsch</b> , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	<b>Wyant</b> , Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The Premier has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this legislature, a group of outstanding Saskatchewan citizens seated on the floor of the House here today.

With us are eight of the ten recipients of the 2017 Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal, accompanied today by the province's chief of protocol, Major Jason Quilliam. Two of the recipients, Robert Dumur of Pasqua Lake and Audrey Heit of Kindersley, were unable to join us today but will be honoured at a later date.

Mr. Speaker, this morning a number of us had the great privilege of attending a luncheon in honour of these guests. In a few moments each of them will be introduced by their respective MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. But first, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome them and their families and their friends to this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the writer Thomas Carlyle said the work of an unknown good man or woman "... is like a vein of water flowing hidden underground, secretly making the ground green." Those we honour today have not sought fame or glory as they quietly went about their work, making the ground greener in our province of Saskatchewan, making our province a better place. Mr. Speaker, through the years our guests have invested their time, their resources, and their energy in an incredible variety of causes across this province to make Saskatchewan so much stronger. And it is so much stronger for their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, we bestow one of the province's highest honours so that these good women and men are known to the people of the province. We want everyone to be apprised of the extraordinary commitment that these folks have made to their community and to our province. We want everyone to be aware of their remarkable contributions so that more of us may find it within ourselves to emulate the example put forward, so that more of us might be motivated to follow in their footsteps, but also so that we may think of them, so that we may think of them and we may thank them with all they have done on behalf of us, Mr. Speaker.

Today we honour 10 special people, inspirational leaders in their own right, exceptional role models, heroes among us, heroes deserving of our everlasting gratitude and our everlasting respect. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in welcoming these outstanding citizens to their legislature.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, it was my honour to join the Premier and other members this morning in the ceremony that welcomed the recipients of the Saskatoon ... Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal, Saskatoon in the case of one of my constituents. And we were just so honoured to be able to hear the stories of the way that these members of our community have contributed over the years time beyond all measure, beyond any expectation, and the way that that impacts the people that they touch, the people they work with directly, and the people that those people work with.

These are actions, these are contributions that are passed on, that are like a wave moving through the province. And that wave of volunteerism has been a part of our province for many years, and it's just such an honour to welcome and to ask the members to join me in welcoming these exemplary volunteers.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Mal Barber from the constituency of Weyburn-Big Muddy who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Scott Boyes from the constituency of Cumberland who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Humboldt-Watrous.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mrs. Shirley Frydenlund from the constituency of Humboldt-Watrous, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

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

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Ms. Helene Kesten from the constituency of Regina Pasqua, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce Mr. Eugene Paquin from the constituency of Saskatoon Southeast, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

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

**Mr. Dennis:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to introduce Mr. Vincent Somogyi from the constituency of Canora-Pelly, who today received the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Wood River.

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to introduce in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, 23 guests from the Saskatchewan construction industry here, and their names are as follows. I couldn't name all the companies, because there's 23, but they do represent the industry well.

They are, and I'd ask them to give a wave, Mr. Speaker: Ashley Campbell, John Lax, Teck Shing Lee, Nick Sackville, Brian Baber, Ryan Leech, Kris Watrich, Mark Cooper, Stu Niebergall, Mike Martens, Larry King, Ryan Tynning, Warren Douglas, Cory Richter, Karen Low, Evan Hunchak, Dennis Burnie, Carolyn Bagnell, Dion Malakoff, Shae Lawson, Ian Knibbs, Chris Guerette, and Aleksandar Kisin. They represent companies and associations significant to the construction industry from across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. These are individuals who are literally building our province.

As some of you may know, today is the final day of Saskatchewan Construction Week, which we began celebrating April 11th, and today is their lobby day. These representatives have met with MLAs, cabinet ministers, and government officials throughout the day. So on behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I'd like to welcome all of you to your Legislative Assembly here today. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the minister across and welcome our guests who are in the legislature today as part of Saskatchewan Construction Week and construction day at the legislature. We know that there are 56,000 people employed in this province in the construction industry, in that sector. We want to thank these men and women who are here on behalf of industry today who are leaders in all of their sectors.

We had an opportunity to meet with some of these leaders today. We met with Warren Douglas, Cory Richter, Karen Low, Evan Hunchak, and Carolyn Bagnell, as well as Ashley

Campbell. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Dion Malakoff, who I didn't have a chance to say hi to earlier today. And I ask everyone to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce several visitors seated in the gallery this afternoon. They are articling students who have been working with the Ministry of Justice or the courts across Saskatchewan. They are not only passionate about the legal profession, they are also involved in their communities. And I'm also proud to say that they have come through my alma mater, the University of Saskatchewan College of Law.

It is my pleasure to introduce Jessica Brockman — I'm asking them to wave as I read their names — Allison Graham, Michelle Korpan, Lauren Scharfstein who are clerking with the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan.

Jessica Brockman spent time as a domestic violence court case worker and interned in public prosecutions. Upon the completion of her articles, Jessica will be an associate with the firm Stevenson Hood Thornton Beaubier in Saskatoon.

Allison Graham is from Killarney, Manitoba. Allison says she enjoys watching the CFL [Canadian Football League]. And, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that Allison is from Manitoba, I'm sure that she's already converted to becoming a die-hard Roughrider fan. Upon completion of her articles, she will be an associate with MLT Aikins in their Regina office.

Michelle Korpan will be pursuing a Master of Laws degree at the University of Cambridge in the coming year. Along with her academic accomplishments, Michelle's community involvement includes volunteering with the Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City and as a Youth Ballet of Saskatchewan dance teacher.

Following her clerkship, Lauren Scharfstein will be working as an associate at the firm of Stevenson Hood Thornton Beaubier in Saskatoon. Lauren has been editor of the *Saskatchewan Law Review* and serves on the board of directors for the non-profit organization Dance Saskatchewan. She is also the winner of two provincial soccer championships.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to introduce Lindsay Hjorth, who is articling with Legal Aid's northern office. Lindsay received the 2018 Aboriginal Achievement Award from the College of Law as recognition for working with the Indigenous Law Students Association, and volunteering with Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City.

I would also like to introduce — I'm sorry, I've got to do this carefully — Mobolanle Depo-Fajumo, Nathaniel Scipioni, and Laura Barath who have been articling with the Ministry of Justice.

Mobolanle got her law degree from Nigeria and attended the University of Saskatchewan for a Master of Laws degree in taxation. She also spent time working as a civil coordinator in the ministry's dispute resolution office. In her spare time, she enjoys photography, watching movies, travelling, and exploring new places.

During law school, Nathaniel competed in the 2017 Jessup International Law Moot, and participated in the Wahkohtowin justice class, which means "kinship" in Cree. After he completes his articles, Nathaniel will be joining public prosecutions as a Crown prosecutor in Regina.

Laura Barath grew up in London, Ontario, but also has lived in Calgary and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, she describes herself as an odd duck, which means she would fit in well in this building, and she believes winter is her favourite season. So that would make anyone an odd duck, especially this year. She might be feeling right at home in our province this year. She has spent time volunteering with CLASSIC [Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.]. She will be joining the legal services division in the ministry when she completes her articles.

I would also like to introduce Noah Wernikowski who is articling with the Court of Queen's Bench. We will soon have to wish Noah safe travels because he is set to move to London, England after clerking to complete a Master of Laws degree at the London School of Economics. He plans to return to Regina to practise.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Jessica Nixon who is articling with the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan. Jessica spent a couple of years as a legal assistant and intake officer with Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan. She has very strong ties to the community in Regina and has done extensive volunteer work with many organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud of this group of articling students and am confident that we will see great things from them in the future. Please join me in welcoming them to the legislature.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming these articling students today to their legislature. Mr. Speaker, it's always my favourite time of the year when we bring the articling students to welcome them. I'm always excited and humbled to hear their respective resumés, and it's always great to see what you do in the future. So welcome to the profession, and I'm very honoured and excited to see what you'll do with your lives moving forward.

[13:45]

I do in particular, Mr. Speaker, want to call out a few of the

students that are sitting in the gallery, in particular, Mr. Speaker, Noah Wernikowski who I had the pleasure of working with when he was the communications officer at the Regina Catholic School Division, — he was there when I was a school board trustee — and, Mr. Speaker, Michelle Korpan and Jessica Nixon who I had the absolute pleasure of working with when they were intern students at Pro Bono Law Saskatchewan, the charity I used to work for. So I know the legal profession is in very good hands with these students, and I'd like to again join with the minister and ask all members join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I do want to introduce another individual who is actually seated in the west gallery. Vince Somogyi is not only just a recipient, he's also the father of a wonderful daughter who is a good friend of mine who is seated there. It's Jolean Somogyi. She's seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, to watch her father be recognized for the service that he's done for the province.

Jolean is an engineer at Mosaic. And aside from that, she is also married to another good friend of mine who I went to law school with several years ago, which is a little bit depressing to say because I sometimes often feel like I'm about the age of the articling students rather than someone who graduated several years ago. But it's so exciting to see Jolean here this afternoon, and I'd ask all members join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly as well.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery is a group of grade 12 students from F.W. Johnson Collegiate. There's 41 of them. Their teacher is once again Mr. Scott McKillop. I look forward, as always, to having a talk with them after routine proceedings. I ask all members to welcome this group to their Assembly.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise today to introduce three guests seated in your gallery. And it perhaps is especially fitting that they be here during National Volunteer Week. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, are some members, representatives of the Regina Ski Club. We have Karen Hardy who does communications for the club. We have Ron Blechinger, volunteer and master groomer extraordinaire, who I'll be talking a little bit about in a member's statement and about the ski club. Ron used to work with my mom out at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] and polytechnic.

But I have to tell you, Ron, for a long time I thought you lived backing on to Kings park, or the ski trails there. I found out later that he lived closer to home; he just spends a whole lot of time out there making sure that those trails are in good conditions despite some trying weather.

Also with us today is Dale Hjertaas, the president of the ski club. And, Mr. Speaker, the Regina Ski Club is well served by their executive and their volunteers. They include over 680 members and provide an opportunity for people in this city to

get out and enjoy winter.

I was a little worried, Mr. Speaker, when I've had this member's statement ready to go for a number of months, and I was worried that the snow might run out before they got here, Mr. Speaker. It turns out I needn't have worried. So I invite all members to join me in welcoming these members of the Regina Ski Club to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, knowing that there's a lot of guests today that probably can't all be introduced, I did want to take an opportunity really quickly to recognize and introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, seated in the west gallery, another constituent of mine, Jo-Anne Cugnet.

Jo-Anne is probably best known in this province and this country, and dare I say internationally, as the best-selling author of *A Prairie Alphabet*. But closer to home in Weyburn she is well known, Mr. Speaker, through the efforts of her and her late husband, Kenny, in all the work that they have done around our community and frankly across this province in making it a better place. And so I just want to take a few minutes to say hello to Jo-Anne and to formally introduce her in her Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to stand today to recognize two of my constituents up in the west side, Rae-Lynn Somogyi and Jolean. I guess she's from Regina, but they're daughters of Vincent who's a long-time friend and kind of the glue towards Willowbrook, as well as his wife, Sandy, behind.

Without that family, I don't think there would be a Willowbrook, to tell you the truth. They've been involved in the curling club, the hall, raising kids, playing, coaching ball, and everything else. And Rae-Lynn's teaching up in Yorkton and living in Willowbrook and following in her parents' footsteps.

And I'd also like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly and just say that, you know, Vince has done a lot for this community but he still couldn't hit my curveball. I'd like to welcome them to the Assembly. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Excellent. Well welcome, everyone.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request

the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Alsask, Eston, Kindersley, and Elrose. I do so present.

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

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

And you know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people. And we know that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties. We in the prayer that follows . . . I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today come from the city of Saskatoon and Melville. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand today to present a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. The individuals who signed this petition wish to draw these 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 Service, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide counselling and intervention services to clients.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed this petition come from the city of Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for support of local small businesses as part with the legislation of retail cannabis sales. Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: the federal deadline for legalizing recreational use of cannabis is quickly approaching and the Sask Party's lack of action has left Saskatchewan as the last province to start dealing with the provincial implications and regulations for the sale of cannabis; and despite clear calls by Saskatchewan people to keep wholesale and retail sales public, the Sask Party have said they plan to restrict retail sales to privately owned businesses only; and small and medium-sized businesses create the majority of jobs and keep more of their profits within local communities and Saskatchewan.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly call upon the Sask Party government to give particular consideration to local small and medium-sized businesses when granting licences to dispense cannabis.

Mr. Speaker, I have pages and pages of this petition, but I know that the Minister for SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] has announced recently that he will be making more information known about who is receiving these retail permits, unironically on 4/20 which is Friday, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to present this petition today. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Second Annual Saskatchewan Construction Week

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. April 11th through 17th has been proclaimed Saskatchewan Construction Week, and the construction industry across the province has been celebrating. This is the second annual Sask Construction Week, bringing together more than 20 industry associations and business support groups. The week recognizes the crucial contributions of more than 50,000 Saskatchewan workers and 11,000 Saskatchewan businesses who expertly design, build, renovate, and maintain the public infrastructure, private residences, commercial spaces, and industrial facilities of our province.

Mr. Speaker, this vital work contributes to the economic and social fabric of our province in profound and significant ways. Construction is the province's second-largest private-sector employer, providing some \$2.5 billion in good wages that support Saskatchewan families. It accounts for 11 per cent of the provincial payroll, and it looks like this will continue into the future with over 10,000 people expected to enter the trades in Saskatchewan over the next 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, construction is responsible for converting investment into tangible assets and productive facilities. It is

construction that fulfills the dreams of new homebuyers and new business owners. Construction enables economic expansion.

Mr. Speaker, here today we have many representatives of Saskatchewan's construction industry, and I'd like to ask all members to join me in thanking the people and businesses for building our province every day and recognizing this Saskatchewan Construction Week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Saskatoon Theatre Production Explores Homelessness

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Sunday, April 15th, along with the Leader of the Opposition, I attended a play at the Broadway Theatre in Saskatoon called *Home is a Beautiful Word*. This production was presented by Persephone Theatre in association with Sum Theatre and the Broadway Theatre. It was a revival of the Belfry Theatre's production collected and edited by Joel Bernbaum and directed by Michael Shamata.

This play is an example of verbatim research, where 500 interviews were conducted to bring together the actual script said by the actors. It featured a deep discussion around homelessness, where we heard from the housed, the homeless, and those who are one paycheck away from the street.

Before the show, we heard from a panel of local community members: the Leader of the Opposition, along with Sheri Benson, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon West; Colleen Christopherson-Cote from SHIP [Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership]; Dr. Kristjana Loptson, researcher from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]; and Dr. Priscilla Settee, faculty member from the U of S. The speakers provided their thoughts on homelessness and barriers to housing in Saskatchewan.

Of particular note to this Assembly, there was a discussion about the provincial government's recent decision to eliminate the rental housing supplement in Saskatchewan, how this program helps to keep a roof over the head of some of our most vulnerable and prevents them from ending up on the streets.

I want to invite all members to attend this eye-opening play in Saskatoon, which runs until April 21st, and to join me in thanking everyone involved in this production for their contributions to our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Moose Jaw Health Foundation Celebration

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday, along with the member from Moose Jaw North, I was pleased to attend the 2018 health care foundation in Moose Jaw, hosted by our health foundation. The chairman of the foundation, James Murdock, shared with the attendees the ongoing work that the generous donors, volunteers, and health care professionals are doing to ensure quality health care for Moose Jaw and the surrounding communities.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, I'd specifically like to acknowledge the incredible volunteer work done by my former constituency assistant, Laurie Kosior. Laurie's commitment to the success of the Moose Jaw foundation's annual Festival of Trees — raising well over two and a half million dollars in 11 years — was given special recognition which was a nursing scholarship given in her name.

Mr. Speaker, the overall success of the foundation has directly impacted patients in Moose Jaw in a positive way. The foundation helped the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital purchase an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] machine which in the past year performed 2,700 scans, allowing access to a service that we hadn't previously had available outside Regina or Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, over the past 31 years the foundation has raised \$36 million, adding another donation this year of \$2,474,878.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in congratulating the Moose Jaw Health Foundation on their continued success, as well as thank them for their dedication on improving health care in Moose Jaw. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Regina Ski Club Embraces Winter**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it's no secret that Saskatchewan winters can be long and cold, but that's life here in the province that we love. The members of the Regina Ski Club embrace our winters, relish in the opportunity to exercise, enjoy the outdoors, and build community while they're at it.

The Regina Ski Club has served the residents of Regina for over 80 years. The club has a rich history and diverse membership that includes many community builders and lifetime athletes. Mr. Speaker, the club has several octogenarians that can out-ski the majority of the members, and they show no signs of slowing up.

Mr. Speaker, community builders and volunteers plan ski trips like the annual Fred Cameron Memorial trip to Canmore. They clean up, trim, and groom trails all around the city and out in White Butte. Residents can use these trails and facilities for free. The club facilitates Nordic skiing and Alpine skiing and Alpine adaptive skiing for folks of varying abilities. There are programs for ages 3 and up, recreational and competitive programs, lessons, loppets, and local events and trips all around Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Ski Club takes winter by the horns and transforms the challenges of winter into loads of fun. Events run on weekends and weekdays from December through March — maybe even into May this year. Their motto is, "Join us! We're having snow much fun!" And, Mr. Speaker, judging by today's forecast, there may be an opportunity for a little more fun yet this year.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the Regina Ski Club, its over 680 members, and its volunteers on a very successful winter season.

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

#### **Saskatchewan Welcomes 233 New Canadian Citizens**

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 28th and 29th I had the privilege to bring greetings from the government to two citizenship ceremonies here in Regina. 233 immigrants received their citizenship at these ceremonies, adding to an ever-growing number of new Canadians who call this great province home.

Mr. Speaker, as a recent immigrant myself, I can say that Saskatchewan has much to offer. I strongly believe there is no better place to live and start your new life as a Canadian citizen. And many seem to agree. Approximately 107,000 new immigrants arrived to over 420 Saskatchewan communities from 2007 to 2017. This influx of people is a testament to the kind of province Saskatchewan has become.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province welcome these newcomers with open arms. We welcome their skills and talent, their culture, energy, and excitement. Canada and Saskatchewan are stronger thanks to their diversity. It binds us together as a nation and a province, and our motto says "from many peoples, strength." Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this entire Assembly, I want to welcome these 233 new Canadians and all others with open arms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Birthday Tea Celebrates Long-Lived Residents**

**Ms. Lambert:** — Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, I, along with the Saskatoon mayor, Charlie Clark, had the delightful privilege of attending a birthday celebration for 27 residents of Scott-Forget Towers, located in my constituency. This special event was in recognition of residents who were celebrating a birthday of at least 90 years of age. They are all living independently.

I'd like to read their names for the record. They are: Veronica Wall, 92 years of age; Clara Johnston, 92; Paul Kuzek, 99; Petrona Boechler, 90; Eugene Bader, 90; Sheila Fasr, 90; Wilhelmina McTaggart, 92; Anne Mitchell, 94; Violet McCowan, 92; Helen Albertson, 90; Lois Speir, 90; Ruth Shanofor, 91; Rose Lukey, 93; Gladys Kirk, 93; Ruth Evenson, 92; Sophie Kudyba, 95; Lillian Generoux, 93; Alice Linnell, 90; Doris Fanner, 92; Margaret Harrington, 90; Leeta Johnston, 92; Mavis Hassel, 93; Helen Bohrsen, 92; Olga Meszaros, 91; Elizabeth Ralph, 92; Ruth Forrister, 98; and Theresa Hubert, 94.

Mr. Speaker, I greatly enjoyed tea and cake and listening to some incredible stories from their lives. On behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I would like to wish a happy birthday to all of these 27 constituents. Thank you.

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

#### **Jansen Mine Strikes Potash**

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — I'm happy to share with you today the good news from BHP regarding their significant milestone at



the Jansen potash mine. On March 30th, both the production and service shafts at Jansen struck the first layer of potash at a depth of 924 metres in what is called the upper Patience Lake formation.

The next step for BHP's 3.8 billion greenfield project include further excavation and permanent lining of both shafts. In the past decade the potash industry has committed over \$20 billion for expansions to current operations and the development of new mines in Saskatchewan, including the Jansen product.

Saskatchewan mining's industry provides over 30,500 direct and indirect jobs. According to the Fraser Institute 2017 annual survey of mining companies, Saskatchewan ranks second among 91 jurisdictions around the world, and number one in Canada for mining attractiveness. And among 85 jurisdictions, the *Mining Journal 2017 World Risk Report*, that Saskatchewan's a top-rank jurisdiction in terms of places in the world to invest resource capital.

Mr. Speaker, should the project proceed, it is estimated that it will be the largest corporate investment in our province's history. Our government will continue to work hard to ensure that Saskatchewan's potash and mining industry remains an economic success story for our province.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating BHP, DMC Mining, and the many other partners on this very important milestone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I thank the school group for joining us today, and I hope that you have something to offer your MLA after question period. So that's where we're at now.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Provincial Sales Tax on Used Vehicles

**Mr. Meili:** — On this side of the House we're very committed to keeping life affordable for Saskatchewan people, which is a commitment that the members across once professed as well. In 2007 this government ran on a promise to do away with the PST [provincial sales tax] on used cars. The premier said at the time that government should avoid doing dumb things, and the idea of charging the PST on the same used car over and over again seems pretty dumb. It's a fair point, Mr. Speaker.

But what can we say about a government that breaks its election promise and throws a policy in reverse when it's no longer convenient? The Sask Party got a lot of mileage out of this tax cut, and now that it's no longer useful to them, they've decided to try to flip it back to the people of Saskatchewan to the tune of \$95 million. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people know a lemon when they see one. They see this government looking to balance the books on people's essential purchases, like a family buying a used car so they can get to work, or kids' clothes, or restaurant meals.

This government expressed a lot of concern about affordability for struggling families when they first ran for election. Why is the new Premier less concerned about that now than when life

was significantly more affordable a decade ago?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question with respect to changes in the budget that was delivered in this Assembly last week, a budget that continues us on our three-year plan to balance, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm pleased to say that we are on track to achieving that on behalf of the people in the province of Saskatchewan, on behalf of the people to ensure that we have that sustainable investment capacity years into the future, Mr. Speaker, for that next generation, for my children and others across the province, Mr. Speaker.

The changes with respect to PST on light vehicles here in the province came about after much consultation with the industry, Mr. Speaker. In the months leading up to the budget, talked with industry organizations across the province. And this aligns Saskatchewan's tax treatment on light used vehicles with all of the other provinces that charge PST on light used vehicles, Mr. Speaker.

Again this was consulted and received support from many in the industry, Mr. Speaker. And it's part of our broader initiative to ensure that this budget that was delivered continues us on our three-year plan to balance, Mr. Speaker. We're on track.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The addition of PST on construction labour, kids' clothes, restaurant meals, and now used vehicles puts us on track for an economy that continues to slow, and for life being much less affordable for people in this province.

One of the strangest elements of this policy, Mr. Speaker, is to make SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] the after-the-fact arbiter of what the fair value of a used vehicle sale should be, based not on the amount actually paid but the listed red book value. So a person buying a used vehicle might pay a higher tax calculated than based on what they actually paid for the vehicle.

Why is the government putting themselves in the business of determining what the right price is for a used car and penalizing those who buy for a bargain?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, in this province we are focused on affordability of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We're focused on that affordability not just today but decades into the future; unlike, unlike, parties of the same colour as the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, to the west of us that decided to run \$8.8 billion deficits each and every year, Mr. Speaker.

We are not in that market, Mr. Speaker. We are on a path to balance. We remain on track to that path, Mr. Speaker, all the while, all the while focused on affordability of the people across the province, Mr. Speaker. And over the last decade, we've

actually removed people off the provincial tax rolls — 112,000 of them, Mr. Speaker, 112,000 of them.

And to the member opposite's point, a family of four with 50,000 in this province will pay \$2,300 less income tax than 2007, a 77 per cent decline, Mr. Speaker. All the while we continue to invest in communities, in health care centres, in highways, in all of the infrastructure that people and communities across this province expect, Mr. Speaker. And we preserve the opportunity to invest into that infrastructure and those people far into the future.

**The Speaker:** — Recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

### Saskatoon Bypass

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, the climbing debt in this province, the amount we have to pay to service that debt, this is continuing to drag down on our finances and result in moves like this that make life less affordable and slow down the economy, Mr. Speaker.

On the weekend we saw discussion of another megaproject from this government, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure announcing that they've established a route for the so-called Saskatoon freeway. And they've asked the city to endorse their proposed alignment.

This freeway was first proposed after a study done in 2001, Mr. Speaker. The city of Saskatoon has changed a little bit in 17 years. The Sask Party has not shared all of their current information with the city on this, and we're left once again wondering if the government has a plan. They're offering a proposal that has no clarity on funding expectations from municipalities, no clarity on infrastructure ownership and maintenance responsibilities, no clarity on access points and who's responsible for building those, and no clarity on the expected phasing, timing, and procurement methods for the building. Along with that, no clarity on what the price tag for this project will be.

How can we, with the experience with this government, with the climbing debt, have any confidence that the costs for this bypass won't balloon out of control the way they have at the Regina bypass?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — A number of questions in there, Mr. Speaker. First of all, with respect to the Regina bypass, Mr. Speaker, that project is actually ahead of schedule if I'm not mistaken, on time and on budget, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the debt in this province, Mr. Speaker, we have an operating debt that is nearly 10 . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Did you have stopwatches out to figure out how long they lasted? Six minutes. Okay. I recognize the Premier.

[14:15]

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, this province, on a net debt basis, is second lowest in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. When you compare debt to GDP [gross domestic product], Mr. Speaker, we're third lowest in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. And with respect to the bypass around the city of Saskatoon, this is why we're consulting, Mr. Speaker. This is why we're talking to our stakeholders. We're talking to the city of Saskatoon. We're talking to those that would advocate or like this project, Mr. Speaker. And we're talking about the growth of that city, not only over the last decade, Mr. Speaker, never mind the lack of growth in the 70 years previous to that, but in the last decade, Mr. Speaker. And we're talking about where we will be into the future.

This is what governments do as we consult, Mr. Speaker, and we ensure that we advocate at every opportunity for a strong economy here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That includes advocating for pipelines such as the Trans Mountain pipeline, Mr. Speaker, of which we're a little unsure where the members opposite are, Mr. Speaker. We're wondering, with their donation from, Mr. Speaker, with their donation from the BC [British Columbia] NDP [New Democratic Party] to their campaign, does that affect where they stand on this pipeline, Mr. Speaker?

We know where their staffers are, Mr. Speaker, with hashtagging and tweeting of #StopKM [Kinder Morgan] on the great World Wide Web, Mr. Speaker. But we ask the members opposite. They're going to have an opportunity to have a say on this. Let's see what . . .

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

### Programming for Special Needs Students

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's cuts to education are still doing serious damage to some of the most vulnerable children in our province. Last summer Regina Public was forced to shutter its Discovery and Communication preschools for children with special needs. The two-year net cut of \$24 million at a time when classes are growing doesn't even come close to fixing the problems that this government inflicted on our kids' classrooms, and families are still left without options for their children.

An FOI [freedom of information] captured some of the correspondence related to the forced closure of the Discovery preschools and, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read a few of their comments into the record. One parent wrote, "The long-term effects of this decision are dangerous. We will see more language-deprived children, which will result in poor literacy skills, poor self-concept, and increased social isolation."

What does the Minister of Education have to say to these parents?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're very concerned about early years, Mr. Speaker. We're specifically concerned, Mr. Speaker, about ensuring that we're providing the right supports, especially for children who have

special needs, Mr. Speaker. You'll note that last month I signed an agreement with the federal government that's going to provide an additional amount of money that's going to allow us to establish pilot programs in Regina and Saskatoon with respect to providing some of those supports, Mr. Speaker.

And I can also tell the member opposite that we're having ongoing conversations, Mr. Speaker, with the Chairs of the Regina, Saskatoon school divisions, Mr. Speaker, with respect to enhancing the program delivery, especially with respect to children that have special needs, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue that conversation. It's important to this government. We understand the importance of ensuring that we're providing those supports, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to work with the school divisions to make sure we provide those supports.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, all the conversations in the world do not return that critical year lost to these children because the cuts by this government. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to try another quote from a parent: "As a parent of a deaf child who attended this program, I cannot put into words my utter shock and disappointment with this decision." Another quote, Mr. Speaker: "Right now no child should be left behind, and that is what these cuts are doing."

Yet another parent, Mr. Speaker: "A child who cannot communicate effectively with peers or their parents will become withdrawn, socially deprived, and depressed. This has detrimental effects on them both in the short and long term."

Mr. Speaker, these parents know what's at stake here. Why is the minister prolonging with these detrimental effects by failing to undo the cuts to special needs preschools now because of the cuts from last year's budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, we agree that no child should be left behind, Mr. Speaker. We have committed an additional \$30 million in this year's budget, Mr. Speaker, to provide supports for children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. And as I said in my previous answer, we're pleased that the federal government has committed some additional funds through their programming, Mr. Speaker, under the agreement that we signed to help enhance the delivery of programming, especially to our early years, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll continue to have these conversations. I know that Regina Public is starting to accept children back into the program, Mr. Speaker. I know that Saskatoon Public is continuing to work to make sure that they preserve their programming, Mr. Speaker. This is important for me. It's important for this government, Mr. Speaker. And I've made commitments to those school divisions to make sure that we can provide those resources. We'll continue to have that dialogue with those boards of education, Mr. Speaker.

As I've mentioned on many occasions, I'm pleased to sit down with parents of children that have these challenges, Mr. Speaker, to talk to them about what we're doing as a

government, Mr. Speaker, what the commitments that we've made as a government and what commitments we are going to make, Mr. Speaker. And we'll all do that as a result of having ongoing conversations with all our partners, and all our partners in the education sector, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Children With Autism

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, dialogue is great but what these families want is action, Mr. Speaker. After two years of waiting, the Sask Party has finally budgeted for individualized funding for children with autism. Families are saying this funding falls short, the age restrictions are problematic, that many kids have aged out, and it seems they will be waiting even longer.

Parents have been seeking information about the application process but can't find much in terms of answers other than a vague explanation on the government's website. Details of how to apply won't be available until June. A list of eligible services won't be posted until July. The minister and the Sask Party have had two years to prepare and deliver on this programming, and the lack of detail is unacceptable.

What does the minister say to families and their children who again feel like they are left waiting for this long overdue support?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, as the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education stated, we take our children's well-being very seriously, Mr. Speaker. I would remind the member that, you know, we did increase the funding to autism over the past number of years. Right now we're at \$8.55 million annually — under the NDP, \$500,000 under the health budget, Mr. Speaker — aside from the other funds that do come through Social Services and through Education for these children, Mr. Speaker.

We do know that there's about 700 children that would be qualified for individualized funding. That's why we've allocated 2.8 million extra dollars in this budget to move toward individualized funding. The process will roll out in July for applications, the detail of applications right now. The stakeholders are looking at some of the services that would be approved for those funds, Mr. Speaker. And funds will be allocated by August, but it will be going retroactively back to April, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, this is the third budget since they made this promise, and to not have the details ready now is unacceptable. Families want answers about this programming but can't find the necessary details they need to apply. They're paying out-of-pocket for treatments like occupational therapists and speech language pathologists while they wait. Even if the

funding is backdated to April, families can't start programming if they don't know what providers are eligible to provide services until months later.

This government has had two years to figure this out and figure out these details, and this plan is rolling out like it was drawn up on the back of a napkin. When will the minister provide families more details to assist them in accessing this long overdue program?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, I think some of the stakeholders involved in rolling out this plan would be very interested at that member's comments about being drawn on the back of a napkin. There's been many individuals through the different ministries who have worked very diligently along with the stakeholders to roll out a plan that's both responsive, effective, and will fill the needs of these children, Mr. Speaker. We have people within the Ministry of Health, Social Services. Those officials have been working for a number of months on this program, rolling it out to get it up and running as soon as possible.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of our record for the 8.55 million and the additional 2.8 million to address the needs of those 700 children in this upcoming budget. Mr. Speaker, promise made, promise kept. It will be rolling out this year and again, retroactive to April 1st, so there'll be no financial burden to the families that have been waiting for this funding. It will be retroactive to April 1st.

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

### Funding for Post-Secondary Education

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Advanced Education minister about the Sask Party cuts to post-secondary education and student supports that are hurting so many across our province. She didn't answer any of my questions and she certainly didn't provide assurances to students at the U or R [University of Regina] social work program that they'll actually be able to finish their program.

In fact, rather than making higher education the priority that it needs to be, she said that she's been encouraging universities to "... try to diversify their funding pool." Does that mean more privatization, more tuition hikes, or both? What exactly is the Sask Party's plan?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I was quite clear in answering the member opposite's question yesterday. There's a difference between liking the answer and getting the answer, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to operational funding for the universities, we have increased the operation funding for this year by 1.5 per cent in the Ministry of Advanced Education. I recognize that that is still creating some challenges for the universities, Mr.

Speaker. And we're going to work with them on a go-forward basis.

I do want to thank the students from the social work faculty, Mr. Speaker, for raising those issues about their program, and faculty members for their institution's attention. As an autonomous institution, Mr. Speaker, the university itself has some decisions to make there, and I'm happy to work with them on a go-forward basis.

As for the diversification of the funding pool, Mr. Speaker, all universities in Canada have diversified revenue portfolios. That is the case for most of the institutions in Canada. The university has the fourth-highest dependence on government provincial resources, and I'm committed to working with the board of governors on that issue on a go-forward basis, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — The minister says go-forward basis. We're concerned it's a GoFundMe basis, Mr. Speaker. You know the minister tries to blame the institutions for the mess that the Sask Party has created within those institutions. According to her, it's their fault that they are now having to cut programs and hike tuition and that they're scrounging for money, that they've been told that they have to scrounge for money and go look elsewhere. We don't know if that's tuition hikes, or privatization, bake sales, charity, or GoFundMe pages.

But students are paying the consequences. We know that students right now have already felt the impacts of a 4.8 per cent hike in tuition at the U of S. We know that the president of the U of S has said that that's a direct consequence of the Sask Party's devastating budget.

We need strong and vibrant post-secondary educations. And we need to make sure that we're ensuring opportunity for young people today to fill those skilled jobs today and for tomorrow. This budget doesn't cut it, and it certainly doesn't repair any of the damage of last year's budget. Instead of giving universities the green light for more tuition hikes, why won't the Sask Party step up and properly fund our universities and students?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all just to address the member opposite, he knows full well that universities set their own tuition rates. As an autonomous institution, they have the ability to do that. Our role in establishing the tuition rates, Mr. Speaker, has been to work with the boards of governors of all of our institutions to make sure that education remains affordable to the citizens of Saskatchewan. And given the amount that the provincial government provides in supports, in addition to student supports, we are subsidizing advanced education to a significant degree in this province because we think it's important. And that's also part of the post-graduate piece which our graduate retention program offers, Mr. Speaker.

I would add this, Mr. Speaker, that when students graduate from college it is an investment, Mr. Speaker. An individual with a college degree earns 44 per cent more as a result of their college

degree. An individual with a university degree, Mr. Speaker, can earn up to 85 per cent more on the course of their lifetime. These are important investments. They're investments that the province shares, they're investments that the individual shares, and they're investments that the federal government shares. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Emissions Reduction and Renewable Energy Targets

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the minister if he had a plan to get 50 per cent renewables by 2030. Now he listed off a handful of projects, but he failed to mention that the 200 megawatts of new projects plus the existing capacity of wind adds up to barely 20 per cent of SaskPower's own 2100-megawatt target for wind power. His numbers just don't add up.

We've seen no plan to add the remaining 1700 megawatts of wind power. It's crystal clear that the Sask Party is not on track to meet their targets. If they were, they'd have to add 80 per cent of that additional capacity in the final two-thirds of that timeline. So, Mr. Speaker, again what is the plan to get to 50 per cent renewables by 2030, and what's the plan for the other 80 per cent of the wind power that will be needed?

**The Speaker:** — Recognize the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, if we could somehow harness the power of all the white flags that the NDP have been waving lately, we'd certainly get to our 2030 target sooner than later, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, it's been indicated by both myself yesterday, in an interview with the media, as well as SaskPower officials, we certainly are on track to achieve the 2030 target.

Analysis is under way currently on an RFP [request for proposal] for both wind and solar power generation. We're looking forward to making announcements later this spring on, I think, a very successful RFP competitive process. And from that, that will drive decisions going forward. Mr. Speaker, we're certainly confident that we can get to a 50 per cent renewable capacity target by 2030. That's been indicated by SaskPower, by myself, and certainly that is our plan going forward.

[14:30]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a good thing that the Sask Party isn't into archery because they have failed to hit any of their targets when it comes to emissions reductions. But you know how they solved that problem, Mr. Speaker? Just avoid having targets. That same indecision is plaguing SaskPower when it comes to the possible expansion of post-combustion carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration technology.

Now the president of SaskPower said he would have a decision item on BD4 [Boundary dam 4] and 5 to his board in

December. So, Mr. Speaker, has the SaskPower board made that decision? And if they can't make up their mind, will the Sask Party make it for them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly appreciate the deliberations that the SaskPower board makes on a number of issues, but at the end of the day the Government of Saskatchewan is the shareholder of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker. So ultimately the government does have a decision that we need to make in the coming months, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to hear from the members opposite about targets, Mr. Speaker, and passing targets. The members opposite will know — and there's two former Environment ministers sitting across the way; one out of six of their entire caucus is made up of former Environment ministers, Mr. Speaker — they presided over a government of the time, Mr. Speaker, when GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions went up by 70 per cent at the same time that people were fleeing this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we've been able to reduce the intensity of our emissions by about 15 per cent. At the same time the GDP of the province has grown by 24.4 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are certainly going to do our part on emissions reductions. And we won't take the advice of the members opposite and bring in a carbon tax to do so because it won't work.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — I'd like to harness some of the wind power coming from over there, Mr. Speaker. The question was, when will the decision be made on Boundary dams 4 and 5?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the analysis is ongoing. Mr. Speaker, this is something that obviously the CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] board and the cabinet will have to look at once the SaskPower board does their deliberations on the matter. Mr. Speaker, it will be over the coming months that we will make those decisions, not just on 4 and 5, but also we need to look at what comes after that: 6, Poplar River 1 and 2, and Shand as well, Mr. Speaker, as well as continue the work on an equivalency agreement so that we can extend the life as much as possible under the new federal regulations, Mr. Speaker. So that's work that is all happening.

As well, Mr. Speaker, we are doing work on renewables that will get us to 50 per cent capacity by 2030. And certainly this is the position of the board, the management of SaskPower, as well as the Government of Saskatchewan.

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

### Emissions Reduction and Provincial Tax Rates

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's becoming more

and more clear that the Sask Party isn't going to meet their renewable power targets. But we also know they have no plans to meet their greenhouse gas emission targets either. There's nothing in this year's budget to help families make energy-efficient choices. In fact they're taking away the PST exemption for energy-efficient appliances.

Last year's budget decision to add the PST on to construction labour drove up the cost for renovations and puts energy efficiency even further out of reach for families. Saskatchewan families want to save money on their power and gas bills with more energy-efficient windows and insulation, but slapping the 6 per cent PST on construction labour makes that simply unaffordable.

Will the Sask Party scrap the 6 per cent PST on construction labour so that we can make green home renovations more affordable?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite of course is speaking to last year's budget and a change that was made in last year's budget. And he understands fully why that change was made. Resource revenues have gone down significantly and in order to keep the programs that we appreciate in this province for the people of this province — in health care, education, and social safety nets — to ensure that they are sustainable, Mr. Speaker, we had to shift away from reliance on resource revenue to reliance on consumption.

Mr. Speaker, we're also mindful of what affects the economy, Mr. Speaker. And in this province we have one of the lowest personal income tax in the entire country. We have one of the lowest corporate income tax in the entire country. We have one of the lowest small-business tax in the entire country. We do have the highest small-business income threshold in the country. We have the lowest PST of all provinces that have PST, Mr. Speaker. And you know what else that will help the economy and attract investment in this province, Mr. Speaker? We don't have a carbon tax.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, their decision to slap the PST on construction labour blindsided Saskatchewan families, and it blindsided homeowners too, just like when they scrapped the EnerGuide home program that helped families save money and reduce their emissions.

Now the Sask Party isn't taking any steps forward when it comes to helping families reduce their emissions. They're only taking steps backwards. They talk about changes to the building code and their prairie resilience plan, but they didn't include any measures to help families pay for the costs associated with improving their energy efficiency.

Will we see any meaningful programs to help families cope with the costs of reducing emissions?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like the member

opposite to actually take a look at the budget document that was presented on budget day and look at the cost or the savings that families are experiencing due to the tax cuts that this government's made over the last number of years. It's on pages 62 and 63. It shows the number of dollars that families in this province save, as opposed to other provinces within our country, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure why they keep ignoring that.

Families in this province quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, are paying lower taxes than they did in 2007, Mr. Speaker, and all of that is managed through prudent tax cuts where it helps to stimulate the economy. But we did have to make difficult decisions, Mr. Speaker.

We need to stay competitive. We need to be able to create jobs. We need to attract investment into our province, Mr. Speaker. But we still are affordable when we compare our province to other provinces, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Land Acquisitions for Regina Bypass

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Almost every other week we hear about another truck or combine or trailer getting stuck on the Regina bypass. And, Mr. Speaker, if it isn't farm equipment the Saskatchewan Party forgot to plan for who are getting stuck, it is now the minister that is getting stuck on his facts, Mr. Speaker.

Recently the Highways minister had to apologize after saying that there are no lawsuits surrounding land acquisitions at the bypass. Well, Mr. Speaker, that isn't the case. Not only are there a ton of outstanding lawsuits, that number is growing quickly. He mentioned that there were nine lawsuits after he admitted there were. But, Mr. Speaker, that has now ballooned to 23 lawsuits.

To the minister: how much are these lawsuits going to add to the ballooning \$2 billion bypass tab? How much?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite I would say this: there were over 100 titles affected in assembling the land for the Regina bypass. In every kind of situation like this, there's processes that take place that allow a fair and reasonable price to be given to the citizens that have land that are affected. And, Mr. Speaker, that is what the intention of this government is, to make sure that that takes place, that there is a fair and reasonable process, that people aren't taken advantage of, Mr. Speaker. And that is what we are going to do.

The people in that ministry and the people in the Ministry of Justice are working to resolve those things as quickly and as expeditiously as possible. Mr. Speaker, it is not beneficial when the members opposite sit and make complaints about something that is a process that's under way. It's before the courts and, Mr. Speaker, that's a process that this government is committed to. It's a process that we're going to follow. And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite should just stay tuned as it takes place.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill No. 123 — *The Snowmobile (Fees) Amendment Act, 2018***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 123, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 123, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 124 — *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018***

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 124, *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 124, *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Principal Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Next sitting.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## 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 Minister of Government Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my constituency of Melville-Saltcoats, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of the 2018-19 budget presented by our Minister of Finance.

I'd like to first start off by thanking a few very important people in my life. First would be my mom, but I know she's already changed the channel with the uninspired question period. The Blue Jays game is on, so I've lost her attention already. So I'll have to therefore default next to my good spouse, Carla. I'd like to thank her for her endless support and really continuing to stand by me. I do know that since I've been away fairly extended periods of time, her scrapbooking has gone up exponentially. But I do want to say that she does make it possible for me to be here today and each and every day, and I really couldn't have done all of this without her support.

I'd also like to thank my sons Michael and Matthew. I'm very, very proud of their accomplishments in their life, and they do continue to inspire me. And I do feel for my youngest son, Matthew, who has quite a career choice in front of him that may actually bring him from the centre of the universe, Toronto, back to here in Saskatchewan. And it's really those kind of decisions and opportunities that we've got in front of us, is the reason that I want to stand here today. I'd also like to thank my daughter-in-law Laine and for our only grandchild, Brynn. And they are another reason that I want to leave this place a lot better than when I first found it.

I'd also like to thank my constituency assistant, Rick McIntyre, who's kept our constituency offices running perfectly and without a hitch. Really the other people I'd like to thank are my office staff here in the building, and that's Grant and Tennille, Donna, Emma, and Launa who we lost to free agency, to the Premier's office. But they've all been a great asset to our team, and really they all contribute such unique and special talents that have been a great benefit to our office. And it's made for a much easier transition, really, to the desk in room 30.

And to my constituents in Melville-Saltcoats, I thank you for allowing me to represent you here in this legislature. Each and every day I'm thankful that they've given me the opportunity to serve them and to help them make a better life.

To my deputy minister, Tammy Kirkland, I'd like to thank her for her constant support and wisdom. The assistant deputy ministers in our ministry — Keith Comstock, our assistant deputy minister of municipal relations and northern engagement; Laurier Donais, our assistant deputy minister of corporate services and public safety standards and disaster recovery; Giselle Marcotte, our assistant deputy minister of

First Nations and Métis relations; and Duane McKay, the assistant deputy minister of emergency management and fire safety — I'd also like to thank all of these incredibly talented, dedicated, and hard-working people for their commitment to Government Relations. They are so full of knowledge and I am so lucky to have these people backing me up every day in the ministry.

[14:45]

I'd also like to take a moment to acknowledge Duane McKay and the emergency management and fire safety branch in its entirety. The emergency management and fire safety branch played a significant part in the recovery from the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy of Friday, April 6th, 2018.

For the people who were behind the scenes, like Jay Teneycke, director of communications for Government Relations and the whole communications branch. Jay spent a tremendous amount of time and effort arranging the conference call for RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and EMFS [emergency management and fire safety] workers across the province.

To our on-site rapid responders and emergency service officers who assisted the RCMP, we are so proud of the critically important role that these people and many more people played in the rescue and recovery efforts. And thank you to everyone who made an effort and worked so tirelessly to help the victims of this tragedy.

I'd like to thank the member of Cut Knife-Turtleford who did a lot of work on key issues before me in the Ministry of Government Relations.

Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday was a day to remember. The member for Humboldt-Watrous delivered a very heartfelt and meaningful speech to express condolences for the Humboldt Broncos. She had said Humboldt is strong, and somehow we will figure a way to get through this. Humboldt is strong, Mr. Speaker, and we'll never forget it.

Last Tuesday was also that day that the budget was delivered. That budget was delivered by our Minister of Finance. Our Minister of Finance was the second woman to deliver a budget in Saskatchewan's history. The member from Humboldt-Watrous tabled a very productive, dynamic, and well-thought-out budget this year.

Mr. Speaker, we had a tough budget year last year, but this year we as a Sask Party government have kept our promise by producing a budget that is on track to become balanced by next year.

I want to touch on some specific things related to my ministry. The 2018-19 budget continues to support First Nations and Métis with significant funding for a variety of crucial services including education, health, and social services. Approximately \$200 million is provided for targeted program funding primarily for First Nations and Métis organizations or individuals.

The Sask Party government has invested 16.8 million for funding direct to the First Nations and Métis education initiatives and institutions, 74 million in gaming agreement

transfers to First Nations and Métis organizations, 27.8 million in ongoing funding for training programs and services for First Nations and Métis people in our province, and 5.1 million in funding for programs and services connected to the joint task force in improving education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan. First Nations contracts in northern communities wildfire protection increased from 1.5 million to 2.6 million, which is up 74.7 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, our First Nations, Métis, and northern residents are integral to the success of this province, and we're going to continue to engage, consult, and move forward on the many issues that they have established as priorities. And these will include movement towards a Sixties Scoop apology. And we're going to continue to work on the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation report.

In regards to municipal funding, the Government of Saskatchewan's 2018-19 budget continues to provide strong, predictable, and stable funding for our municipalities. This budget provides 412.9 million of direct provincial support to municipalities, including municipal revenue sharing as well as funding for municipal infrastructure projects and other community services.

Municipal revenue sharing remains on track at near-record highs. The amount this year is set based on one point of the provincial sales tax collected in 2016-17. 2016-17 represented a bit of a down year for us, but municipal revenue sharing is a no-strings-attached fund that is provided by our government to municipalities. And it's increased. It's increased from 127 million in 2007 and '08 to 241 million in 2018. That's an 89.5 per cent increase since the NDP was in government. We will be distributing 155 million to urban municipalities for municipal revenue sharing. That's 68.1 million to rural municipalities and 18 million to northern municipalities.

It was announced at the recent SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] conventions that, as a result of the recent expansion of the PST base and the fact that the program is almost 10 years old, government officials are going to conduct a very thorough review of the current municipal revenue-sharing program in consultation with our key stakeholders. And our government remains committed to providing predictable and stable funding to our municipalities.

But we do need to review this program. During those 10 years we have seen record population growth, significantly new infrastructure built, highways and bridges improved and constructed, schools and hospitals built. And our stakeholders are looking forward to the review process of municipal revenue sharing to ensure that the current format continues to serve their changing needs. Growth is never a bad problem to make changes for.

Some of our stakeholders have mentioned that, even though they didn't get all that we were hoping for, they thanked us for communicating the changes in advance so they were prepared.

So finally I can quote numerous references made by our community stakeholders confirming that we provided clarity to grants-in-lieu. Grants-in-lieu will refer to grants in lieu of



property taxes based on assessed values for government buildings in a community. In Regina this provides an additional 1.1 million in revenue than what they had received before. Saskatoon, an additional 377,000 in revenue.

All other terms that were lumped into grants-in-lieu are no longer going to fit under that definition. Franchise fees, no longer referred to as grants-in-lieu. Surcharges, no longer referred to as grants-in-lieu.

We anticipate an additional 22 million of extra revenue to communities in Saskatchewan that had not received the surcharge that SaskEnergy had provided to only 109 communities before this budget. We have now developed a fair, transparent, and equitable revenue stream based on grants-in-lieu along with power and energy surcharges.

In my short time as Minister of Government Relations, I have experienced first-hand that communication is key. Key health investment for our province is \$523,000 being invested in a universal newborn hearing screening program. Our province is getting younger. In fact, our neighbours in Churchbridge just had a newborn baby last month. Our other neighbour is expecting this summer. Newborn hearing screening is very important to them because it's one less stress that they have in raising a child in today's world.

The much anticipated new individualized funding for autism allows parents to determine the best treatment regimen for their children.

And our budget invests \$378.6 million to help ensure a strong agriculture sector. This is very important to us, Mr. Speaker. Our province is built around agriculture. We're committed to ensuring that we have opportunities to capture emerging opportunities wherever they may develop around the world. The future in ag research in our world-renowned Crop Development Centre at the U of S, Ag-West Bio, the Food Centre, or our new livestock facilities at the U of S in Saskatoon are going to ensure that we will continue to be competitive around the world when it comes to ag production.

And we continue to remove some of the agriculture production stresses by constantly improving crop insurance and the western livestock price insurance program. We're continuing to support business risk-management programs such as AgriStability and AgriInvest.

Mr. Speaker, a very exciting opportunity came to us earlier this year and that was the announcement of the protein industries supercluster, and it's an incredible opportunity that this province is going to have and undertaking an advantage that we're going to be able to utilize our innovation and ingenuity that has a potential economic impact of \$4.5 billion over 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, another part of our budget that means well for our province is found in social services. The budget for social services and assistance is going to increase by 25 million to a record \$1.38 billion. This includes funding increases for foster families, community-based organizations that provide family-focused services, and services that support people with intellectual disabilities. Mr. Speaker, that means Rail City

Industries in Melville or Langenburg and District Activity Centre in Langenburg and Esterhazy or maybe the St. Marie Bernard Hospice in Grayson can provide more and improved services.

Mr. Speaker, we care about the residents of Saskatchewan, and we're going to continue to do what we can to support them. As our province continues to grow, the 2018-19 budget keeps our province and our economy on track by generating opportunities for increased trade, business, investment, and job creation. We are dedicated to maintaining competitive taxes such as the no increase in personal, corporate tax rates and, our most recognizable, no carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, this is going to keep Mosaic potash, Nutrien potash companies competitive in the world market. It's going to keep Bridgeview Manufacturing and Castleton Industries competitive in our world market.

We've proved ourselves by maintaining investments in Saskatchewan's infrastructures such as opening new schools and hospitals. New schools like the Langenburg Central School opened in 2016. Improving roads and highways like the planned passing lanes between Melville and Yorkton and between Yorkton and Canora. Opening new long-term care facilities and co-funding infrastructure projects such as the newly opened group home in Esterhazy or the groundbreaking on the new water delivery system in Melville.

I'm happy to stand here today and give my support to our 2018-19 budget and not support the amendment. We have listened to the people of Saskatchewan and we will continue to listen to them. Mr. Speaker, we continue to believe in the people of this province and the businesses of this province. We're going to continue to make Saskatchewan strong and we will continue to build on our motto, "from many peoples, strength." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to enter into another budget debate here this year. Mr. Speaker, I do so certainly keeping in mind the good people that I serve and the good people who offer me so much trust, so much advice, and motivation to act and build a better province, Mr. Speaker. So I think of constituents all throughout Regina Rosemont who are really active, Mr. Speaker. And I'm thankful for their level of engagement and, as I say, their level of trust and faith. And it's always through that lens that I assess a budget and the choices of a government.

I also want to say thank you and recognize Gloria Patrick within our constituency office. Gloria has served as an exceptional constituency assistant for many years. She's recently taking on an exciting new job opportunity for her, Mr. Speaker. She's not only been a dedicated civil servant and constituency assistant; she's continually advanced her own education and worked hard to do so and recently, I guess in the past year or two, completed her master's of social work. And she's going to take that master's and her learning and her abilities and her care, and offer that to many within our community who I know will be better for her service and her effort.

But I certainly want to say to Gloria and have it on the formal record that her service to the people of our province, her service to the people of Regina Rosemont, is something that's been exceptional and something that I'm thankful for. I'll also miss having her in our office with her approach, and I think I've lost my personal counsellor, Mr. Speaker. But I certainly look forward to the work ahead with a very strong new constituency assistant that'll be starting very soon as well. And I'd like to recognize . . . We have some casuals that work in that office who are incredible, Mr. Speaker. So I want to thank that team.

I'd like to also recognize, as other members have, my family or our respective families. And in my case I want to say thank you to Stephanie, a grade 6 schoolteacher here in Regina at George Lee School, and to William, who's almost four years old, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize all their involvement in our service within their community, and certainly in the case of Stephanie, her advice as well. And she knows all too well the impacts of this government's choices when it comes to education, Mr. Speaker. And I know on that front she's incredibly motivated to do the best that we can for students and to step up as a government, Mr. Speaker.

I want to recognize my extended family: my mom and dad, my siblings, their families, Stephanie's families. They're all actively involved in my service and all actively involved in giving me advice and support, Mr. Speaker, and I'm thankful for all of it.

We're in the wake of an incredible tragedy that's rocked our province, Mr. Speaker. And I want to, as other members have, pay my respect and offer my condolences, my prayers, and my care to all those affected by the tragedy that's impacted the Humboldt Broncos, Mr. Speaker. None of us can fully understand what those parents and what those players and what that team has gone through. We can only imagine, Mr. Speaker, but it's heart wrenching, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say in the wake of that terrible tragedy, one that will cause hurt and impact on our province and many people for many people's lives, Mr. Speaker, I'm so heartened and so thankful for the response and the love and care of so many within our province who have come together in the way that we know Saskatchewan people to come together, Mr. Speaker, and also so thankful for the support for those from right across Canada, right around the world, and led by our incredible hockey community, Mr. Speaker. So I want to put well on to the record that my thoughts and care are there, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

When I enter into the budget here, Mr. Speaker, I always enter into it with a lens to identify positive measures or constructive measures that have been brought forward, and certainly it would be wrong for me not to recognize progress on a couple of fronts. Don't get me wrong: this is a damaging and challenging budget, one that really represents poor choices by this government. But within it I'm certainly pleased to see the extension of full coverage for HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] medications for those that are requiring those medications. This is something that we've advocated for a long period of time, Mr. Speaker. It's something that will save lives, it will save dollars, and it's an important measure.

I'm pleased to see the screening that's going to be going on for babies around hearing loss, Mr. Speaker. That's an important measure. That being said, we need to do such a better job when it comes to making sure then that we have the supports for hearing loss within our province. And of course in that devastating budget last year, we saw some of those supports directly being impacted, Mr. Speaker. So we'll be vigilant on those fronts.

Certainly I've spoken at length for the need to have support for a growing tech industry within our province, and there's a measure within this budget that responds on that front. Certainly we'll be assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of that measure. But this is an important industry for us to be supporting the growth of, and an industry that will certainly create all sorts of new opportunities for many within our province, adding strength and diversity to our economy here in Saskatchewan.

I also want to recognize the attention provided in one measure to value-add agriculture in the province. Again on this front, we'll assess with stakeholders across Saskatchewan the adequacy of this measure, making sure that it in fact is as effective as it needs to be, Mr. Speaker. But there's limitless potential or enormous potential in this province when it comes to value-add agriculture. And we need to be doing all we can to be leading on this front and providing opportunity by way of jobs, by way of investment, by way of diversification to our economy, Mr. Speaker, and an economy that I don't need to remind many has been dramatically weakened by the choices of the Sask Party government. So we need to look for measures wherever possible to create jobs for Saskatchewan people, ensure stability for hard-working people and families across our province who have been so dramatically hit by the poor choices from an economic perspective of this government and so impacted by precarious work and job loss, Mr. Speaker, and certainly then impacted in a significant way by the increases to the cost of living that have been foisted upon Saskatchewan people as a direct result of the mismanagement of the Sask Party.

We're at an important time within our province. Many would say that we're at a crossroads within our province. We have a government that had been in power for quite a period of time, Mr. Speaker, that really went offside of Saskatchewan people over the past couple of years. A government that's really broken trust with Saskatchewan people. A Sask Party and a cabinet and a premier that betrayed the people of the province that once elected them and offered a tremendous amount of trust. That trust has been broken within our province, Mr. Speaker. The things that give us strength today and for our future have been directly attacked by this government. The things that give us strength today and for our future are at risk and have been dismantled: our Crowns, our classrooms, supports for people and the very most vulnerable throughout our province.

And we've seen a government that presided over an economic boom, Mr. Speaker, but that actively pulled apart the measures that give us strength. Boasted and coasted when times were good but didn't get the job done when it comes to diversifying our province, ensuring security and peace of mind for the long haul — and a government that failed to save a dime, Mr. Speaker, during those best days. A government that in fact

during times of plenty, times when dollars were rolling in in record ways, Mr. Speaker, a government that couldn't balance their budget during those years, didn't save a dime, piled on the debt, and actually drained the rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine, when times were booming. A direct consequence of mismanagement on front after front after front, project after project that went sideways, by a government that was not playing with their own dollars, Mr. Speaker, but the hard-earned dollars of Saskatchewan people.

You know many . . . These projects stand out in the minds of Saskatchewan people. The GTH [Global Transportation Hub], the untold millions that have been wasted. The bypass, Mr. Speaker, and the overrun that must be the biggest overrun in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, a project that originally was pegged for \$400 million and that has now ballooned over to over \$2 billion and counting and adding up. And, Mr. Speaker, now we're learning this government mismanaged this project so greatly that there's lawsuit after lawsuit calling on the hard-earned dollars of Saskatchewan people because of the mismanagement of that government.

We saw the mismanagement in the project down near Estevan, Mr. Speaker, and a failure to provide the kind of security and peace of mind to those workers in that region, Mr. Speaker, that they deserve. Putting at risk the hard-earned dollars of Saskatchewan people and, you know, blowing through those dollars as though we had limitless money trees throughout our province, Mr. Speaker. That reckless abandon, that waste, that mismanagement has consequences.

You know, it astounds many that open up the book of the budget and look to the debt page. And it astounds many to realize that this is a government that has actually tripled the debt since 2008 to where they're headed, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that has doubled the debt in just the last two years. And this is a government that's done that, Mr. Speaker, not because they were investing in the priorities of Saskatchewan people or investing in creating jobs and opportunity, but a government that couldn't manage their projects, that failed to protect taxpayers. And of course it's all of us that are on the hook for that, Mr. Speaker. But ultimately it's the next generation that takes the hardest hit, Mr. Speaker.

Our economy, without doubt, has been weakened. A government that has failed to support the diversification of that economy. I think of the film industry as just one measure, Mr. Speaker. We had a thriving film industry of course. We have the sound stage across the lake here, Mr. Speaker, that producers from all around the world were lining up at the gate to be able to come to Saskatchewan and film in that state-of-the-art sound stage. That sound stage now is of course underutilized because this government did in the industry. They did in the film tax credit.

These were the choices of a government during times of boom. A government that chose to weaken our province instead of looking to add strength and diversity at every turn. And now of course it should be no surprise from a government that's looking to sell off everything that's not nailed down, Mr. Speaker, that we hear that this government's now looking to sell off that sound stage. Something that's an incredible asset to rebuild an industry, Mr. Speaker. And we'll push this

government. We'll push back to make sure that that sound stage isn't sold off.

The right way to deal with this issue of underutilization is to rebuild the industry, is to reinstitute a film tax credit that works for Saskatchewan, that brings the world to us, that brings the investment and the jobs back, Mr. Speaker. But that sort of common sense is lost on the Sask Party at this point.

And the concern is this is a government that's looking for money and they're looking to sell off public asset or Crown after Crown, Mr. Speaker. And you know, today it's the sound stage that they're looking to sell off, but tomorrow it's SaskTel. And rest assured to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, that we'll be active every step of the way, certainly as the official opposition, also the New Democratic Party, but all people across this province to never let the Sask Party sell off our Crown corporations. And that's why we're at a crossroads within our province right now, Mr. Speaker.

As I say, we have a government that's broken trust. I mentioned the GTH mess, the mismanagement. Of course it's under investigation. Actually it's beyond that. It's over at prosecutors, Mr. Speaker. And this is an issue, of course, that the premier before and the Sask Party tried to dismiss as no big deal. Well, Mr. Speaker, it is a big deal. Those are the hard-earned dollars of Saskatchewan people. What I noted in the budget though was no mention of the GTH inquiry. No mention of getting to the bottom of that mess, Mr. Speaker. You know, a government that's unwilling to put some daylight on a scandal like that isn't worth their stock, Mr. Speaker.

Hard-earned dollars . . . And I have members that are actually heckling in here. And I get a kick out of it because we recently had those members all jockeying for positions over there and many of their members standing up and saying that they needed an inquiry into the GTH. And of course that simply hasn't happened.

Mr. Speaker, we also see within this budget a complete failure to support students across Saskatchewan. And this comes on the heel of that devastating budget of last year that took \$54 million from our classrooms across Saskatchewan, that put teachers out of work, that put educational assistants out of work, that grew the class size, that eliminated supports and programs for the very most vulnerable students.

Now in this budget we see a little modest amount of dollars being allocated towards education. Those dollars are nowhere clear, nowhere close to the dollars that were stripped away from classrooms last year. Nowhere close to meeting the needs for a growing population within those classrooms and the complexity that we're facing. The challenge that our students are facing across Saskatchewan is not one they should be facing alone. It's time for a government to step up and to provide the resources that our classrooms need.

It's just the same in mental health. We see dollars that are insufficient in meeting the needs of people all across our province at a time where we should be doing all we can to extend services and supports, when people need them all across our province, Mr. Speaker. We know the consequences of not supporting mental health and addictions within our province.

Those costs are real. There are lives across our province that we should be responding to and supporting and saving, Mr. Speaker. But we also know that \$1 into mental health and addictions services will save \$7 in greater health costs. It will create greater productivity within our economy.

We see within this budget a continued attack on the most vulnerable within our province. A government that's of course stripped away dollars for those that need transportation and those with . . . for basic food budgets. Now they're going at the basic housing support that Saskatchewan people have. These are people living with disabilities. These are families with children, Mr. Speaker, who are being stripped of very basic dollars, very nominal dollars to meet the needs of them and their family. It strips people of the peace of mind and security that they deserve and it's simply not, it's simply not reflective of the values that I know within this province, Mr. Speaker.

We also know that in areas like advanced education, this is a government that's making education less and less accessible, more and more expensive. And the programs themselves are having the dollars stripped away from them, pulling away the strength of what was and what needs to be an exceptional post-secondary system within our province.

These kinds of choices directly impact our future, Mr. Speaker. They impact lives all across our province and they speak to the kind of province that we're aiming to become. When we're talking about not supporting students in their classrooms, not supporting the most vulnerable, not supporting those that are trying to access post-secondary, we're limiting not only their future but the future of our province.

Mr. Speaker, we see as well a government that eliminated a lifeline to Saskatchewan people by way of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] and has left people with disabilities, people in remote communities, people that are needing to access health services without the access that they deserve, without the connectivity that they deserve.

You know, I've heard incredibly challenging stories from so many people, so many with disabilities, Mr. Speaker, who have had their lives rocked by that decision that was so damaging, to scrap STC. It's critical in our province that we do all we can to build back public transportation, to make sure that people across our province are able to have the dignity that comes with having access. And as the official opposition, certainly we're going to do all we can to build back a public provincial transportation system within our province.

[15:15]

And I have the member from Martensville who's heckling and saying, how are we going to do that from opposition? Well we'll appeal to this government and call on them to act, to recognize the indecency in their choice that they made, and we'll call on them to step up to the plate. And we'll appeal in every constructive way for them to provide those services.

But, Mr. Speaker, ultimately there's an election coming along as well, Mr. Speaker, and we'll lay out alternatives to Saskatchewan people. And we'll see if Saskatchewan people want to stand with the member from Martensville who's

heckling as we're presenting, Mr. Speaker, the impacts, the impacts of those that have been impacted by the damaging sell-off of STC and the lack of decency behind those choices, the lack of common sense behind those choices, or if they'll demand something better of those that are elected and a better path forward into the future, Mr. Speaker.

We see right now as well that we have an economy that's been weakened. We see a government that's failing on this front, that's failing on the transportation file on front after front. And when we look at the issues around rail transportation and their impact on producers across Saskatchewan, the impact on exporters across our province, the impact on manufacturers, the impact on our refinery, Mr. Speaker, none of us should tolerate the underperformance of the duopoly that is our rail system, Mr. Speaker. And it's time for this government to act in the interests of the people of our province and make that rail system actually perform.

Of course it's not fair at all, Mr. Speaker, that as a vessel sits off the coast of BC, Mr. Speaker, that it's the hard-working producers who got that crop off and put it in the bin who are paying the penalties for having that ship sit at sea and not be loaded, Mr. Speaker. That's wrong. It's not fair. We need to make sure we shift that responsibility to the rail companies, Mr. Speaker, and work to make that system perform. And we can't treat those companies with kid gloves, Mr. Speaker, as we see time and time again by the Sask Party. We need to push for competition on those rails. We need to push for joint running rights and interswitching that would actually be in force, Mr. Speaker. And this is important to our economy.

We need to make sure we do all we can to diversify this, our economy. We need to make sure as well we deal with other matters of transportation. We need to make sure we build pipeline capacity that gives producers in Saskatchewan options, that allows us to close that differential, that gets our resource to tidewater, Mr. Speaker, allowing us to maximize the economic and fiscal benefits of our resource in that important industry, Mr. Speaker, within our province.

And we should be doing all we can as well, Mr. Speaker, to crank up jobs and acting to address emissions. And renewable power provides an incredible opportunity right now to be providing leadership that would be providing investment, creating jobs, and yes, also bringing down our emissions. That's the kind of leadership that we need right now in our province. That's the kind of opportunities that we need to extend to the people of our province. And wherever possible, as we bring that power production online, we need to keep those benefits local. We need to distribute that generation across Saskatchewan and make sure that the benefits are shared with farms and First Nations and homeowners and industry throughout our province, Mr. Speaker.

We see within this budget that we . . . We see no action as far as commitments towards actual reconciliation, Mr. Speaker, no commitment to closing the gap between indigenous people and the rest of us, Mr. Speaker, no commitment to live up to our treaty obligations. And that's a loss for all of us, Mr. Speaker, and certainly it impacts our future as a province.

And it's clear as well that we see this is a government that's just

not up to the task when it comes to responding to the very real fentanyl crisis, the very real crystal meth crisis that people are facing across our province. You know, as I sit down with many families across our province, Mr. Speaker, that have been ravaged by crystal meth within, Mr. Speaker, it's clear to me that we need to step up to the plate.

This is a government that seems to gloss over the reality that many are facing on this front, how hard that addiction is, Mr. Speaker. And they gloss over what I'm hearing from police forces across Saskatchewan as well, that there's a direct correlation with the crisis and the utilization, the addiction of crystal meth, and crime and gangs all across our province, Mr. Speaker.

I see my good brother and good friend from Regina Elphinstone, our Deputy House Leader, is telling me that my time is up, Mr. Speaker. But I just want to say that this budget really fails to repair the damage caused by this government's choices, that budget last year that attacked our classrooms in such a significant way, Mr. Speaker. It certainly doesn't speak to the kind of future we should be acting on. It doesn't step up to the plate to ensure the kind of jobs that Saskatchewan people need today. It certainly doesn't build the kind of diversity and diversification that we need within our economy, so certainly I won't be supporting this short-sighted and callous budget, Mr. Speaker. I will be supporting the motion and I'm thankful for the time to enter in here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know it's always interesting to follow the member from Regina Rosemont. And I caution the people because that side of the House seems to want to defer from some of the facts and go with their own agenda and it just, a lot of times it doesn't make sense. I'll just put that out there.

Mr. Speaker, this is responsible budget by a responsible government that was brought down last week. It's a budget that we actually brought in last week and this budget keeps us on track to what we need to do to get this province back onto a balanced budget.

We're getting away from the resource revenue that we were so dependent on for years. But this is a plan. It's a plan to get away from the dependence on resource revenue and a plan to move back to a consumption tax and to get back to balance in three years, which will be next year. This is a plan and the plan, Mr. Speaker, I would say, is on track. It's a responsible plan and it's not going to tack a lot of debt on the next generations. That's the kind of budget that we brought down. It was brought down by the hon. member from Humboldt-Watrous last week.

Mr. Speaker, my condolences go out to her and her community and especially to the families of the Humboldt bus tragedy. The member had indicated that for the last few months, that's all she had on her mind was the budget, the budget, the budget. And then four days before the budget, the bus accident really took her mind off the budget and had to attend to the concerns of her constituents. And again my condolences, like everybody else's, goes out to that community and those families and all that is affected by it.

I also want to just mention the town of Nipawin. I served in both those communities in my previous employment and I know both communities. And as much as there's a rivalry in the hockey industry from the hockey game in Humboldt and Nipawin, I'm sure that the Nipawin Hawks have felt as bad as everybody else and the citizens up there. Just a tragic accident and for sure our condolences go out to them.

Mr. Speaker, before I get too far into the budget address, there's a few people that I would like to acknowledge, and first and foremost of course is my wife Debbie. She's been a true supporter right through different employments and different opportunities and for sure in my work here not only in the legislature, but especially in the constituency of Moose Jaw North, going to different events and being there in support of . . . Always somebody I can bounce ideas off of, and I certainly appreciate her input.

I'm a bit of stickler about having our constituency office open, as we say we are as representatives of our constituents. I don't think my office has been closed for two days in the last 10 years because we are quite committed to serving the public and serving the constituents of Moose Jaw North and of Moose Jaw. So I want to give kudos to my office assistants: Judy Hatfield, who is very diligent in doing the work on behalf of the constituents, looking after their needs; and also to Rosalie Boots, who fills in from time to time. I'm certainly blessed to have that kind of assistant in the constituency office.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't had an opportunity but I want to congratulate the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook, our new Premier, our new leader. Very strong in his passion for Saskatchewan, will represent us very well not only in all corners of this province, but nationally and internationally. And I appreciate his leadership and his direction and wish him well, and offer certainly all of my support, as have all the members here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also acknowledge the new members that we welcomed into this legislature from Kindersley and from Melfort and from Swift Current — great gentlemen who will represent their constituents well and we wish them well and welcome here.

I also want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, who actually comes from my hometown. It's interesting. I know his mom and dad very well. They're constituents of mine and they actually were members of our party and supporters of mine a few years ago. I don't think they still have their membership in the party, but I know secretly they certainly still support me even though they won't do it publicly. And very nice people. I'm certainly proud to have them. I know Mr. Meili is a very strong initiative, a good businessman in the community, and I know where his heart is and I thank him for that.

The Leader of the Opposition is . . . I welcome his new perspective and the idea that he wants to do . . . I think the way he expressed it was he wants to do politics different. And you know that certainly is a nice touch, refreshing from what we've known, but I guess that my question, Mr. Speaker: when is he going to start doing this? Because we really haven't seen it at this point. He says he wants to do politics different, and yet I quote from *Hansard* on Tuesday, March the 27th, and this is

what he said:

We'll head a little further west to my hometown of Moose Jaw where they just saw their sewer rates go up by 6 per cent, the water rate go up by 9 per cent, and a two-year increase of over 12 per cent in their property taxes — a direct result [he says], according to Mayor Fraser Tolmie, of cuts in the 2017 provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, I took exception to this. And I took that quote and showed it to the mayor and went over it with him, and he said that's not what he said. Our mayor is very committed to working with us, to working with senior governments because he knows consultation and communication is the best way.

Well to go a little further, our researchers went and found where this quote from the Leader of the Opposition may have come from. It was from Discover Moose Jaw. It wasn't a direct quote; it was in a report. But even when you read the report, he had to twist it for some political benefit. And yet he wants to do politics different.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we were sitting here listening to the budget eloquently presented by the Minister of Finance, and right after she talked about the plan and how the plan was on track — the plan to get away from resource revenue — the plan was on track, how to bring it back into balance within three years. She finished doing this 45-minute presentation and the member from Saskatoon Nutana gets up, the Finance critic, and says, the first thing out of her mouth or one of the first things is, there is no plan.

And I was almost embarrassed for her, Mr. Speaker, because you could see the body language of the people around her; they were kind of rolling their eyes and shaking their heads. Even a comment from your gallery, Mr. Speaker, said, wasn't she thinking or wasn't she listening? And it's strange, but that's the kind of way they promote themselves and the way they want to do politics different.

Mr. Speaker, it's phenomenal, the way we have to correct the preambles to a lot of their questions and the things that they do say. The member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Northcote, in one of her quotes talking about the bridge and the repairs to the bridge . . . And when we took over government we had to invest quite handily into repairing the P.A. bridge. But on March the 22nd in *Hansard*, she said, “. . . as recently as 2005 the NDP contributed 4.3 million dimes in that year alone.”

[15:30]

Now is that trying to mislead the public? Did she think that we were going to think well, she said dollars. But in actual fact it was \$430,000 that they put into it. But to say dimes instead of dollars is a mislead and that's the way they operate, so we have to be very careful.

And they want to do politics different. Mr. Speaker, the member from Saskatoon Centre last week — and the member from Athabasca went along with this too — talking about the millions of dollars that were left in the treasury when we took over in 2007 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't hear your comments, but . . .

**The Speaker:** — Sorry, it's just the word “misleading.” Okay. Please just withdraw it, please.

**Mr. Michelson:** — I will withdraw it. Mr. Speaker, you know, when it comes down to doing the presentations here in the legislature, it just . . . Sometime we have to be very careful of what we hear from the other side. I know the member from Saskatoon Centre, when he was talking, was talking about where did the money go. Where did the money go? They left a fair amount of money in the treasury. And to their credit, yes they did. But they didn't look after the province very well or the people very well.

I use an example of the seniors' income supplement where it was at \$90 in 2007 and it had been at \$90 a month for the 16 previous years. Mr. Speaker, we tripled that when we took over the government.

And that's not the only place. Like, there was a need for highways; there was a need for hospitals and health care and education. We had the longest surgical wait in the province. We had the lowest job creation and we had population loss. People were moving away.

Mr. Speaker, even the . . . When they talk about the Global Transportation Hub, it's always referred to as a scandal. It wasn't a scandal, Mr. Speaker. It hasn't been a scandal. It won't be a scandal. We had the auditor review that whole file and she said she could find no wrongdoing, but that's what they still refer to it.

Mr. Speaker, if they want to talk about scandals, we can look back at a \$35 million SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] scandal. That's the record of the NDP. If we talk about Murdoch Carriere, there was somebody they fired, and they fired him over allegations of sexual harassment and convicted of assault. They fired him but they gave him a severance of \$275,000. There's a scandal, Mr. Speaker. And Ann Lord, who sent a letter to their caucus saying that she had spent almost \$6,000 in caucus funds that she wasn't entitled to, and they hid that for years. Now, Mr. Speaker, there's another scandal. So if they want to look at scandals, they can.

But the Global Transportation Hub was set up to help to export the product of Saskatchewan and to grow our economy, and it's a great idea. We're a landlocked province. We haven't access to tidewater. So we've got a Global Transportation Hub that increases the economy, helps attract investment into the province, and exports our goods to our customers all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, we were talking about the piece of paper and referring to the \$2.5 billion deficit that the Leader of the Opposition was trying to impose. When he was doing that, Mr. Speaker, they didn't know what we were talking about. And they finally asked us to table this document. Well it was their document, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition in his leadership campaign was trying to convince the people of Saskatchewan that they should spend \$2.5 billion per year on an ongoing basis.

And it was so ridiculous that even part of it was an \$18 million for farmers not to use pesticides. Mr. Speaker, I've got news for

him. They don't use pesticides because they want to. They need to use them to protect their crops so we can have an economy; we can have the product sent to our markets and feed part of the world. And they just don't understand that. And yet they want to do politics different. Mr. Speaker, we don't want to run the kind of debt that they would want to run. We're not going to do that. We're not going to go pass it on to our next generation, to our children.

Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce you to one of Saskatchewan's newest citizens. His name is Malachi, Malachi Xavier Michelson. He is my newest grandson. Malachi was born the day before Easter, you know, and what a blessing to have a grandson that's born . . . It would have been even, in one respect, a bigger blessing to have it actually born on Easter day. But this year being the year it was, he'd have had to live with having a birthday on April 1st for the rest of his life. So he came into the world the day before and, Mr. Speaker, a great big . . . a great blessing.

He's the brother to Josiah and Isaiah and the son to my son Brent and his lovely wife, Carmen. But you hold this baby in your arms and you look at him and you think, what a blessing. What a welcome to the world, just to have this child in your arms, so innocent. And then, oh, by the way, your provincial amount of debt that you have just inherited is over \$6,000. That would be the idea that the Leader of the Opposition would have imposed on this child. We're not going down that path. We're not going to straddle our children with the kind of debt that they want to bring upon us.

Mr. Speaker, our government's expenses are down. The cost of government is substantially less than under the NDP governance, and we will continue to do that. We have reduced travel. We've improved efficiencies. We're planning a future, for a strong future, and there is no carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, we want to continue with doing the right thing for the people of the province.

This budget is about leadership. It's about responsibility, accountability, control of our expenses. It's about caring for our citizens, making Saskatchewan a better place to live and to work and to raise our children, to enjoy our parks and our amenities, and to cheer for the Riders, and to eventually retire with pride and dignity. It's about planning for the future while maintaining a strong economy and a social program now in the present and growing our province. It's about a budget that is on track. And it's about a province that leads the nation in many sectors. Mr. Speaker, there is no carbon tax.

I will not be supporting the amendment opposed by the opposition, but I will be supporting the budget brought down by our Finance minister. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise today to address the legislature with my maiden speech. I realize this speech is to address the budget, but I'd like to touch on a few other topics before I get into that.

Normally this would be an exciting opportunity, and it still is, Mr. Speaker. However since April 6th all of our daily tasks are

now performed with mixed emotions and sad hearts. Mr. Speaker, last week was obviously a terrible time for us here in the Assembly as it was for everyone across the province and the nation. We will forever be changed by the tragic accident involving the Humboldt Broncos. We know it also extends beyond the 29 families of the passengers on that bus. It extends across the entire nation, province, and continent, and globe.

I must say I was very touched by the member statements and prayer condolences delivered in the House last week. These were very meaningful, heartfelt messages, Mr. Speaker, that hopefully show the Humboldt Broncos' families that they are not alone in this time of grief and that the members of this legislature truly care and are thinking of them.

Mr. Speaker, travel is part of being from Saskatchewan. It's a way of life. We are all well aware of the risks. Mr. Speaker, I as many others in this legislature maybe even rode the school bus for years. My four siblings and I rode that school bus route three hours a day, five days a week from kindergarten to grade 12. We carpooled. We rode in vans, bused for school sports, band, curling, hockey, baseball, and football. Countless miles in all sorts of weather and road conditions, Mr. Speaker. As kids we never ever once thought we were in danger even though it meant likely at times we were.

I never sat down to do the math, Mr. Speaker, but I travelled the province extensively in the first 10 years of my working life. And I easily logged over a million kilometres not once ever worrying about road safety when I was single. But once you get married, have a family, become involved as a volunteer in a community, become a coach, or drive other people's kids, you do change your mindset. In fact, the fact does remain that all it takes is one mistake by one driver or another and the results can be devastating to many.

I can tell you with absolute certainty however, Mr. Speaker, that the highway system in this province now is exponentially better than it was when I was growing up. During the 16 years the NDP were in power prior to 2007, our infrastructure was a mess. Travelling the province during that time gave me a great insight on how people in rural areas feel about Saskatchewan and its issues. I worked for almost every Crown utility and I soon became aware of people's political opinions on their current government.

I enjoyed my time working in the government but was a casualty of the NDP cuts of the mid-'90s. The SaskPower program I predominantly worked on was scrapped. It was projected to be a 25 to 30 year project, Mr. Speaker. I believe it only lasted five or six. I see why the current NDP does not like to talk about the past. It was such a dark time with deep cuts including hospital and school closures. I wouldn't want to talk about it either.

But, Mr. Speaker, in crisis comes opportunity. And crisis is a little bit strong of a term for losing a job but in this particular situation . . . but certainly it was a major setback for me personally. But I suggested to my wife that we move back home to Kindersley, a move we were both unsure of at the time but have never regretted since. My wife was very fortunate to get a position with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan. For those of you not familiar with the Saskatchewan Pension Plan, it was moved

to Kindersley as a Fair Share Saskatchewan project from a previous Conservative government era. And I'm proud to say that it's still going strong and has been a tremendously successful operation since being headquartered in Kindersley.

In moving back to our home community, I was finally able to fulfill a dream of starting, operating, and owning a business, as well as farming with my parents. In 1996 we started our family and have made Kindersley our home ever since. Our two eldest children are now attending U of S in Saskatoon, and our youngest is finishing grade 10.

So with just two years remaining until our nest is empty, my family wholeheartedly supported my decision to enter politics. I was elected as councillor, and subsequently appointed deputy mayor for the town of Kindersley back in 2016. And this quickly transitioned into running a contested Sask Party nomination event this past January. I competed against five other candidates in that nomination, and was fortunate enough to win that race on the final ballot. I went from the political sidelines to full-on politics and getting to deal with this crew. What a step that is. I can't thank my family enough, and my constituents enough for this encouragement and support through this whole process. And at times these people are even encouraging, from what I hear.

I'm also very thankful . . . I want to express my gratitude to the Premier, cabinet, and caucus, as well as the members opposite. Everyone has been quite gracious actually, and welcoming, and they have helped make this transition quite enjoyable. So thank you all for that.

With my first month behind me, I am pleased to say that I am enjoying every aspect of this job. I don't even mind the eight-hour commute per week, and if spring would ever get here, that commute will become easier. I did my first Monday morning commute yesterday, and apparently I was whining about my first 20-hour day. Fortunately, the member from Kelvington-Wadena kindly reminded me where the word "sympathy" falls in the dictionary.

Mr. Speaker, change is in the air, plenty of change. Not just for myself, but so much change under this roof — a new Premier, new Opposition Leader, a new Lieutenant Governor, and last but not least, your own election, Mr. Speaker. Congrats to all of you on those great accomplishments.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, I've been in the private sector for the last 23 years, and of course I've had some . . . Being your own boss for that long, you do have some apprehension on entering politics where you're under the microscope. But so far it has exceeded all my expectations, and I wouldn't change any of it.

Mr. Speaker, I come from a very diverse community, a community of farms, ranches, small, medium, and large businesses mainly relating to agriculture and the energy sector, a community that, in my opinion, epitomizes the Sask Party core values, this government's core values, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to speak and tour the office from the member from Cannington, a wise and

battle-tested veteran that has more . . . I knew I might get some quips on that. He's had more than his share of victories and defeats, Mr. Speaker, over his tenure. He gave me a quick tour of his office the other day. It's quite impressive, I must say, with his trophies and his artwork. And I came across a photo of the original eight members that started the party back in the '90s. I told him I could only imagine the excitement that they felt and how their bold actions changed the political landscape in the province forever. We do owe them so much for paving the way for the successes we've enjoyed since then, especially in the last decade, a decade of growth since 2007. My hat is off to him and those others that participated in getting us here, including former Premier Wall and former MLAs. And I look forward to learning more from the member from Cannington as well as the rest of the members here. I hope to extract more information from these seasoned veterans as I make it through this very steep learning curve.

The past is the past, Mr. Speaker, and they say there's a reason that the windshield is a lot bigger than the rear-view mirror. However one still needs to remember the past when looking into the future. My constituents remember the past, Mr. Speaker, the dark past containing NDP governments, socialist ideals that has held us back for 80 years. Mr. Speaker, we've only had one NDP MLA in Kindersley over the years; that was in 1971 to '74. My constituents remember that all too well. Back in March they strongly indicated they never want to see another one, much less an NDP government. They came to the polls March 1st and overwhelmingly supported this government in that by-election. Over 88 per cent — according to Wikipedia, 88.15 per cent of the voters — supported me and this government, Mr. Speaker, a very strong message and a strong mandate for the party. The left-leaning socialist mentality does not fly in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. The T.C. Douglas days are over. The post-depression war era is long gone. No disrespect or disregard to any of the great accomplishments of that era, Mr. Speaker, but it's not 1945 anymore.

Post World War II, Saskatchewan and Alberta were deemed fairly equal as far as population, wealth, and resources. Since then Alberta has seen multiple decades of growth and prosperity with conservative-minded governments while Saskatchewan has wallowed in socialist policies that hindered the economy and any hope of population increase. Sitting on our mineral wealth for a rainy day was a profound mistake, Mr. Speaker. Socialism has tried and proven to fail time and time again here.

My late father who was a farmer and a cattleman and his friends used to say, if the NDP had their way, all anybody would ever own is a cow, a sow, and a garden. A joke of course, Mr. Speaker, but it speaks to the fact that free enterprising people do not wish to be controlled or hindered by their government. A government should work alongside its people in conjunction with private individuals and businesses, not compete against them or be in their way. Even with some of the tougher budget decisions that were made last year, my constituents continue to understand that rationale. They get it. They have to balance their books; why shouldn't the government?

My own business, Mr. Speaker, was faced with a downturn of a couple of years ago and we had some tough decisions to make. Our choices were either lay off 20 per cent of our workforce, our staff, or roll back everyone to a four-day work week so



everyone could maintain their jobs. Everyone, including ownership, management, and staff took that 20 per cent hit, Mr. Speaker, without any job losses, and we made it through. Everyone participated. Employees were not pleased. Who would ever be pleased with a 20 per cent reduction? But you know what? When we got through it, everyone felt a winner. Everyone did their fair share to make it through a tough time. Tough decisions, Mr. Speaker, but that's what responsible leadership does. They look beyond today, and that's what this government does.

Our constituents trust us to make sound decisions on their behalf. They know this government is thinking ahead and planning long term. Budgets are never perfect. There are always tough choices to make and it's understandable when some feel their cause is perhaps greater than someone else's. But the fact remains that this budget keeps us on track to balance by next year, Mr. Speaker, and my area supports fiscal responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, my constituency has had its challenges. Farmers and ranchers and small businesses and the oil patch have all had their struggles. Lots of adversity, yet we stay positive, positive because we know we have a Sask Party government that has their backs.

Mr. Speaker, I can't express how much pride I see with the fact that our Premier and this government is standing up to the federal Liberals, the Trudeau Liberals, and their carbon tax. Saskatchewan stood alone for so long in this fight. We're now seeing some potential allies developing, coming up to back us up. Hopefully that trend continues and we can have allies in a new Alberta and Ontario provincial government. Mr. Speaker, we on this side will continue to fight the good fight. We'll let the opposition and their counterparts wave their white flags.

It's been a long-standing joke that the shortest book ever written was French war stories, but I think the NDP, I think the NDP across the nation can top that with how the NDP fought the carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite aren't just waving white flags, Mr. Speaker, they're dropping their guns and running, something the members opposite might think appropriate, Mr. Speaker, but not the members on this side. Governments need to step up, protect their rights, protect the rights of the common people, and improve and enforce things like pipelines that generate jobs and provide tax revenues to all Canadians.

I pray the electorate across the nation has watched this display of ineptness from provincial governments from BC and Alberta and federally and Ontario, and Canada should look at, take a good look at little old Saskatchewan. We'll stand alone if necessary, but they should take a look at our model of government, look at our prairie resilience plan, look at our budget. Our approach works. It's common sense. It's sustainable and it will work, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is obviously my first provincial budget experience. I had no input and cannot take any credit or criticism for its content, but what I can say is that it seems from both a personal and business perspective, it is very smart and well thought out. It sees savings in areas and increased funding in other crucial areas like social services and health. It doesn't have any increases to tax rates and it creates stability in

reducing reliance on non-renewable resource income. My serious congratulations to the Minister of Finance and her team as well as all those ministers and MLAs that had input into the 2018-2019 budget. You clearly show that this government is in control, accountable, and committed to delivering high-quality services to the people of this province, and on track to return to a balanced budget by 2019-2020 and keeping Saskatchewan strong into the next decade.

In closing I would just like to thank my family for all their support; my new hire, my CA [constituency assistant] Judy Penner, for agreeing to work for our Kindersley constituency in our office and holding that fort while I'm away; and lastly to my constituents for having the faith in me to be their representative.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget motion as presented by the Minister of Finance, and I will not support any motion to amend it as put forth by the opposition Finance critic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to reply to the budget speech today. But first before I do that, I want to give my condolences to the city of Humboldt and to the Humboldt Broncos. It was an unbelievable tragedy that came upon them some 11 days ago.

And you know, I think we've all been there. We've all experienced tragedy around us but not to this magnitude. I know the village of Borden, we had a couple of kids killed in a car accident 12 years ago that were on their way to a sporting event. And you know, that still affects our community. So it takes a long, long time to heal, and we all need to work together and do what we can to support one another.

And so my condolences to Humboldt and all the people affected: the first responders, the ambulance attendants, anyone that had a part. You know, STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] played such a large role in saving so many lives, and we need to be thankful for that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook on his campaign and becoming our next Premier. A very, extremely strong leader and I think he's going to lead us well into the . . . hopefully for the next 10 years at least. And you know, he just offers a lot. And he's a down-home guy and actually comes from a good part of the province up around Shellbrook there. That's where I grew up as well. And proud of him. And everyone in that community is extremely proud of our Premier.

I also want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition. You know, he worked hard and won in the end. So congratulations to him on that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's a real honour to represent the constituents of Saskatoon Westview. Saskatoon Westview is a very diverse constituency, a lot of different nationalities. People moving in every day into that community. You know, you could have people that have lived there 80 years in the older

parts of my constituency, but there will be people that'll be moving there this month or this week. And so thankful to have them in my community. And they've always been extremely respectful, and we've tried hard to accommodate any needs they have.

I'd also like to thank my wife. My wife, Karen, you know, she's always there, always supporting me any time I have anything to do. And just the fact of being away for a few days at a time, you know, that's a lot of stress that she probably doesn't need. But she's willing to sacrifice so that I can achieve one of my goals, which is representing Saskatoon Westview.

I also want to thank my dad. You know, he instilled in me the hard work ethic. Get out there and get it done. Nothing replaces hard work. And so I want to thank him for that. He's 97 years old and up until this year he lived on his own. And what an amazing feat. I mean I can't imagine living to 97, let alone by myself.

Also I want to thank my CAs. In the last year I've had two CAs. My first CA, Sasha Peters, left on maternity leave and so Gwen Joa came in and helped me out and is going to take over for that year. And Gwen, as a lot of you will know, was Roger Parent's CA. And so she comes extremely well qualified for the job and does an excellent job and is a great communicator for my constituents.

I also want to thank my constituency association. You know, Kim Groff is my president and he's a strong leader. And you know, there's always a lot of work with a constituency association. You have to, you know, have meetings all the time and there's always fundraisers to plan and always things to do. And so you need good leadership in that as well. So I want to thank my association for all their hard work. They get out and do the door knocking and meet with people and have a hot dog on the corner, so very happy about that.

But you know, I really want to thank our Finance minister for a great budget, the member for Humboldt-Watrous. And you know, she delivered a budget that's very respectful of everybody in Saskatchewan. You know, it's being careful with our money yet staying on track with our plan. And that is, you know, where we're at. We are on track, and it gives us a strong future when people can understand the direction we're going and we live up to the word that we say we are. And so I commend her for the hard work to bring in such a great budget.

[16:00]

But you know, sometimes I think we're better off, Mr. Speaker, to not just look at ourselves, to judge ourselves. Sometimes we're better off to ask others. And so I wanted to have a couple of quotes in here from a couple of our leaders in the province.

And from Mayor Fougere on April 10th, he'd say, "I'd say positive feelings. That's for sure." That's a quote that he said on April 10th. And speaking of the grants-in-lieu, "It certainly is a great step in the right direction." And also another quote on the grants-in-lieu, "We're pleased to see a new program that's transparent and predictable for municipalities."

Mayor Clark out of Saskatoon, who is my mayor, you know, his

comments were, "Sounds like they heard our message and we are able to get to the table, which is really key for the future of revenue-sharing as well." And identified:

And they want to have a thoughtful consultation process in the future of revenue-sharing, as cities and communities try to create more jobs, try to help to attract investment, try to build quality of life. That will make sure we have a strong economy in the future and have jobs for the next generations coming up. Having that sustainable, predictable funding is absolutely critical.

That's from Mayor Charlie Clark on April 10th at Global. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation weighed in as well, and I quote:

I can't think of any government in all of Canada who is actually trimming spending. I don't know if a government has actually slayed a deficit without trimming spending. So when you see that spending number coming down, it makes you feel good about the future.

And that was from Todd MacKay, prairie director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. And he also said that on April 10th to CKRM.

This budget is a strong commitment to the future of Saskatchewan. This budget carefully balances spending where we see some pressures, and trimming the budget to make sure we are getting the best value for taxpayer dollars. Most important in this budget is what is not there, Mr. Speaker. All the great work done by our Finance minister, and yet it's what's not in the budget that is so important. What's not in this budget, Mr. Speaker, is a job-killing carbon tax, something this leader and this government will not impose on the people of Saskatchewan. Those people on that side of the aisle would bring in a carbon tax tomorrow if they had their way.

And this budget is in a stark contrast to the NDP's spending promises during their NDP leadership campaign. Nearly every day they stand up in the House and they condemn us for spending, and to try and manage our books better. Yet their spending promises were for \$2.5 billion per year, \$10 billion over the next four years. How would they pay for that? I mean they obviously didn't look into this.

And yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the member for Athabasca said he didn't know where all the money went since Saskatchewan Party formed government in 2007. So I'll gladly provide him with a list to remind him of all the great work this government has done.

Well where has the money gone, Mr. Speaker? It's reduced our operating debt. It's tax reductions which have saved people \$5.9 billion, 112,000 people off of the tax rolls, 4.3 billion in personal income tax cuts, 1.3 billion in education property tax cuts.

In infrastructure, we've invested 12.5 billion in infrastructure since 2007, 1.4 billion in infrastructure for our health care system which includes the children's hospital, the 15 new long-term care facilities, the Moose Jaw Hospital, and the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. Eight billion dollars for highways, nearly 1.5 billion to build and repair schools, 1.5

billion for Crown capital in 2018.

You know, investments in people, since 2007 a 72 per cent increase in health, education, and social services investments: 750 more doctors, 3,400 more nurses, 8.55 million annual for autism services. That's a 1,600 per cent increase. 2.7 invested in mental health and addictions since 2007, and over doubled the funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. And most everyone in this room knows someone that's affected by cancer, so it's very relevant to each and every one of us.

Education. Two and a half times more education funding compared to 2007. Forty new schools, 25 major renovations, 840 more teachers since 2007, and created over 8,500 new child care spaces.

You know, in Social Services, Mr. Speaker, over 1.18 million invested in 2018, a \$54 million funding increase since 2017.

Advanced Education. Since 2007 we've invested over 9.1 billion in post-secondary education: 406 million in rebates through the graduate retention program for 70,000 graduates, and the only graduate retention program in the country; 43.9 million provided through the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, over 90,000 scholarships to approximately 40,000 students. I hope that reminds the member for Athabasca that that's where we've spent our money. There's more work to do, and we're glad to do that work.

But let's talk a wee bit about their record. You know, when we think of municipalities, the NDP cut nearly 500 million out of revenue sharing during their time in office. From 2001 to 2007, the number of teachers dropped by 400. They closed 176 schools, 52 hospitals; they had the longest surgical wait times in Canada. Saskatchewan lost 450 nurses, 173 doctors, from 2001 to 2006. Raised taxes 21 times in 16 years, had the worst job creation record in the country, and just half the national rate of job growth. The population dropped by 22,000 people from '96 to 2007.

And you know, throughout this session we have seen the same old NDP, the smear politics and the cherry-picking of statistics. And this government on this side rejects and condemns the NDP's plan to increase spending by over 2.5 billion per year, 10 billion over four years, as it would leave Saskatchewan with an extreme deficit which would hurt future generations. We know the NDP would implement a carbon tax and raise taxes on corporations which have proven to hurt economic growth in provinces among many other policy platforms.

Despite the opposition from his own party, the Leader of the Opposition stands against pipelines which would increase jobs in Saskatchewan as well as be a key factor in alleviating the grain backup for Saskatchewan farmers are experiencing. In this platform there is no evidence of job and population growth incentives. This government will not stand for the NDP taking advantage of the Saskatchewan people again and we'll continue to stand up for it on a national level. We will not allow a federal government to impose a tax. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon University.

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm proud to stand in my place and speak in support of the budget motion and against the amendment put forward by the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Before I go any further though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel I must speak about the tragic event that happened on April 6th near Nipawin. Words cannot express the heartbreak of losing a child, a father, a daughter, a friend, and a teammate. I was at the Heart & Stroke Hockey Heroes Weekend when news began to break about the accident, and the room went suddenly sombre. Everyone in that room looked inward remembering their own experiences on a bus, a road trip, or a memorable tournament that they shared with their teammates. They'd all been there, Mr. Speaker, and in their minds they were there again.

In the days that followed, as the scope of the tragedy was fully understood, we saw the backbone and the resilience of the Saskatchewan people, whether it was the huge amount of money donated, people opening up their homes for friends and family of the victims, churches comforting the grieving, or the first responders who didn't know the meaning of the word quit. Saskatchewan, Canada, and indeed the world responded.

All of us had a connection to this tragedy; our Finance minister had more than most. She's a remarkable woman, a mother, and a grandma, and she's a remarkable leader. So to the member from Humboldt-Watrous, a heartfelt thank you for your leadership. All of us know Saskatchewan will persevere. We are wounded but we are strong. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we are all Humboldt strong.

I have to thank a few people who have helped and encouraged me this past year on this journey. First of all, my fiancée, DonnaLyn, has continued to be the rock of our family. She's been holding things together while we do the people's work here in Regina.

I'm always the most proud when I get to share in the joys of my daughters Abby, Rebecka, and Danielle, whether they're playing soccer, performing at school, or most likely just goofing off at home. They're very enjoyable, Mr. Speaker, and I love spending time with them. And then there's my son Connor who works at Canadian Tire and has now decided that he wants to become a pilot. So he's going to be coming and speaking with the member from Carrot River to see how maybe not to do certain things and how to do certain things. But he's going to be coming to speak with him, and this fall he's going to enter pilot school.

Now my mom is probably watching, not because of who's speaking this afternoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but because she just underwent her second hip replace surgery in the last three years. So she's convalescing at home, and she wanted me to pass on to the Minister of Health how remarkable the doctors that we have in our province are, and the nurses and the support staff. She's had wonderful care. She's recovering nicely, and hopefully she's watching this and trying to stay awake this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

My constituency assistant, Madelaine Fast, is remarkable. She

looks after our office. She gets me to where I need to go with the things that I need to bring with me, and so I'm very thankful that she's working with us. It's not easy, Mr. Deputy Speaker; there are some tough things that have to get done. But she's compassionate and she's got empathy, and she definitely helps the people that come into the office that need help, Mr. Speaker. And so I want to say thank you to her and encourage her to continue what she's doing.

Now turning to the budget, Mr. Speaker. We're on track. We're on track to balance the budget next year, and we are unique in Canada. We will not kick the can down the road as they have to the east and the west of us, Mr. Speaker. We will not continue to pile debt onto the credit card for our children and grandchildren to pay. And so we've made adjustments, and those adjustments, Mr. Speaker, have been good adjustments. We've shifted our reliance away from resource revenue to consumption taxes, Mr. Speaker. We've controlled spending. We've made investments in people, Mr. Speaker.

Just because you say something over and over, Mr. Speaker, doesn't mean that it becomes the truth. When we were in this place on April 10th, Mr. Speaker, and we listened to the Minister of Finance give her budget address, after that was all finished we had the opportunity to listen to the Finance critic, Mr. Speaker. And when she stood in her place and said, and I quote:

What we were looking for in this budget, what the people of Saskatchewan were looking for was four things: a plan, hope, inspiration, and leadership. And sadly, Mr. Speaker, this budget offers none of those.

When she said that, Mr. Speaker, the expressions on the faces of the people in this place were of bewilderment and disbelief. Many wondered if she'd even listened to what had just been said by the Finance minister. So, Mr. Speaker, let's take a look at that statement, and then we'll take a look at the budget.

[16:15]

A plan. Our government has charted a three-year course to reduce our province's dependency on resource revenue and to balance the budget by 2019. This year's budget keeps that plan on track by controlling government spending while making important investments in health care, education, and social services, where it is most needed. We're controlling spending like reducing vehicle costs by \$5 million by reducing the number of government-owned vehicles, improved purchase prices, and a move to private sector rentals for short-term vehicle use. This budget keeps Saskatchewan strong while committing to balance in 2019.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is filled with hope. This province is filled with hope. Hope, like the \$700,000 investment to ensure 100 per cent coverage of HIV drugs for Saskatchewan people and to provide other HIV supports. Hope, like \$520,000 for a new program to ensure that babies born in Saskatchewan hospitals are screened for hearing loss, an investment in our children, Mr. Speaker. Hope, like the \$2.8 million to fulfill our commitment to provide individual funding for children with autism spectrum disorder. Initial funding of \$4,000 per child under the age of six will be provided this year.

Leadership. Mr. Speaker, our government has been showing leadership for 11 years. We've invested \$1.87 billion in education operating funding this year. We're investing \$5.77 billion in health, \$1.3 billion in social services. And, Mr. Speaker, that's leadership.

Just last week the member from Prince Albert Northcote suggested that we talk to our municipal leaders about the budget. She was worried that they would have maybe an adverse comment on what happened on April 10th, Mr. Speaker. And so I took that opportunity and I actually took the opportunity to talk to two members of city council, but one is very familiar to this place, Mr. Speaker, and especially to the opposition.

I went and spoke with Councillor Randy Donauer. And he's a favourite of those members over there as they continually quote him and talk about him. And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Randy Donauer is a vociferous and tireless advocate for the city of Saskatoon and for his taxpayers and the people that live in his ward. And you know, he makes no apologies for that, and I'm proud of him for that. So I went and talked to him and I talked to another councillor, Councillor Troy Davies as well from ward 4. And you know, we had a great conversation. We actually had lunch. And so I talked to them a little bit about the budget, and they said, you know, it's pretty good. It's pretty good, Mr. Speaker.

I shared with them some numbers that they may not have been aware of and told them a bit of a story that's been going on in this place for the last little while. And I'd like to share it here in this place as well, Mr. Speaker.

So we hear over and over and over that the reason that municipal taxes go up in Saskatoon is because of reduced provincial government funding. We hear that over and over and over, Mr. Speaker. And so I did a little research. I took a look at some numbers, and I'll share some of those numbers with you. And in fact I was involved in some of those decisions that we made when I was on Saskatoon City Council from 2012 to 2015.

So in 2010, municipal revenue sharing to the city of Saskatoon was just over \$29 million. And at that time, city council raised property taxes by 3.86 per cent, almost 4 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The next year, revenue sharing went up to 37, just about \$38 million to the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the city council raised taxes once again almost 4 per cent. So there was \$8 million more revenue sharing, and the property tax increase was about the same.

So the next year, Mr. Speaker, 2012, the revenue sharing increased to \$42 million and the tax increase was once again 4 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Skip ahead now to 2014, where the municipal revenue sharing to the city of Saskatoon was almost \$46 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that's in 2014, \$46 million. And we raised property taxes — and I say “we” because I was on city council — we raised property taxes almost seven and a half per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So as I look at these numbers and I talked to Councillor Donauer. I said, so we raised municipal revenue sharing every year, and for the first two or three years you kept the property

tax increase the same. But then you had a record year in 2014 of \$46 million, but yet you still raised taxes almost seven and a half per cent. That really doesn't square the circle, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the more money that is shared with the city of Saskatoon, the higher the property tax rate went, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I would submit that municipal revenue sharing, and a drop in the municipal revenue sharing, doesn't really correspond to a higher percentage of property tax increase, especially in Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that the numbers just don't lie.

Well speaking about Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and Saskatoon University in particular, we have something big happening here in the next couple of years. And I'm very proud of that, and I'm proud of this government for ensuring that the insight and the vision was there. I'm talking about the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's opening up next fall. We're eagerly awaiting it. The number I just saw yesterday was it's 83 per cent complete. Staff is being hired, staff is being recruited.

You know, everything is coming together. and that's because of good work by the people at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation. They are fantastic. They raise tons of funds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they are doing great work. And we're really looking forward to that investment coming to fruition, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's 2019, in October.

It's in Saskatoon University, but really it's a provincial hospital that'll look after all of our children, making sure that children that are sick, their parents, their siblings, don't have to travel away, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have a niece that has some challenges and it's heartbreaking to see them. My brother and his family have to take their daughter to Edmonton or Calgary or later this year they may be going down to Philadelphia to help her become more healthy. And it'll be a great asset to Saskatchewan to have some of those specialities right here at home and allow people like my brother and his family get the care that they need for Anna right here at home.

Also, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Saskatoon this government has made fantastic investments. And I think about the university: just this year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, almost \$88 million for the College of Medicine at the U of S to ensure a successful college that provides a quality medical education; \$470 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the U of S, the U of R and the federated and affiliated colleges, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We also look at what we've been funding in education K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12], Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've had four joint schools opening in Saskatoon. We've got Sylvia Fedoruk School and St. Nicholas Catholic School, Ernest Lindner School, and St. Lorenzo Catholic School, Colette Bourgonje School, and St. Thérèse Catholic School, as well as Chief Whitecap School and St. Kateri, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In 2016 École St. Matthew School received \$9.6 million for a renovation that was sadly overdue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Georges Vanier, E.D. Feehan, my old alma mater, Holy Cross, got a new facelift and, you know, that was almost \$19 million, Mr. Speaker. So this government has been investing in Saskatoon and in the citizens of Saskatoon and the citizens of

Saskatoon University for the last 11 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this year's no different.

We're on track to get back to balance next year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through leadership, through hope, through inspiration, and through the hard work of the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're not going to stop. We're going to carry down the path that we're going because we are on track and because the Saskatchewan people deserve it, they want it, and they demand it. So I will not be supporting the amendment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, put forward by the member from Saskatoon Nutana, and I will be supporting the budget that was presented by the Finance minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into this budget debate regarding the 2018-2019 provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I would be remiss if I didn't start out by thanking some of those people in my life who allow me to be here, but I think I will be brief with those comments, Mr. Speaker. Certainly my family plays a role as it does for everyone here, but I'd also like to thank the people of Regina Lakeview for putting me here in this Assembly, for showing faith in me. And I want them to know that I do take very seriously the responsibility that sits with all members in this place, Mr. Speaker, and that is to bring their concerns, their hopes for their families but also for our province forward and enter them into the record here in this House, and also to advocate for those things that they see that need righting, Mr. Speaker. And so I do thank them for that responsibility, and I take it very seriously.

I also take very seriously, Mr. Speaker, my role as critic — my role as critic for Education, my role as critic for early learning and child care, my role for critic of Agriculture, and my role for critic of Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, Mr. Speaker. And I thank those people around the province who put their trust in us, who come forward with their hopes, their thoughts, and their concerns, and who entrust us to bring their voice to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I think that sometimes the role of opposition is not appreciated, but there is certainly a role there, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that those voices come forward in this place.

Of course you get a certain spin with a budget, Mr. Speaker. I think a lot of people on the surface think that budgets are, you know, all about facts and figures, charts and tables, Mr. Speaker, sort of dry accounting procedures. But certainly I mean there are facts and figures, Mr. Speaker, but they are also . . . They're important but they're also inherently political. The budget document, you know, particularly is an inherently political document, not only in the spin that we see put on this budget but also in the decisions that are made within that budget, Mr. Speaker — those decisions of who has favour, who receives support for their concerns, for their . . . which ministries see support and which don't, which are highlighted, which are not, which voices are brought forward and listened to, Mr. Speaker, and are not. Those are all inherently political decisions and I think they're worth unpacking, some of the decisions that were made in this budget.

Of course decisions, as I've said, in the budget are inherently political. Budgets favour some and too often they punish others. Mr. Speaker, I think that sometimes that punishment is deliberate and clear. I think of the film tax credit, a decision made by this government against the advice and wishes of the whole film industry, made against the advice of the chamber of commerce, and a choice that saw the Sask Party government willingly and deliberately turning their backs on tens of millions of dollars of revenue, the cultural vibrancy and the ability to tell our own stories and to gain understanding that comes with a thriving film industry, and a choice that has decimated, Mr. Speaker, a thriving, a once-vibrant film industry in our province, seeing families and individuals leave our province for employment elsewhere.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that decision has also impacted the sound stage, a state-of-the-art facility not far from this Assembly contained in the constituency of Regina Lakeview, underutilized and now we see under the shade of potentially a for sale sign, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

And I think that was a shameful and deliberate decision, and I offer it up as an example of one of those decisions that is meant to punish a whole industry for reasons that I don't know that are completely clear. This despite the fact that even when awash in evidence that this decision would be counter to even the government's own stated goals of diversifying the economy, shifting our dependence on resource royalty, and keeping Saskatchewan families in our province, even despite all of that evidence, this decision went ahead, Mr. Speaker. And I think that there are other examples of this type of punitive budget and policy-making by this government, but I offer that one up as a shining, unfortunately, example.

But I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that many budget choices that are formulated by this government have not come out of a punitive desire, but from ignorance in the literal sense, Mr. Speaker, not knowing or understanding the impacts of their choices, and from being profoundly out of touch with the realities that are facing so many individuals and families in our province. In the end, whether a government sets out to deliberately harm or punish a group or sector in their budget making, or if the harm comes because that government failed to listen, the impact is the same.

Whether they failed to take a reasonable view of reality, failed to take a long-term, or in some cases, even a short- or medium-term view, forecasting of how that decision would play out; failed to listen to their own officials, their own ministries, their own stakeholders; failed to listen to voices in the sector; failed to listen to voices on the front line; or failed to listen to those who receive the service, it really doesn't matter, Mr. Speaker, because the harm that that group or individual or family or community experiences is real, regardless of intent.

We're taught very early on, Mr. Speaker — I think something I tried to teach my own children — you're responsible not only for your intent, but you're responsible for the impact, Mr. Speaker. And I think the same goes for budgets.

And every day I know that members on this side of the House

... I suspect because I see the cc's on the letters of members opposite ... Every day we hear from people in this province who have been harmed by choices made by this government, Mr. Speaker, this budget and past budgets.

And of course we don't hear that in the budget document. We don't hear that in the budget speeches from members opposite. To listen to these members, Mr. Speaker, you'd think that nothing has ever been better in this province. I know some members on this side are fond of saying that it's as if the sun ... the skies opened up and the sun started shining in this province in 2007, Mr. Speaker.

[Applause]

**Ms. Beck:** — Yes, and they're clapping for themselves, as I suppose is predictable, Mr. Speaker. And I think that belies the reality, the long history of this province, the history of people in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, but the longer history of this province, a history going back well before contact, before European contact, Mr. Speaker. So I would caution the members opposite not to clap too loudly for themselves and maybe go read a history book or something along those lines, Mr. Speaker.

I think that part of the reason that we ... We hit a nerve there, Mr. Speaker. I think that part of the reason that we see this bravado, this out-of-touch talk by members opposite, I think that there's a certain trap that governments fall into after they've been in government for a long time, Mr. Speaker. You tend to start reading your own press and stop talking to people out in your communities. You start to believe your own hype, Mr. Speaker. And that's, unless you actively work against that trap, Mr. Speaker, that's something that governments can fall into, and I'm hearing increasingly that being the case. I know you kind of get comfortable at the tables and the mixers and the receptions, and you hear from people, you know, who are in positions of power and you forget that there's a whole world out there, Mr. Speaker. And I don't want to paint too wide of a brush, Mr. Speaker, but that certainly is a trap that's out there if you don't actively work against it.

And sometimes when I hear member after member on that side standing up and saying, you know, how things have never been better, clapping for themselves about what's happening in education, for what's happening across the province, you know ... Not to say everything is doom and gloom, Mr. Speaker, but understanding that the more that you present a picture that fails to reflect the reality of people's lives, the more they're going to push back, the more they're going to push back and say, but this is how it's happening in my household. This is what's happening in my community, Mr. Speaker.

So I would just caution this government and any other government to not believe their own hype too much and to read a little broader than their own prepared notes and their own press releases, Mr. Speaker.

This government tells us that they're on track. That's written on the front page of this budget document. Again they're clapping for themselves, Mr. Speaker. But on track to where, I think, is a pertinent question. One of the things that, I think, I suspect the members opposite would tell us is that they're on track to

balance the budget by next year.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are practical and of course they want to see us live within our means. But Saskatchewan people also know that this is a government that inherited a booming province, inherited a balanced budget with a surplus, inherited a province that was growing. And despite all that and a decade of record resource revenue, this is a government that has failed to balance eight out of the last 11 budgets, Mr. Speaker. So I think Saskatchewan people would be forgiven if they waited to see the evidence with regard to whether or not this government can manage to get back on budget, Mr. Speaker . . . The member for Cannington is heckling from his chair. I hope that he gets a chance to stand up and enter his thoughts into the record, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has steadily added to our public debt. Operating debt has been growing steadily since 2015. They've piled debt on our Crowns. They've locked us into costly P3 [public-private partnership] contracts that not only will we be paying, but our children will be left to deal with, Mr. Speaker. Total debt will grow to over \$25 billion, Mr. Speaker, by 2020, and that's using the government's own numbers. And the cost of servicing this debt, Mr. Speaker, will also grow as is reasonably to be expected.

But they want us to trust them. They want us to trust them that they've got this, despite the evidence through the best years they couldn't balance the budget, that they're going to be able to do it this time, Mr. Speaker. And I guess we'll see. We'll see next year.

And if those listening along at home, if they want to look in their budget books or look it up online, these numbers are on page 48. They're in black and white. The graph is in green, perhaps should be in red. Mr. Speaker, this is what we're leaving to those who will come after us, a debt like we've never seen in this province, Mr. Speaker. And this after enjoying a decade of record resource revenue.

That's part of the track that this government is on, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pretty straightforward track here certainly since 2012. And instead of believing that the sun started shining in 2007, that the Sask Party can do no wrong, I think it's important to take real stock of the reality and the track that many Saskatchewan families are on in this province, those families that have no voice when you hear the statements and the budget responses of members opposite.

I'm afraid that this government is showing increasing signs of being in the state that I mentioned earlier, that state of, you know, rubbing cozy shoulders with those who tell you what you want to hear and losing touch with those who are actually experiencing the fallout from the decisions that you're making in your budgets. To use a baseball analogy, Mr. Speaker, some people are born on third base and go through life acting like they've hit a triple. I think we've got a government, Mr. Speaker, on that side who's pretty sure that when they got in government that they hit that triple, and they were actually left in a situation where they were on third base.

And I can see why, you know, they had some pretty good years at the beginning, Mr. Speaker: lots of funding, lots of resource

revenue coming in. The provincial nominee program continued to tick along and ensure that we had immigration to the province, Mr. Speaker. And times were pretty good. And to be fair, you know, they made some investments and they made some early choices. I'm going to have to think back to some of the investments. The SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program for people who have disabilities, enduring disabilities, certainly was one of those programs, Mr. Speaker, and there were some choices along the way.

But I think the problem when you're standing on third base and you think that you hit a triple is that you might not have the skills or the ability to manage things when times aren't so good, Mr. Speaker. And I think we certainly saw that with . . . Last year's budget was a glaring example of that, Mr. Speaker, but we were seeing signs of that a few years back.

One of the things I want to spend some time on is the education portion of this budget. Much has been made by members opposite of the promise for \$30 million to be invested into education. Mr. Speaker, I've heard people say that it's a start. I've certainly heard the minister say that it's a start and the Premier. It is a start. It does not go very far, especially when you compare that up to the fact that there were \$54 million cut out of education last year, Mr. Speaker.

But lest people forget or think that that was the first difficult budget that boards were faced with in this province, it's not the case. We've seen underfunding for growth in this province going back a number of years, boards being forced to swallow up that cost to that growth within their own budgets. And then we saw in 2014 in fact, Mr. Speaker, just a few months after oil prices took a downturn and after this government had never properly funded growth, we saw this government have the audacity to ask for money back from school boards, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I shouldn't be too surprised because that's something we've seen, the Ministry of Advanced Education actually claw back funds mid-year from universities in our province a couple of years in a row, Mr. Speaker.

The impacts of that underfunding are very real. They are intense. They are intense of course for those families and those students who don't have the supports that they need in the classroom. But I would submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that those impacts will be intense for this province going forward for many years. There are critical years that children have with regard to development. There are years when our investment in their education and supporting young children has the most benefit to those children and has the most impact in terms of returns on dollars investment across the lifespan.

I'm going to read, Mr. Speaker, into the record some comments from 2016, *Saskatchewan's Early Years Plan*, Mr. Speaker, because it is quite a lovely document actually. The opening paragraph reads as follows:

The Government of Saskatchewan's vision for our province is to be the best place in Canada to raise children. To support this vision, we have developed . . . [this plan so that] all children can be safe, healthy and develop to their full potential in strong families and supportive communities.

Mr. Speaker, members on this side could not agree more. We need to ensure that those supports are in place. But the reality is, and you won't hear this from members opposite, is that we are failing.

Mr. Speaker, since the budget I have been trying to be quite diligent about getting around and talking to school boards, talking to parents, talking to stakeholders in all of my critic areas around the province. I had the opportunity to meet with one school board yesterday, who sent me a very nice chart, Mr. Speaker, just showing the impact of year-over-year underfunding within their school division, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

**An Hon. Member:** — Table it.

**Ms. Beck:** — Well the member . . . I'll table it, for sure. Mr. Speaker, this can be shared with all members. This graph shows a decrease, year over year, going back from \$12,000 per-student funding, reducing to 12 in 2016-17, reducing down to 11 this year. This is a school division that is experiencing growth. The funding, even within the \$30 million, I think they'll receive about \$15,000, Mr. Speaker, and it will not keep pace with the growth. So we'll see another reduction this year as a result of this budget in year-over-year funding. That's certainly something that we're hearing from the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association]. The year-over-year reduction in per-student funding is on track, Mr. Speaker, and that track is going down year after year after year.

I was told by one board member yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that we have trimmed all the fat; we're cutting bone now, Mr. Speaker, and that those are the choices that have been made. This is where we have chosen to balance the budget — on the backs of our children — and really is a short-sighted plan on the part of this government.

We look at the end returns on dollar, and a dollar invested across the lifespan. We know that there are . . . making sure that children get a . . . I'm going to read from the document again:

Making sure all children get a . . . start in life leads to a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people. It reduces the risk of poverty and improves school readiness, health and wellness. It also reduces employment and education gaps for First Nations and Métis people and improves graduation rates and lifelong success for all citizens. It is estimated that one dollar invested in a high quality early years program can result in a return of \$4 to \$9 over the lifespan of the child.

Mr. Speaker, we are failing to make that investment, despite evidence from this government's own document to the contrary. We have far to go. Interestingly, some of these advantages of investing in early years education mirror the government's own stated goal within the ed sector plan. But we're failing. We're failing, Mr. Speaker.

We are failing to ensure that we are mindful of the gap in achievement between First Nations and non-First Nations students in this province, Mr. Speaker. I think that school boards and teachers, parents are doing an admirable job, but the

fact is that the difference in condition that children across our province face is also reflected in the gap that we see in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

So when we see things like a reduction in supports for housing; suspension of programs; an assumption, somehow an assumption by this government that because vacancy rates are falling, that therefore instead of actually going out and looking at Kijiji or whatever method you might want to look for an apartment in a certain jurisdiction, assuming that because the vacancy rate is falling, that rents are also falling. Mr. Speaker, that is a fallacy. It's simply not the case, but yet we're basing policy on it, and that's unfortunate. It has very real implications for families, families who are increasingly struggling to make ends meet.

Of course on track also means we're still on track to have PST applied to children's clothing; on track that PST is still applied to restaurant meals, to construction; that we are on track to see increasing power bills as we have had so many times in the last several years, Mr. Speaker. And all of that is cutting into families' and individuals' ability to make ends meet, Mr. Speaker.

Recently I surprisingly came across a statistic with regard to mortgages in arrears in this country. I think this is very telling and frankly disturbing evidence when we see that Saskatchewan's default rate — mortgages in arrears more than, I believe it's three, and it might be four months — is three times the national average. That is a sign of people being stretched to the limit, Mr. Speaker. And we see a government who seems rather indifferent to that.

This government likes to talk about . . . We had a minister, a previous minister of Education who talked about the most important matrix in education being the number of children in our schools. Mr. Speaker, I cannot begin to start with how wrong-headed that is. I mean certainly this government likes to pat themselves on the back with regard to population numbers, with regard to the number of children in our schools. And I understand that to some degree, Mr. Speaker, but if you're patting yourself on the back for bringing in and for having increased numbers in this province, surely you must also have some responsibility to ensure that there are actually services available for those students, Mr. Speaker.

And as we've seen by the graph — and I'll show graphs from other school divisions — there is instead a decreasing investment in students in our province, Mr. Speaker. So apparently it is more important to this government to have bodies in the building rather than actually provide support for those people. And I think that's unfortunate, and we're seeing the impact of that.

The capital side, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go back to the budget document. This government likes to talk a lot about — and certainly they have put a fair amount of money into — capital builds. Of course when your student population is growing, I think Saskatoon's population is growing at about the rate of two or three medium- to larger-sized elementary schools a year. Regina's at a slightly smaller rate. We have jurisdictions like Moose Jaw, where they're seeing about 100 students per year increase. You will have need for additional schools at a



certain point there.

There was some funding made available in this budget for capital, but I think that there will be a lot of very disappointed communities around this province, Mr. Speaker, when they look at the long-term forecasting for the capital plan in this province. We see this year \$26 million of course for the Weyburn and Rosthern schools, which I am sure that people in those communities . . . And I know from people in those communities is appreciated, Mr. Speaker. So don't say that I'm not grateful for any of that.

We see, if my math is correct here, about \$4 million going into the joint-use schools, Mr. Speaker. And they've really taken up a lot of room in this budget, Mr. Speaker, year over year, but we look forward to next year. And this is where there are going to be a lot of disappointed folks out there, Mr. Speaker, because we have a plan for next year for \$36 million. There are a lot of schools on that capital priority list around this province.

With a side note, it is increasingly difficult to find that capital priority list, and there has been a complete retreat of transparency around the capital funding allocations in this province. You used to be able to go onto the ministry and find a full accounting of all of the submissions by school boards: when they were submitted, under which category they were submitted, the total cost of the project, the priority. Mr. Speaker, that's difficult to find now. The last time I saw the priority list it was a word document that just listed the top 10 capital projects.

And, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people on that list who are hoping. They have some significant needs. We have schools, I know that have been waiting for a long time, that have been promised consolidations, where we have roofs falling in in gyms. We have leaky roofs. We have overcrowding, Mr. Speaker, and I don't see a plan here to address that. I see \$36 million next year. I see \$12 million the subsequent year — which doesn't buy you a school these days, Mr. Speaker — and \$10 million in subsequent years.

So those who have been promised tacitly that they will be seeing something perhaps next year, I would caution them to look at that capital spending plan. Because if it stands, those buildings will not be there, and we will continue to see deterioration of facilities and overcrowding, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is something that I want to read in the record because I keep hearing time after time how great things are in education from members opposite. They seem not to want to hear. The realities are out there. I know that the ministers have been copied on some of these families reaching out, you know, in all-caps letters trying to make the minister understand that if my child loses their pre-K [pre-kindergarten] program this year — which we saw happen and sustained this year for many children — they lose those gaps. They lose that critical window in which the most progress can be made.

Mr. Speaker, I'm looking for . . . I want to end with the words of one of the parents here. I'm just looking for that. Members opposite don't want to hear from this parent, but I think it is really important that we do:

I just want to say [and this is to one of the school directors, Mr. Speaker] I want to thank you for all of your hard work that you've been doing. I know you've fought hard for these programs, and that decision was forced upon you by the government.

A group of parents will be rallying today to show our support for the board. This rob-Peter-to-pay-Paul approach the government is suggesting isn't going to work, and we all know it. I don't envy you the job that you have to do right now, and I want you to know that my letters are personal.

Mr. Speaker, these parents know where the responsibility for these cuts lie. It is not with the school boards, as so many times we've saw this government have invitation to blame the school boards. These cuts lay solely with this government, Mr. Speaker. And they are not fooling the folks out there by suggesting otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, I think that with that there's so much more that I would like to say, but I do think that I should give others a chance to enter into this debate, Mr. Speaker. I will continue with my conversations and bringing the voices of those in the community forward within my critic area and within Regina Lakeview.

I can say with full certainty that my constituents would want me to vote against the budget motion as proposed by the Minister of Finance and vote in favour of the amendment as proposed by the critic. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — It now being 5 p.m., this House stands recessed . . . You want a minute? No. This House stands recessed until 7 p.m. tonight.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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