



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

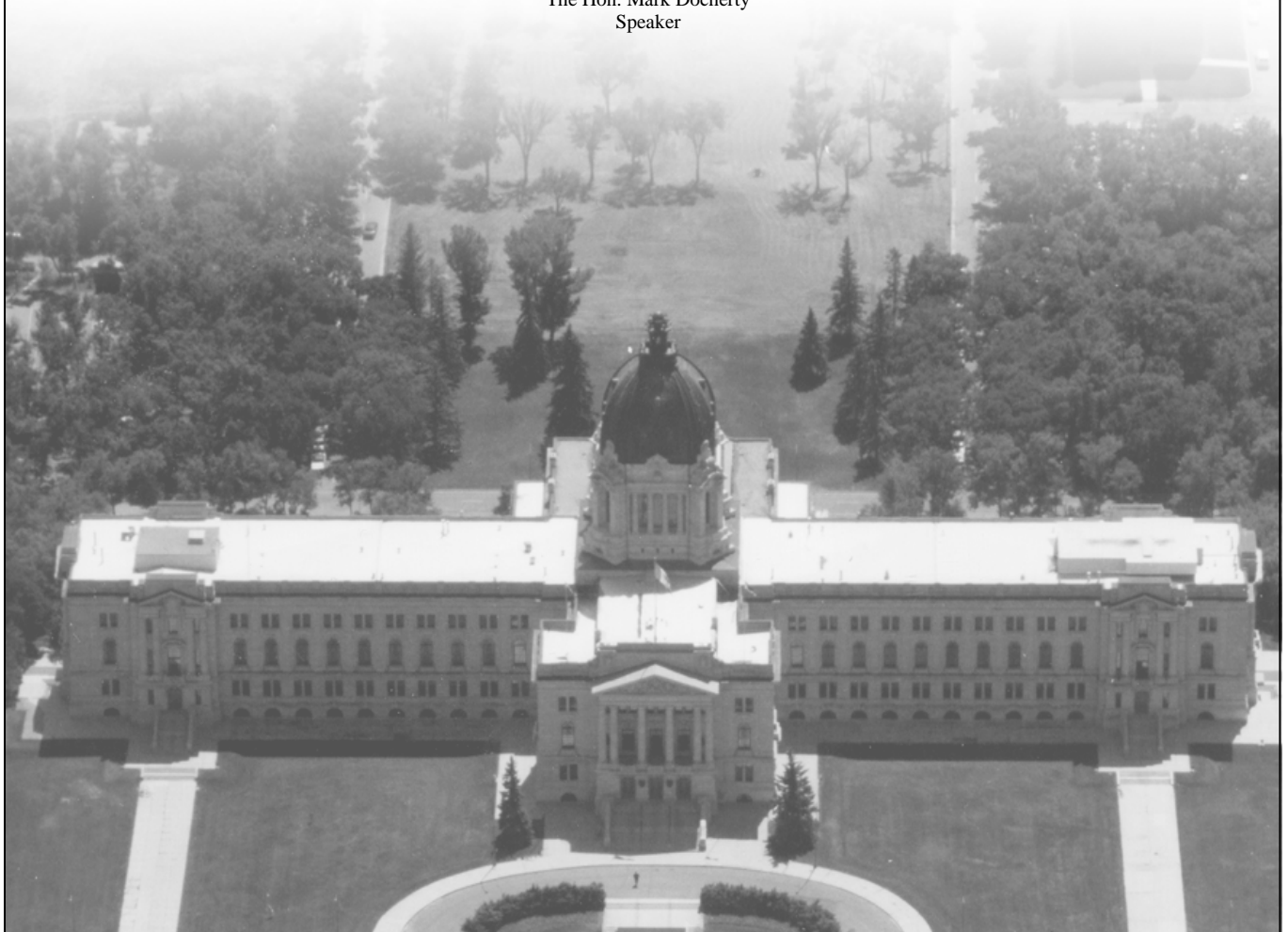
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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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)
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<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great privilege to introduce a number of people from Milestone and also a couple from Estevan that are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. There's Michael and Jennifer Brown and their two sons, Carter and Finley; as well as Jennifer's mom and dad, Paul and Cheryl Deren, from Estevan, as I'd mentioned. Also Michael's mom and dad, Jan and Bill Brown, are here from Milestone; and also cousins, Brennan and Emily Brown. If you could wave; thank you all for waving.

I just want to just say a little bit about this family. I will have a member's statement regarding the achievements of Carter in members' statements, but I want to talk quickly about the Brown family as a whole. You know, I don't think there are too many communities that are successful communities without strong leadership. And certainly the Brown family has been that strong leadership in the Milestone community for generations, and continue to be a real leadership family in that community.

I, a number of years ago, used to play hockey against Milestone, and I don't know how many games. That Bill and his brother Bernie alliance, they were blind when I played against them, but they sure got a lot better eyesight once I started playing with Milestone. But certainly have been an instrumental family.

And also Jan who is a Missal from the Lang community, the Missals were instrumental in that community and have done so much for both of those communities. I want to thank them for being such role models for their four boys that are presently in and around the Milestone-Lang area, for the role models that they have been and for the contribution that they have given. It's what makes rural Saskatchewan rural Saskatchewan, is families like these.

Would all members please welcome the Deren family from Estevan, and the Brown family from Milestone.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the House, I want to introduce somebody very special to me. As the majority of us have that special someone at home, I have my wonderful bride, Marjorie, sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to welcome her to her House, my much better half.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce to you 24 grade 7 and 8 students from Hillmond Central School, just north of Lloydminster, sitting in the west gallery today. They are accompanied by their teachers, Shaun Hart and Sarah Brake; and chaperones, Jessie White, Rhonda Kastendieck, and Melissa Winter. And of course, one of the most important people is the bus driver. Raymond Young — who got them here safely and, as I understand, is well known to some as Happy — is with us here today.

They met with me this morning, Mr. Speaker, and we had some great questions asked and had a great discussion. They are touring our capital city and then going on to visit the great city of Moose Jaw and see the highlights there. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them here today in their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to join the member from Lloydminster in recognizing the group from Hillmond. I remember it was many, many years ago that, when I was a fairly young lad, I went to play volleyball in Hillmond. And of course we lost to the Hillmond . . . I can't remember their name. It's so long ago.

But anyway, I also wanted to recognize their bus driver, Happy Young. Many people may not know this about Happy, but he's my first cousin. And he was an absolute great hockey player when he was young, some say better than I, but there was a bit of a stretch.

But I want to welcome my cousin to his Legislative Assembly and to point out to all the students from Hillmond, you've got a great bus driver and a great cousin of mine and he'll take good care of you. And again, I join my colleague from Lloydminster in welcoming you all to your provincial Legislative Building. Thank you.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — 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. Mr. Speaker, we all know that a carbon tax does nothing to reduce carbon, and it is a devastating blow to our economy.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Moose Jaw. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens who are standing up against this Sask Party's devastating cut for people living with disabilities and for families with children living on the tightest of budgets, on the margins, Mr. Speaker, with the cut to the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement, a cut that certainly defies common sense and lacks any level of basic decency, Mr. Speaker.

And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to immediately restore the Saskatchewan housing supplement.

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens from Regina. I understand that there's petitions right across our province that are being signed. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present yet again another petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the people signing this petition want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, even those outside this province, to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics. And the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

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

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

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition as it pertains to Orkambi. Whereas Orkambi is the first drug to treat the basic defect in the largest population of Canadians with cystic fibrosis. It can slow down disease progression, allowing patients to live longer, healthier lives.

The prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Urge the Ministry of Health to negotiate a fair price for Orkambi and to make it available throughout the Saskatchewan drug plan for those who meet the conditions set by Health Canada and the clinical criteria established by the CF Canadian clinicians.

Mr. Speaker, as I've done day after day, presented page after page on this petition as it pertains to Orkambi, the people that have signed this particular page that I present are from Lloydminster, Spruce Home, and Meadow Lake.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Milestone Youth is an Ambassador, Fundraiser, and Inventor

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand today in the House to acknowledge an incredible young man from my constituency. Carter Brown, who I introduced earlier, an 11-year-old resident of Milestone, was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, or OI, also known as brittle bone disease. Mr. Speaker, the National Osteogenesis Imperfecta Awareness Week is scheduled around Wishbone Day which is this Sunday, which raises awareness of this disease.

When Carter was three weeks old, he was flown to the Shriners Hospital for Children in Montreal to receive treatment. He has been to the hospital over 50 times since that first visit and has become so much more than a patient. Carter is also the Western Canadian ambassador for the hospital and a frequent and successful fundraiser and inventor.

His most recent endeavour was to develop a splint kit for other children who have received treatment for OI. Mr. Speaker, this splint kit is designed to stabilize and reduce the pain of a fracture while a child is waiting for treatment. This kit is made to be mobile, and is about the size of a small backpack and easy to apply. Carter's efforts also raised over \$25,000 in sponsorship, so he can now provide free kits to 350 patients at the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, this splint kit is simply another in a long line of truly inspiring and incredible achievements by Carter. So on behalf of everybody in the Assembly, I want to thank him for all his work, and Michael and Jennifer for all their support in his journey. Mr. Speaker, they make us — he makes us — very, very proud. Thank you, Carter.

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

### International Day of the Midwife

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, communities across Canada and throughout the world will celebrate the International Day of the Midwife. I rise in the House today to acknowledge the important role of midwives in our communities in the past, in the present, and in the future. The care midwives provide to support women, mothers, fathers, babies, and families is foundational to healthy communities. Midwifery is an important and established profession in our country, and in other provinces they're making great strides to advance and promote midwifery.

Unfortunately for families here in Saskatchewan, government progress has been slow. Many women aren't able to choose midwifery because there simply aren't enough midwives working in our province. Services are only available in a handful of communities across the province, and wait-lists are long and many women often can't choose the type of care that they need.

Mr. Speaker, legislation has been in place in our province for over 20 years, and we need movement to expand and integrate these valuable services. So, Mr. Speaker, I call upon the government to take action, and I join families across the province in continuing to recognize the contributions of midwives to build healthy communities and to celebrate the potential to build on this success for all families across Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### School Safety Patrol Week

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Assembly to acknowledge CAA's [Canadian Automobile Association] School Safety Patrol Week here in our province. Student safety is a top priority for all Saskatchewan schools. Each year patrollers are trained by CAA Saskatchewan with assistance from law enforcement before they can participate in the program.

Forty-seven hundred students participate in CAA's school safety program, volunteering their time to keep their peers safe. These patrollers not only assist their peers crossing the road safely, but they also help students learn about pedestrian, traffic, and school-zone safety. These students represent 162 schools and 70 communities across our province. The Deputy Premier had a chance to experience this, helping student patrollers Monday morning at St. Peter Elementary School here in Regina.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, the Chair of CAA Saskatchewan board of directors, Suzanne Young, said CAA is proud to manage the school safety program that for decades has guided our student patrollers to keep our communities safe. She offered her genuine thanks to the hard work and volunteer commitment of each patroller.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in offering our genuine thanks for the hard work and volunteer

commitment of each patroller as well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Jane's Walks

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to recognize a community-driven event taking place this weekend in Saskatoon, May 4th to the 6th. Jane's Walk is a movement of free, volunteer-led walking conversations inspired by Jane Jacobs. It encourages people to share stories about their neighbourhoods, discover unseen aspects of their communities, and use walking as a way to connect with their neighbours.

Jane Jacobs was a writer, urbanist, and activist who championed the voices of everyday people in neighbourhood planning and city building. The annual Jane's Walk takes place the first weekend in May, which is close to Jane Jacobs' birthday on May 4th. Her first book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, challenged the ideas of modernist city planning and offered a new vision of diverse cities made for and by the people who live in them.

Mr. Speaker, Jane's Walk was founded in 2006 as a living, walking commemoration of Jane and her legacy. Ten years later in 2016, over 1,000 Jane's Walks took place in 212 cities around the world spanning 36 countries and six continents. Since 2012 Jane's Walk in Saskatoon has been coordinated by a small volunteer planning committee. The organization offers a website for anyone who wants to lead a walk or join one or more walks being offered free of charge. Over the weekend, 14 different volunteer-led events are taking place in Saskatoon. I want to thank all of the volunteers, participants, and sponsors for their dedication to making Jane's Walk such a success.

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

### Gatsby Night for Autism Held in Saskatoon

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week I had the privilege of attending the Gatsby Night for Autism along with the Deputy Premier. The event was hosted by Autism Services of Saskatoon, and was held to raise funds for that charitable organization. Mr. Speaker, working with a 1920's theme, the event had many unique ways to raise money. Attendees could grab a drink at the Gatsby speakeasy, try their luck at the casino, or for \$20 you could throw your friends in jail for 10 minutes.

They called this jail and bail, and the Deputy Premier had his opportunity to serve time. It's ironic that as a lawyer and former attorney general, the minister didn't have some obscure law in his back pocket to avoid the clink. He could have called the current Attorney General for counsel, but it most likely would have led to a flood of donations locking him up for the rest of the night.

Mr. Speaker, the evening ended up raising over \$40,000 for Autism Services Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, these funds help Autism Services strive towards helping people with autism

reach their full potential, their green light at the end of the dock.

On behalf of this entire Assembly, I would like to thank everyone at Autism Services Saskatoon for making this event possible and all those who attended and donated to make this night a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

### **Melville Helps Humboldt by Hosting Archery Tournament**

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when Humboldt was overcome by the news of the Broncos bus crash, Melville stepped up to help by hosting a school provincial archery competition. Humboldt was the intended host of the National Archery in Schools Program provincial competition April 13th and 14th, but the tragedy that struck that community challenged those plans.

The vice-principal of the Melville Comprehensive School, Darren Wandy, saw a chance to help and offered Melville as an alternate location. The Merv Moore Sportsplex and the Melville high school gym played host to nearly 1,000 archery students in grades 4 to 12 from across Saskatchewan.

Vice-principal Wandy thanked the city of Melville as well as the director of community services, Chris Bruce, for clearing the schedule at the Sportsplex so the competition could take place. Wandy said the most impressive thing was the sense of humanity of people just wanting to make it work.

About 75 people from the Melville area volunteered to ensure the competition ran smoothly, including business owners, students, parents, even CN rail employees coming off their night shift, the air cadets, the Oasis Youth Centre. The Melville Lions Club provided food services. Wandy said it was a surreal moment to have the community come together and that it was a proud moment to be in the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone in this Assembly to join me in acknowledging all of those in Melville and surrounding areas for stepping up to support our neighbours and reminding us what Saskatchewan is all about. Thank you.

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

### **Wages, Personal Income Tax, and Affordability**

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, members opposite are calling for a \$15 per hour minimum wage, but the minimum wage is only one part of the income discussion. The other part is personal income tax exemption limits. We have worked very hard to make sure people have more money in their pockets, and that is why we've increased the personal exemption rate over the last 10 years. We now have the second-highest exemption limit in Canada.

People here can earn over \$16,000 before they pay any provincial tax, up from less than \$9,000 in 2007. In 2007 if you earned minimum wage, you could keep just 45 per cent of your wages before tax kicked in. Ten years later, you were able to

keep 75 per cent of your wages before paying taxes.

And if you look across the country at provinces with higher minimum wages, when it comes to actual disposable income, money in your pockets, Saskatchewan remains competitive. In fact in many cases, disposable income here is higher, even with a lower minimum wage.

And if the members opposite are really concerned about the cost of living for our residents, I would call on them to reverse their support for a carbon tax. What will be expensive for our residents is a tax that will increase the cost of everything from food to fuel. And I'm not sure how upstream it is to call for increased minimum wages on one hand and then take it all away with taxes on the other, Mr. Speaker. But on this side of the House, we will continue to defend the interests and future of our residents.

### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Pilot Training Program**

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we asked a question about the future of pilot training at 15 Wing Moose Jaw. It's an important issue and it was a chance for the government to appeal to its base. But instead, the member for Meadow Lake appeared to be winging it. He told the member from Saskatoon Fairview to call the federal government if she had concerns about the future of the program.

Mr. Speaker, pilot training at 15 Wing, the home of the Snowbirds, it's an important program for Moose Jaw and a point of pride for our province. But we've seen this play out in issue after issue. From equalization to funding for education on reserve, from rail transport to leadership on climate change, the Sask Party government has failed over and over again to deliver when it comes to engaging with Ottawa and getting results for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, is it not the job of this government to advocate for Saskatchewan jobs? When will the Sask Party do its job and advocate for pilot training at 15 Wing Moose Jaw?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, that advocating started two years ago under the previous premier as he wrote a letter to Minister Goodale, Mr. Speaker, asking them to continue with the operations in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

But this raises, you know, a good topic of doing politics differently in this House, Mr. Speaker. Because a few weeks ago there was a budget introduced here, Mr. Speaker, and members opposite asked for increased funding for school divisions. Check, Mr. Speaker. That's been accomplished.

Mr. Speaker, they asked for increased funding to autism spectrum disorder, Mr. Speaker, to those in our province, Mr. Speaker, to fund autism spectrum disorder to a higher level. Check, Mr. Speaker, in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, he called on us to increase funding to CBOs [community-based organization], Mr. Speaker, the front lines of our services across the province, Mr. Speaker. \$10 million into those CBO fundings, Mr. Speaker. Check, Mr. Speaker.

He also called on us to fully fund those HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] medications to people of the province, Mr. Speaker. And I'm happy to say that this budget is doing just that, Mr. Speaker. And I ask the members opposite, let's do politics differently. Let's support the budget when we get the opportunity here.

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

### Support for Indigenous Education

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government likes to pick fights with the federal government, but their track record in winning those fights is abysmal. We've long known that First Nations children receive significantly less funding for education than those living off-reserve, that a child at Goose Lake primary school who's struggling — needs a little extra attention — can't expect the same supports that a child at Grenfell Elementary can. We've repeatedly called on this government to take the fight to Ottawa and to make this right. The minister has said there's ongoing conversation on this injustice, but they've been saying that for years with no sign of any action.

Will the Premier stand up and tell the federal government that every Saskatchewan child deserves a good education and a chance to succeed? Or will we see another school year go by while the conversations go on and on?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, this feels remarkably like federal question period. But, Mr. Speaker, the answer to his question about access to education in this province, Mr. Speaker, is yes. And we have made great strides across this province to ensure that we are increasing our grad rates, Mr. Speaker, our on-time grad rates in communities across this province, Mr. Speaker, First Nations or non-First Nations. And, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, is it was in this province, in this province where treaty education was first mandated into our curriculum, Mr. Speaker. And it's in this province now, since 2011-2012 year, Mr. Speaker, we're up some 20 per cent in our grad rates with our First Nations and Métis individuals across the province of Saskatchewan.

We continue to work with our federal government, whether it be advocating for 15 Wing Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, or whether it be advocating for funding, proper and appropriate funding for our First Nations students in communities, Saskatchewan communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

We advocate with the federal government on every opportunity that we have to increase the opportunities that we have in this province, whether they be in services to the people, Mr. Speaker, or whether it would be to broaden and expand our economy so that we can have a growing population, Mr. Speaker, and attract people and retain people in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The First Nations education funding gap has been shown to be costing our economy a billion dollars a year. Upstream investments in First Nations kids improve their lives, their opportunities. They also improve opportunities for people all across the province. This is quite simply just the right thing to do to reach out and equalize that situation, get rid of that funding gap.

Mr. Speaker, we hear about ongoing conversations, but we've seen no action. So let's have a timeline. When will these communities have more than false hope? When will they actually know that they're going to get the education that their kids deserve?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, we take this issue very seriously, Mr. Speaker. We continually work to remind the federal government of what their responsibility is with respect to funding First Nations children and Métis, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke to Mr. O'Soup last week, Mr. Speaker, the child advocate, and we've agreed to work together to continue to advance that conversation with the federal government, Mr. Speaker. We'll be sending a joint letter . . . We talked about sending a joint letter last week to the federal government to remind them. I'm prepared to go to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, to have conversations directly with the minister, Mr. Speaker.

But we are not ignoring this issue. It's important for the future of our children in this province, Mr. Speaker. It's important for our economy. It's important for the entire province, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Global Transportation Hub and Government Transparency

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday when asked about transparency at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], the minister said, and I quote, "That's taxpayers' dollars that are being spent there, so I expect and I think all of us expect them to be accountable for that and to provide transparency and information on that."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can certainly agree with the first part of that statement. Over \$150 million of taxpayers' hard-earned money spent at the GTH, so Saskatchewan people should expect transparency. But that's not the case. How can the minister, after their own leadership candidate says this didn't smell right, after they've denied witnesses, after they've denied documents, and after Sask Party supporters made \$11 million, how can he still think that the Saskatchewan people can trust the Sask Party government to be accountable and transparent about the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a process, a

process that is being followed with regard to freedom of information and access requests all throughout government. Elected politicians do not participate in that process. It's done by the staff. Staff make a determination and, Mr. Speaker, we don't know about it till after the fact. Mr. Speaker, we're not going to weigh in to those decisions. We're going to let those processes play out. They can have discussions with the Privacy Commissioner with regard to what's commercially sensitive information and what's not, and we'll follow up on it after. Mr. Speaker, for them to stand up and say, no, we're doing this right now, is something that's totally inappropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the members opposite took a tour of the GTH. They understand the number of jobs that are being created out there. They understand the amount of economic activity that comes from that location. And I would like them to look at the people out there and say, we support you.

[10:30]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, just like the land at the GTH, no one is buying the minister's lines about the supposed separation between the operations of the GTH and the operations of the Sask Party government.

The minister must be forgetting the hundreds of emails between the GTH and the Ministry of Highways or the Ministry of Economy or Laurie Pushor, the deputy minister. And these emails weren't just for the land flip, Mr. Speaker. There's emails from the GTH directly to the deputy minister to ask him to fix immigration issues.

Mr. Speaker, the GTH is the creation of the Sask Party. And much like Dr. Frankenstein, they just can't walk away from it. So can the minister confirm today that they will respect the Privacy Commissioner and ensure transparency at the GTH for the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a process in place. We will wait for the process to work its way through. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite would like nothing else than to have something come from the prosecutions that are taking place, the review that is taking place in Manitoba.

And, Mr. Speaker . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite chirps from his seat and wants justice. He wants us . . . That member wants us to weigh in to a prosecution that's being done by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and by the Winnipeg Department of Justice. Mr. Speaker, we're not going there.

They might want to weigh in and go in and do things that are totally inappropriate, but on this side of the House we will have respect for the rule of law. We'll have respect for the process that's taking place. And that's the type of thing that we have that is going to make sure that the rights of the citizens of this province are protected.

Mr. Speaker, we won't be taking any advice from the people over there on how rights should be respected or how process should be followed. If we deviated from the process one bit, they would be up on their seats saying no, no, no, you can't do that. Mr. Speaker, they're going down the wrong path.

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

### Rental Housing Supplement

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — The Sask Party's choice to cut the rental housing supplement is rightly drawing fire from all sides. The Saskatchewan Landlord Association says . . . They're speaking out and they're calling this cut a short-sighted move. They said, ". . . the lack of affordable housing options and financial support for those seeking such options, will cause even more of a burden on social services."

But the other night in committee, the minister couldn't even call the cut a cut — a cut of \$5 million in the black and white of this budget book here this year. He tried to say that there's federal support on its way, which will apparently lessen the blow. But it's just plain wrong to cut support before this federal program is in place and that people can be supported.

Will the Sask Party government finally do the right thing and will it scrap this mean-spirited and damaging cut? Or at the very least will they postpone this cut until the federal program is in place?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question. And I want to get again on the record, and I've said this many times and in committee. There is no change in policy for current existing clients that meet the criteria for the Sask rental housing supplement, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd also like to get on the record that we invest \$46.2 million in the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement in the '18-19 budget. We are working with our federal counterparts to be able to make sure that their program suits our needs in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But the market has changed. We have a 9 per cent vacancy rate in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the highest in Canada. We also have the lowest rental in our two major cities, Mr. Speaker. So that combined, we have to look at the situation that we're dealing with right now, Mr. Speaker. And for him to say that there is a cut, Mr. Speaker, is inaccurate. We have over \$46 million invested in this program, and we look forward to working with the relationship with our clients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — This is a \$5 million cut in the black and white in this budget book. For that minister to suggest this isn't a cut, a cut that'll impact thousands of people and families across our province, is absolutely indecent and beneath a minister. The minister, the minister talks about rents going down but that's just . . .

[Interjections]



**The Speaker:** — Order. You know, the minister and anybody in this House is not indecent. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont, and I caution you.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — The minister talks about rents apparently going down, but that's just not the case. In 2005, a two-bedroom apartment rented for \$607. At the end of 2017, that same apartment rented for \$1,100. They've nearly doubled, Mr. Speaker. The need is still there, but the Sask Party government is taking away supports because they say statistics show that average rents have fallen by — get this — a whole \$7 in one year. And of course the cost of entry-level housing, the very housing that those utilizing the rental housing supplement are occupying, hasn't come down at all.

Cutting needed dollars, modest support for those on the tightest of margins, is simply not right. Why won't the Sask Party reverse this callous and damaging cut?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to continue my answer from the first question, Mr. Speaker, is that we also, in addition to that, to the addition to the federal program, addition to the highest vacancy rates, we also have Sask Housing Corporation. The taxpayers have paid for these units, Mr. Speaker. We have over 3,000 of these across the province that are currently sitting vacant. We have 700 that are in our two major cities, Mr. Speaker, that aren't being utilized.

If somebody is experiencing some rental challenges, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage them to look at Sask Housing as an option. We've got some very fine units. We've got different units, Mr. Speaker. We've got units for seniors. We've got units for families. We want to maximize these units, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, what I am very proud of is some of the investments that we have made in our budget, in our community-based organizations. Unlike the members opposite that don't see social services as an investment, we do on this side of the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Value and Taxation of Used Vehicles

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have recently begun to be hit with some late-onset sticker shock when they go to license a used car that they've purchased. Saskatchewan people are proud bargain hunters, Mr. Speaker. When someone gets a deal at the end-of-the-season sale, they pay tax on the price they paid, not the sticker price, whatever the discount. But when someone goes to buy a used car, Mr. Speaker, they find themselves paying hundreds of dollars more tax based on its listed value on red book, an auto-valuation website that charges money to even see the listed price — and that assumes the vehicle is in top condition.

Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], what's the true value of a used car — what someone pays for the actual car, or what a website declares to be the value of an ideal specimen of that car?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — The methodology that's used to determine the PST [provincial sales tax] on a private deal, a private sale is no different than what's being used right across all of Canada. It's no different than what was used by the NDP [New Democratic Party] when they had this same policy in place. And it's no different than the methodology that was used . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, and it's no different than the methodology that has always been used in this province for other registered vehicles and boats, such as motorcycles, heavy vehicles, trailers, campers, etc. So it's the same methodology used. A consumer will pay PST on the proportion of the value that the consumer uses, and the red book value is a check and balance there. It can be appealed. There's an appeal process. If they feel, if the consumer feels that there is additional wear and tear and it does not meet the red book value, there is an appeal process.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are being sold a bill of goods. A \$9,500 vehicle taxed at a value of 14,600. A \$6,200 sale taxed at a value of 9,894. People are coming forward every day with jaw-dropping stories like these. And they're right; it simply does not seem fair.

What does someone consider when they're buying a used car? Of course, the make and model, Mr. Speaker, and the mileage. Also other conditions of the car. Is there rust? Are there holes in the upholstery? The red book value of the vehicle doesn't reflect these crucial factors in determining the value of a car. And that same car, that same car, Mr. Speaker, if it's written off, won't be reimbursed by SGI at the inflated value.

So my question for the Minister of SGI, Mr. Speaker: what exactly is being taxed here? A car that may have spent years navigating Saskatchewan highways and grid roads, or an ideal version of that car that sat its whole life in a garage?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, I'll repeat the answer. This is the methodology that was used previously when there was PST on used vehicles. It's the methodology used across entire Canada. It's the methodology that we've always used for heavy vehicles, for boats, for trailers, for campers, for motorcycles. It's not different than what we've always been using, which is the red book value. It can be appealed, and the appeal process is very reasonable. If there is rust and wear and tear over and above, that the consumer can say this is why he feels that the vehicle is worth less, that will be looked at, and the PST will be returned.

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

### Minister's Comments and Provincial Budget

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, just before introducing the budget, the Finance minister made a very troubling assertion. She told a reporter that math skills are “not necessarily always typically the female strength.” Mr. Speaker, it’s 2018 and the minister should know better. Women and girls can do math and don’t need to hear these outdated tropes about what they can and cannot do, repeated by members of cabinet.

Doesn’t she think women can do math just as well as men can? Will the Finance minister apologize for these comments?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, a surprising question. Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I was very proud, very proud in this budget, Mr. Speaker, the very first budget to be released by a woman on behalf of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

The third female Finance minister, Mr. Speaker, in the history of the province. The second to deliver a budget. As I said, the first for this party and for this government, Mr. Speaker. And it makes me extremely proud — and I think all of us extremely proud — not only of the member from Humboldt, not only of our Finance minister, Mr. Speaker, but all of the female people in our caucus, in this building, Mr. Speaker, and across the province of Saskatchewan.

And I would commend this female Finance minister for the budget that she introduced about a month ago, Mr. Speaker. I would commend her for the investments in the people of the province of Saskatchewan. The investments that people expect in our communities’ most vulnerable, the investments in health care, both in infrastructure and people, Mr. Speaker. The investments that the people of the province have asked for, Mr. Speaker. And we’re proud of this Finance minister and this budget.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, women leaders need to inspire young girls. I hope that she will apologize to them for that comment. Now when you look over what’s happened in our province . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you look at what’s happened in our province over the last 10 years, it’s not women and girls who struggle with managing numbers. It’s the Sask Party government.

They’re the ones on track to triple the debt. They’re the ones who watched over the fiscal mess that continues to grow at the GTH. And they’re the ones who were at the helm as the costs at the Regina bypass spun out of control from \$400 million to over \$2 billion, all the while taking more out of the pockets of families with hikes to the PST and our SaskPower bills. If there’s anyone in Saskatchewan with a math problem, it’s the

Sask Party cabinet.

How can the Finance minister cast aspersions on others, when it’s her government that keeps piling on debt and piling tax hikes and fee hikes on to Saskatchewan families?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — You know, I would challenge the member opposite to just say what she said in this House to my three daughters and whether or not I’ve been an example to them.

[10:45]

However, you know what, Mr. Speaker? We are the government that has reduced expenses for families across this province. We have 112,000 residents in Saskatchewan, low-income residents, that have . . . taken off the tax roll entirely. That’s what this government’s been able to do. Mr. Speaker, this government has been able to have one of the lowest personal income tax in our entire country, one of the lowest corporate income tax, one of the lowest small business tax in our country. We are very competitive. Our debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] is the third-lowest in our country and we’re on track to balance. That is something we can be proud of, unlike the members opposite who want to have a carbon tax and they have promises worth \$2.5 billion that they have no idea how they would pay for.

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

### Domestic Violence Legislation

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, this week the minister told reporters he’s hoping the domestic violence death review panel’s final report will be released in the next two weeks. Considering the report was anticipated in the fall of 2017, we really hope that is the case. People fleeing interpersonal violence shouldn’t have to wait any longer for the support they need. Can the minister commit today that we will see the review panel’s final report before the end of the spring sitting, so it could be fully canvassed by members in this Assembly without further delay?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the process is independent. I’m told that it should be done soon. My undertaking is that as soon as it’s received and ready to go we’ll certainly want to be releasing it.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the issues that the member opposite raises. Domestic violence is something that’s simply unacceptable in our province or anywhere else. Mr. Speaker, we have made provisions in our legislation to allow a person that’s a victim of domestic violence to break a residential lease. We’ve passed, or have before the House, legislation that will allow for 10 unpaid days for victims and families so that they can access services. Mr. Speaker, we don’t want to wait for the outcome of that report, but we’ll certainly want to look at it and do whatever we think is appropriate coming out of that to try

and add to the supports that are there.

We're also doing consulting right now on Clare's Law, as I mentioned earlier, which will give the police an opportunity to provide information to a person that's a potential victim, so that hopefully violence can be avoided. We've also worked with the federal government to provide legal advice for a two-year period, and we're going to continue to do that type of thing, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I understand that the panel's good work has been concluded, and it's waiting for approval from that minister and that cabinet. This government is in a holding pattern, refusing to establish better supports until this report is approved. Other jurisdictions have been providing more support for survivors and we should be following their lead, not implementing half measures.

Given Saskatchewan's distinction as the province with the highest rates of interpersonal violence, we should be going above and beyond. If the panel's final report includes recommendations such as longer unpaid leaves and paid days off, will the minister come to the table and finally agree to implement those recommendations and pass our private member's bill, Bill 609?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we'll obviously look at the report and we'll take the recommendations seriously. Mr. Speaker, some of the things that we have done already: we've committed \$11.4 million a year to support for interpersonal violence programs and abuse services; we also have opened the first transition house in Saskatchewan since 1989. In 16 years of NDP government, they did not open transition houses.

Mr. Speaker, we've done that. We're going to continue to do that type of thing, and I have a long list of transition houses that receive funding every year in this province. We're going to continue to make those supports. They're necessary and, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question the member is asking and we'll continue to work.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 242 through 244.

**The Speaker:** — Order 242 to 244. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 245 through 249.

**The Speaker:** — Tabled 245-249.

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

### Government's Commitment to Innovation

**Mr. Olason:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to once again stand in my place to speak about small businesses here in Saskatchewan.

But first I feel the need that I need to thank a few people here in our caucus office. We've got Hayley. We've got Paula. I forget the young fellow's name. Callan.

[Interjections]

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

**Mr. Olason:** — Well that's a first, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. We've got Paula and Hayley and Callan and Lee and John and Karalee in our caucus office providing us research each and every day here. Helps us do our jobs a lot better. And contrary to what the member from Saskatoon Centre thinks, the quality of research has only gone up. It's not declining. And we're very thankful for the work that they do in our office here. And I just wanted to give them a shout-out before we start.

So I'm proud to once again stand in my place and support small businesses here in our province. And we should all support our small businesses here. I've stood many times to highlight how small business is the backbone of our economy and how many people are employed by those entrepreneurs who take a risk, put their own money on the line, and work their fingers to the bone to provide valuable services we all need in this province.

Saskatchewan is blessed with thousands of entrepreneurs, and we reap the fruits of their labour through their contributions to health, social services, and education. Small business accounts for over 98 per cent of the businesses in Saskatchewan. We have more small businesses per capita than anywhere else in Canada. That's why our government has invested in them, removed red tape, and raised the exemption for small businesses up to \$600,000 just this year, Mr. Speaker.

The Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive program actually has its roots in another program started not quite a year ago. Co.Labs launched in June of 2017. I was there with the premier and other colleagues because we all saw what this had the potential to become. I've been there many times since, talking with tech companies — actually mostly listening to those tech companies and their leaders — talking with their mentors, and listening to the sponsors of their various events.

It's quite the place, Mr. Speaker, and I would encourage all in this Assembly to make the trip to the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatoon University constituency, the best in the province by the way, and Innovation Place to see what Co.Labs is all about. It's a part of a strategy to have our entrepreneurs with their fantastic ideas graduate from here, grow their ideas here, and provide people with employment right here in Saskatchewan.

This is something unfamiliar to the NDP. There's nothing ad hoc about this program, as the member from Saskatoon Centre claimed yesterday. When he spoke about elephants in the room, I can only assume he was referring to many of the failed ventures of the past from the NDP, like Retx.com or Clickabid or mega bingo, and oh so many more, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member from Saskatoon Centre said, and I quote:

Excellent idea, but what happens once you've got it up and running? You have to maintain it. You have to maintain it. And this is where this government falls short, and that's why so often start-ups start to look around, around Canada, around the world: where can we go to get the kind of support that we need to make things really work and so they can be sustainable?

Mr. Speaker, wrong. They don't say that, not the ones that I've consulted with or listened to. They don't say that at all, Mr. Speaker. It sounds like the member from Saskatoon Centre wants to own those businesses. Not just give them a tool to help them raise private capital, but buy them and own them and operate them and probably unionize them, like PotashCorp, like Big Sky Farms, and our famous SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. They don't understand business over there, Mr. Speaker.

But unlike those failures, this incentive program will create the conditions for continued rapid growth and success of newly emerging technology companies. This incentive will further strengthen the province's innovation strategy by helping to retain technology start-ups in Saskatchewan. Every jurisdiction in Western Canada has this form of investment program.

Jordan Dutchak, executive director of Co.Labs, says:

The current size of Saskatchewan's private capital pool coupled with a lack of investor incentive programs has made it difficult for early-stage technology start-ups to acquire the capital they need to launch and scale their businesses.

The STSI will create greater access to capital in the province, leading to better retention of entrepreneurial talent and skilled labour. Historically Saskatchewan has been the only jurisdiction in Western Canada that did not offer a start-up investment tax incentive.

As such, the establishment of this program will allow the province to effectively participate in the increasingly competitive area of innovation commercialization in Canada, as well as attract and retain talent and investment in the province.

Saskatchewan has a growing technology sector. It employs about 5,000 people and, according to Statistics Canada, it contributes \$1.45 billion to our province's economy. But the tech sector identified that the number one barrier to success is the access to private capital. Saskatchewan must be opportunistic and cost competitive across all innovation sectors to facilitate greater investment and entrepreneurship outcomes.

Removing the barriers to securing early-stage investment or angel investment is critical to our province at this stage because

these companies outperform non-angel-backed companies in sales growth, employment growth, wages paid, research and development expenditures, and profits. They tend to employ highly skilled workers, and they grow entrepreneurial talent and management expertise and often spur spinoff companies and economic activity. I also heard that, Mr. Speaker. I heard that over and over again when I was listening to these technology companies.

The STSI [Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive] will help to address a significant barrier to the continued rapid growth of companies and economic activity. The STSI will help to address a significant barrier to the continued rapid growth of Saskatchewan's tech sector, the shortage of capital available for early-stage tech start-ups. To qualify for the program, eligible technology-based start-ups must be located in Saskatchewan. They must also have 50 employees or fewer, with at least half of those employees located in our province.

The program also has the support of Saskatchewan's investor community, which has been requesting an angel investment tax credit for several years. The STSI will help up to 30 start-ups over the two-and-a-half-year pilot program. At least \$5 million of private investment will be leveraged by this program. This pilot program will offer a 45 per cent non-refundable tax credit for individual and corporate equity investments in eligible technology start-up businesses, capped at a maximum annual benefit of \$140,000 per investor.

The Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive will be managed by Innovation Saskatchewan and will be funded through the agency's \$7.2 million surplus funds, which will support tax expenditures and program administration. Innovation Saskatchewan will be working closely as well with the Ministry of Trade and Export Development.

So what does this all mean, Mr. Speaker? We've been hearing for years about how our technology companies are hurting for capital. Here's some facts right from the people who this incentive will help the most. Since Co.Labs was founded in 2017, there have been 37 jobs created by the companies in the incubator. They project that they will double that and hire 40 more. Private investment has topped \$3.35 million. Ninety-two companies applied to join the program and 30 have been accepted. They average about five or 5.3 months in the Co.Labs program.

And right now there is over \$5 million in the private capital investment pipeline. This angel tax credit will help that money move from investors to the companies that will be creating jobs for the future. Companies like Townfolio, Mr. Speaker, who started a couple of years ago. Townfolio was a trusted community profile network used by municipalities and businesses to access hard-to-find public data and discover local opportunities across the country.

[11:00]

Companies like SalonScale, Mr. Speaker. This software uses Bluetooth scales to measure the exact cost of each hair colour bowl to allow for a more consistent bottom line at hair salons. Here's what Alicia Soulier, the owner of SalonScale said about the STSI and I quote:

Over the last year I have taken my start-up, SalonScale Technology, from a single idea to a fully functional product. Since the beginning, I have self-funded and bootstrapped my venture to a point where we had a product ready to take to potential investors. Over this last month we have successfully raised \$150,000 in funding from angel investors, all of which reside in Saskatchewan.

Companies like SafetyTek, Mr. Speaker, a platform that automatically enforces a company's safety program by tracking user activity in real time, creating accountability throughout their workforce. At a time when safety is a very big piece of what companies do every day, Mr. Speaker, it would be unfortunate that this great idea would be left behind simply for a lack of private capital.

Ryan Quiring, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of SafetyTek says:

In the early days of a tech entrepreneur's journey to commercialization, there is a phase commonly known as the valley of death. In this phase, entrepreneurs and start-ups often struggle to grow past a certain point as they lack the sales traction necessary to attract outside investment from angel investors and venture capitalists. As a result, many start-ups plateau and are surpassed by their competition.

In developing markets and tech communities like Saskatchewan, incentives such as the STSI allow start-ups to compete with those in larger centres that traditionally have access to larger capital pools, and in doing so, enable the start-ups to circumvent the valley of death altogether.

I could go on and on about the number of companies that will benefit from this program, but I think we're starting to see the big picture.

Money isn't the only thing these young start-up entrepreneurs need, Mr. Speaker, and Co.Labs is providing that mentorship as well. Co.Labs is run by a board of directors. Now on that board, Mr. Speaker, is a number of successful technology entrepreneurs who are more than willing to give up their time to help up-and-comers navigate the path from a great idea to a best-in-class business.

People like Jacqueline Cook, CSO [chief strategy officer] of Vendasta Technologies; Jeff Dyck, director of engineering at Mentor Graphics; Katherine Regnier, CEO of Coconut Calendar; Greg Sutton, CEO of TinyEye Therapy Services; Ian Meier, CEO of Bitstrata Systems; and then there's Wes Jickling and Kari Harvey from Innovation Saskatchewan.

While the STSI is in itself a huge help to making these new, small, but innovative and disruptive companies grow into something more, without support and mentoring some of these companies may very well fall by the wayside. That's why this whole package is very exciting, Mr. Speaker. These young entrepreneurs now have the incubator, the mentorship, and the capital they need to succeed. This will only make our province stronger.

We have our homegrown, successful citizens reaching out and

spending over 500 hours of their own time helping others who need it. We have a space and organization for the bright, young minds to spend their time building and expanding their ideas while doing it side by side. And now we have the investment from the venture capital firms to fund the next big idea. It's a trifecta for success, Mr. Speaker.

But don't take my word for it. Doug Konkin, Chair of the Saskatchewan Capital Network, here's what he had to say about the announcement:

We are confident that this tax credit will give more people the incentive required to become investors resulting in positive economic spinoffs for the province . . . An Angel Investor Tax Credit will encourage more people to invest in more companies and that investment will ripple through the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I hate being in second place. I hate being in third place or fourth place as well. When I hear of Waterloo, I think of Waterloo, Iowa, home of John Deere tractors. I think of the Abba song, which I didn't particularly like, but I think of that song. It certainly doesn't say to me, Mr. Speaker, tech capital of Canada, but that's the word out there, Mr. Speaker. I heard it time and again that we're losing bright, young minds to Waterloo of all places.

And I hate that, Mr. Speaker, especially when they tell me that they would rather have stayed here. We've been there, done that before with Alberta in 1990s, Mr. Speaker, and it drives me crazy.

So I could go on and on, Mr. Speaker, but I move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports the government's commitment to using innovative programs such as the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Saskatchewan value-added agriculture incentive to support businesses and entrepreneurship in our province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon University has moved:

That this Assembly supports the government's commitment to using innovative programs such as the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Saskatchewan value-added agriculture incentive to support businesses and entrepreneurship in our province.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good to take my place in this Assembly, rise and join debate on the 75-minute motion. And again, in terms of just to get this squarely in sight here, Mr. Speaker, wherein the government moves:

That this Assembly supports the government's commitment to using innovative programs such as the

Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Saskatchewan value-added agriculture incentive to support businesses and entrepreneurship in our province.

I guess whenever I see a motion like this, a thought occurs to me, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, in terms of . . . It's sort of like having a motion that you're a carpenter and you want to put forward a motion that you think the hammer's a great tool or the saw is a great tool. And, you know, well sure, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. If the hammer's being used to build things, if it's being used in a good way, Mr. Speaker, then of course that's something that I'm sure we can all get behind, you know, and congratulations for that.

But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that motions like this come forward and, you know, what are good incentives or good policy tools or good programs, Mr. Speaker, the way that those motions are to be evaluated, Mr. Speaker, or considered, it's hard to do that separate from the way that the government has used similar tools in past or that they've used similar measures in the current budget, Mr. Speaker.

So again in terms of, you know, using different tax incentives to incent growth within the technology sector or within the ag value-added sector in and of themselves, Mr. Speaker, no problem. Those would seem to be pretty standard parts of the policy tool kit. And why wouldn't a government avail themselves of it, Mr. Speaker?

But again in terms of what is the overall record, where there's been a lot of effort made by members opposite over the years to talk about how they weren't in the game of picking winning and losers, Mr. Speaker, and the way that they have decried various of these types of tools out of hand, Mr. Speaker, at different points in their careers, but at the same time when they get around to using them, the different sort of misadventures or misuses that take place.

So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the technology start-up credit, Mr. Speaker, again in and of itself a great thing. But it does bring to mind what happened with SkipTheDishes, where you had a great start-up in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, that was a success and was going places and that, you know, had been advantaged by different things in terms of the infrastructure put in place.

I think of, again we've talked about Innovation Saskatchewan and the funds that the government has oversight there, because of course it's a board that is appointed by those members. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, they have certainly significant representation on that board, chaired by the Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan.

Again, Mr. Speaker, one of the previous ministers to occupy that particular position was none other than Bill Boyd, so in terms of different approaches to innovation over the years, we can imagine what various initiatives and, you know, how that all worked out. But again there's some great people there doing good work and some great tools being deployed throughout the sector for people to avail themselves of, to grow their businesses, grow technologies, and in terms of our economy, Mr. Speaker, we all benefit.

But where it gets off the rails, Mr. Speaker, is with again, in the

case of SkipTheDishes, you know, putting . . . It was \$3 million where it started and there was some backtracking from that. But there was also an election coming on in terms of the need for that to fill up the big announcement calendar. And in terms of what was brought to bear for dollars for that organization, Mr. Speaker, that was back and forth and there was a significant amount of hue and cry in the public as to, you know, is this really what those dollars were intended for? And then of course, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that the entity was bought out and left town, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of these kind of investments, I think the people of Saskatchewan rightfully ask, you know, are you making an investment that is for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan? It certainly is a helpful tool for that organization. But what sort of safeguards do you have in place to make sure that the investment isn't made and then a profit realized by the entrepreneurs, and then they leave town and leave the province, Mr. Speaker?

I think the people of Saskatchewan rightfully look at different investments like this and say, what are the guarantees in terms of the return on our particular investment? So those are questions that, in terms of the way that's played out through different circumstances over the years, Mr. Speaker, this government has a bit of a checkered past on that front, Mr. Speaker.

And in terms of the technology start-up incentive, that in and of itself has gone through a number of permutations over the years. And again we'll be watching closely to see how this works out because we don't have any particular problem with targeted incentives, Mr. Speaker, where, you know, it's filling a gap in the investment environment and brings to bear those critical venture capital dollars, Mr. Speaker. That's not a problem. But again it goes back to the tool analogy. It's what you do with any given tool, Mr. Speaker. And if you're using that hammer to help build something, then great. But if you're using the hammer to smash things or to create damage in a sector, Mr. Speaker, you should put down the hammer.

When it comes to the value-added ag incentive again, Mr. Speaker, diversifying the ag sector is older, I would submit, in terms of a pursuit, than the province itself, Mr. Speaker. It's as old as agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan. So again, that we would set out some policy tools to try and diversify what's happening in the ag sector, we don't have a particular problem with that, I would submit.

But we are seized with different questions in terms of what the . . . why was the threshold set where it was set? What is the anticipated benefit in terms of generated economic activity? What is the anticipated benefit in terms of jobs, Mr. Speaker? And how does that attach to the Saskatchewan economy and the Saskatchewan community? And what sort of assurances do we have as the people of Saskatchewan that it's not to be, you know, taken of advantage of and then leave the province?

And again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not asking these questions because I'm some kind of a meanie. I think the people of Saskatchewan rightfully look at the way that taxpayer dollars are handled and have every right to have those kind of assurances brought to bear, Mr. Speaker. There should be confidence in the way that

those questions will be answered.

So again in terms of the two particular initiatives that are being lauded here by the government, certainly there will be more discussion of them at the committee stage of those particular bills, Mr. Speaker. And we'll be looking to get that more detailed analysis that I would hope has gone on in terms of the work of that treasury board, that cabinet, Mr. Speaker. But again, when we've had other measures come forward, in terms of, you know, well what is the projected job benefits, how many full-time positions will various efforts create — sometimes it's just been kind of shocking, the lack of detail in terms of the analysis that is not being presented in committee.

[11:15]

So again I think these are all fair questions in terms of what is the anticipated benefit. What are the projects that are going to arise as a result of these measures, Mr. Speaker? How is this unique in serving something that is underserved in terms of the market? And again, Mr. Speaker, you evaluate all these things against other measures and the way that this government has decried winners and losers before and all those sorts of things — what they did with the film industry, Mr. Speaker, in terms of targeted incentives there. But there are a lot of questions that arise in terms of how these tools are used by that government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sat here, Mr. Speaker, listening attentively to the member from Regina Elphinstone and a couple of things I picked up. He liked to talk about hammers and tools, and I'll explain these two important tools — or hammers, he might call — in a little bit of greater detail.

But first I think we need to thank the good people that have developed this policy, because I believe these are important incentives and it couldn't be done without the hard work of people in the economy that have asked for these tools to be provided to the people of Saskatchewan, and also the people within government that have crafted, I think, two very important incentive programs for our province. And they do deserve some credit.

So what kind of provincial economy do we want? One reliant on few resources and a large government involvement, like the past? Or one driven by innovation and entrepreneurs? We have heard the NDP's position: only government can lead an economy. We've seen the disaster that was their record: failed government ventures in business. A proven better record: an approach that is, let business be in business and government stay out of the way.

This motion today highlights two important programs to help build business and innovation in Saskatchewan. Both are based on an idea. If you want to encourage growth in private sector, government should take less of a business or investor's income. This is done with a non-refundable tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, past failed governments clouded people's

understanding of tax credits when a second type was introduced. It was a grant scheme. We are not talking about grants or refundable tax credits. Big distinction between the two of non-refundable and refundable. The two incentives in this motion are for projects that will be generating income. This is an important detail that can't be stressed enough. All too often governments in the past have tried to incent growth in sectors with non-profitable businesses with grant schemes or equity positions with taxpayers' dollars. Governments have a terrible record in business unless it's a legislated monopoly.

The failed record of NDP ventures in business include . . . Here we go. It's a long list but this is just the partial list: \$26 million lost in Big Sky Farms, an NDP pig farm; 35 million lost in SPUDCO, failed potato company; 15 million in Channel Lake; 5.6 million in Soft Tracks Enterprises Ltd.; 17.2 lost in Coachman Insurance; 40 million lost in Augusta Communications, and 2.4 million lost in Business Watch International, a pawn shop.

**An Hon. Member:** — A pawn shop?

**Mr. Tochor:** — A pawn shop, indeed. I would like to talk about the value-added agriculture incentive first. In this province, growing our economy is simple. Our astute Premier said it best, we need to sell more of what we produce to the world.

Mr. Speaker, it has been working. During the last decade of growth, our exports have grown by 50 per cent. The next logical step is to grow the number more by adding more value to our exports, move up the value food chain — rather simple, but logical direction that the government can help foster.

It's interesting to note that that was the NDP government's goal with SPUDCO — right goal, wrong approach. We saw massive taxpayers' dollars invested directly into the potato business, with disastrous results. It's interesting to note if a potato operation today made the business decision to expand and add value to their crop, through this program, government will take less of their income, without any risk of the taxpayer, but we would gain the reward of a growing economy with more jobs and a higher value-add to our exports. It's a no-brainer, Mr. Speaker. This program will increase investment in our province, provide employment, increase our value of exports, and grow our economy. Only in the socialists' world, this would be a bad thing.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk about the second program that's mentioned in the motion. It's the Saskatchewan technology start-up Act. This instrument . . . It will be doing this by offering a competitive 45 per cent, non-refundable tax credit for individuals, corporations, and venture capital corporations investing in eligible technology-based start-ups. This will be capped at a maximum annual benefit of 140,000 per investor.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a growing technology sector. It employs over 5,000 people, and according to Stats Canada, contributes \$1.45 billion to the provincial economy. Our tech sector in Saskatchewan is growing. I think it's one of the most overlooked sectors. If we can diversify our economy in this direction without risking taxpayers' dollars, why would the NDP be against it?

To better understand the position of the opposition, we just need to look at their failed record in tech companies. It's a different list, Mr. Speaker. Once again, the goal was right, the approach was wrong. They lost \$90 million in Navigata Communications, a communications company in BC [British Columbia]. They lost 16 million in NST Chicago, a US [United States] Midwest fibre optics company. They lost an additional 9.4 million in Persona, a Newfoundland cable company. They lost 24 million in Retx.com, an Atlanta dot-com company. They lost additional \$3 million in Clickabid, a failed Internet auction business. They lost \$10 million in Craig Wireless. That's always puzzled me. Is there a Craig in Manitoba that is still in business? Did Craig take the \$10 million? What happened to Craig's communications wireless? That's what happens when you put taxpayers' dollars at risk. 8.9 million was also lost in Ag Dealer, a farm equipment Internet site. And my favourite of all time, the failed mega bingo, \$8.5 million — unbelievable.

Why would, Mr. Speaker, would we not want a growing tech sector? It diversifies our economy. It's a non-renewable resource. It helps with our economy when we go through the natural cycles with commodity prices and the swings that we have occurred. Diversifying our economy has been a long-time goal of this government, and I would say our past governments as well. But once again when the NDP had a chance, the goals were the same, but the approach was wrong.

And why is this important, Mr. Speaker, is to have a diversified economy that is growing. Well the decade of growth that we just experienced tells a story. It tells a story of improved roads throughout Saskatchewan, a new bypass in Regina. We've been able to take the dividends of growth and also reinvest it in our health care. If you think the alternative being the NDP closing 52 hospitals across Saskatchewan, we're opening hospitals. We have the new children's hospital opening in my hometown of Saskatoon. We have the new Saskatchewan Hospital opening in North Battleford. We heard . . . Just earlier this week, it was in the news about the good work that's being done in Moose Jaw in their new hospital as well.

Mr. Speaker, another important place that we've put additional dollars because we had a growing diversified economy is into education. We've opened over 40 new schools, and that's what you can do with a growing economy versus what the other guys faced was a decade of decline. They had to close 176 schools. This is why we want a growing economy.

I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon University because I believe Saskatchewan's best days are still to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my distinct pleasure to rise today and enter into this 75-minute debate. The question before us is:

That this Assembly support the government's commitment to innovative programs such as Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Saskatchewan value-added agriculture incentive to support business and entrepreneurship in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when I saw that motion before us, I thought well, maybe there would be some interesting discussion here about where our economy is in this province today and what the vision for the future might be for this province. Certainly we need a vision, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have lagging job numbers, in fact record unemployment in this province for the first time in over 40 years. We are looking at an unemployment rate in this province that is above the national average, certainly sluggish GDP growth. And we're seeing more and more folks leaving Saskatchewan to find jobs elsewhere, with some notable former members of this Assembly included, Mr. Speaker.

And I also thought this was an interesting topic for a debate. There's very little that I think is that contentious on the surface here. Supporting innovation, supporting businesses and entrepreneurship, Mr. Speaker, certainly is something that we can agree with. And finding innovative ways to encourage the growth of value-added agriculture and technology in our province, I think is something that will be of benefit to people in this province, and certainly a vision for what the economy looks like going forward is more than necessary.

We are faced globally at this time with some real pressures. We look at the increasing automation, and it is important that we have tech jobs here in the province, that we have those high-knowledge jobs, and that we take our agriculture sector that step further that we're always talking about in this province and ensuring diversity and value-added.

So there's not a lot there, Mr. Speaker, but imagine my disappointment when so much of the comments by members opposite aren't looking forward. They're looking backwards. They're looking back 20, 30, 40 years instead of doing what they should be doing, and that is presenting a vision for the future in this province. They use the opportunity to, you know, bring up issues from years past, Mr. Speaker, and I guess that's maybe where governments get to when they're nearing the end of their reign and are starting to run out of ideas. So I guess we'll cut them a little slack on that.

You know, in terms of some of the things that have been mentioned, the Co.Labs at the university, or the Co.Lab at the university, 37 jobs and 40 more to, perhaps, to be had. It sounds like an interesting idea. I think the larger context there, Mr. Speaker, is what this government has done with our universities and subjected them to chronic underfunding, unpredictability of funding even. We saw two years in a row where this government clawed back funding from our universities.

[11:30]

And, Mr. Speaker, that is incredibly short-sighted when you think of our need to ensure that we have universities that can support students in their learning. We've seen cutbacks to bursary programs, cutbacks to support programs for parents to invest in their children's education. And on one hand, you know, they're trumpeting the value of some of these programs, but on the other hand are really truncating the higher learning sector in this province. And that is incredibly, incredibly short-sighted.

We, on this side of the House, believe in the talent and the ingenuity of Saskatchewan people. I think that goes back, you



know, prior to Saskatchewan even being a province. And there's no argument about that. But where we do take some argument and have some serious concerns is just with regard to this government's track record. They have a track record of trotting out big ideas, and some of them may be a little more or less thought out than others but then, you know, shying away from them and sending different signals to the people of Saskatchewan.

I look at an article from 2015 from the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], "Evraz invests \$200M in Regina facility, creates . . . new jobs." This was an incentive that was seen at Evraz. I'm not sure exactly what came of that program, Mr. Speaker, but I'm not sure it worked out exactly the way that they were hoping.

There was another program that was put forward by this government was the oil processing investment incentive, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again introduced with much fanfare, but I'm not sure that the results worked out exactly the way that was intended.

We know that the former premier made much of this government not picking winners and losers, and as has been mentioned by my colleague, then went on to pick the dishes, or SkipTheDishes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think we all know how that went. I'm looking an interview from 2013 from the then premier:

We've said, as a government, that we're not going to . . . pick winners and losers. In the past, governments of all stripes have used taxpayers' dollars to provide grants to companies, and we've found that that just . . . [doesn't] work.

So, Mr. Speaker, a few different signals we've seen over the years from this government with regard to tax credits. Of course as I've mentioned before, for people in my constituency, they certainly did see the benefit and value of a certain tax credit, that being the film tax credit. It was one that we, you know, we hoped that these incentives worked. We knew that that one was working. I'm looking at an article from 2012, Steve McLellan the CEO of the chamber of commerce expressed his concern about the tax, the film cuts citing that for an investment of just over \$1 million, the net economic benefit was \$44.5 million, Mr. Speaker.

So that I think is where we take some exception to the members opposite clapping for themselves on this one. Just that they don't always seem to have the ability to carry through on what seemed to, perhaps on surface, be good ideas and they have a track record of shutting down other tax incentives that had already been proven to work. And really a whole industry in our province suffered a huge loss at a time when we're seeing record investments in Manitoba and BC. I know that Netflix has created a huge soundstage in BC. Saskatchewan is being bypassed for that investment, Mr. Speaker.

And of course other big ideas like the GTH certainly come to mind in terms of this entering into the thought process and being a little wary with regard to this government's ability to actually follow through in a way that is effective, that has proper oversight, and that ensures that the Saskatchewan people

are getting the best value for this investment. That's something that we certainly will be looking for.

Again we hope that these programs are successful, that they have their intended outcome. But we want to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan know how they'll be evaluated and that we are getting, as I said and has been pointed out by the Provincial Auditor, a bit of a concern that we're getting proper value for these tax expenditures, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again, it's an interesting topic for debate. I suspect it's maybe a little more designed to again clap for themselves and dig up their list from the '70s or '80s, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I have enjoyed the opportunity to enter into this debate, and I thank you.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave to introduce some special guests.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Moose Jaw North has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member may proceed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, my fellow colleagues. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery we've got a group of 50 students from Lindale School in Moose Jaw. It's right in the heart of my constituency. It's interesting watching them. They're more attentive to the speaking that's going on than the members are, so there could be room for them in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Lindale's a great school. One of the biggest programs they have is when they put on their Thanksgiving dinner at Thanksgiving time, and they invite all the parents and some of the dignitaries, and I'm lucky enough to go there. So they work hard, they're part of the community, and it's great to have them here in the legislative.

I want to welcome them, along with their teachers, Angie Milley-Lowe, Mike Wourms, and Allison Shillington. So welcome. I'll ask all members to welcome them. We're going to visit them a little later and answer any questions they have, and we'll look forward to that. So I ask all members to welcome them to the legislature.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with my colleague to welcome the school from Lindale, but also a very special young man in that group. His name is Lukas Hetherington. Lukas, can you give us a wave?

I've known Lukas since he was a little boy. His parents, Jodie

and Mark Hetherington, are pretty well known to many of us here. Lukas is already a really accomplished skier, who skis competitively on a US team. He finished third overall this past season. As a 10-year-old in the 10- to 12-year-old division, he already clears 15-foot jumps and can land three 360s in a row, Mr. Speaker.

Today is also Lukas Hetherington's birthday. And as is tradition in this House, he's not sitting here right now, but usually when it's your birthday in this House, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice will usually give you a kiss. But you'll be happy to know, Lukas, that I've spared you from that. And so I would just like my colleagues to join in welcoming you to your Legislative Assembly and saying happy birthday to you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — We will now resume the 75-minute debate.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

#### Government's Commitment to Innovation (continued)

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's an honour to join in the debate this afternoon. The debate states:

That this Assembly supports the government's commitment to using innovative programs such as the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive and the Saskatchewan value-added agriculture incentive to support businesses and entrepreneurship in our province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel that these are two important initiatives moving forward with our government to ensure that we can continue to keep a strong economy and allow people to come to our province that seek investments so that we can have jobs, good-paying jobs for people that can support families throughout our province.

And having had the distinct honour to sit on the Innovation Sask board for the last six or seven years, I've had the opportunity to visit Co.Labs when it first opened and see the hive of activity in Saskatoon and all these young, bright people going forward, bringing their ideas and getting help from other community leaders to enable those ideas to come to fruition and ensure that they have opportunities to put their ideas down to paper, make a business plan, and move forward as a business. And I think that's something important.

And I was listening intently to the member from Lakeview's comments, as I always do, because she usually has a few pearls of wisdom in there. And I appreciate her taking her commitment to the 75-minute debate seriously, as we all do in this House. And I was listening about big ideas going forward. She wanted to hear what the Saskatchewan Party government wanted to do moving forward into the next decade of growth.

And we do have a growth plan, and I would ask her to take a look at that, but then I started thinking about big ideas, big

initiatives. What has this government done to allow the province of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan to have better quality of life? And I wrote a couple down, and I remember back a couple of years ago when some of these ideas were first brought forward, they weren't really met with a round of applause from the members opposite.

But one of them was — and the former member for Melfort was here a couple days ago — STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society]. Rod Gantfoer was here. And it was a distinct pleasure that Rod, when he stepped down from being the Finance minister, threw his heart and soul into trying to make sure STARS came to Saskatchewan. And we thought it was a worthwhile initiative, and I was fortunate enough to be Rod's researcher when we started going around looking at STARS. We were able to go to Grand Prairie, Calgary, look at the bases there. And it was a good idea coming forward.

And yet there was a couple members opposite that said — and I distinctly remember a couple of them and I won't mention them, but they're not here anymore — Saskatchewan isn't big enough. Why do you need helicopters? We have fixed-wing. We have the ground ambulance. Saskatchewan isn't big enough. I remember them saying that, as that big idea moving forward, something to help the province — NDP against it. You may see a common theme here coming, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I did look back to a couple of different ideas moving forward because this is about new ideas. Seventy-five minute debate should be about government, opposition members standing up, talking new ideas, and making sure that they're the ideas that the people of the province see as being good for their quality of life and being able to help make good jobs, build a life in Saskatchewan, raise your family, and have a good quality of life.

Another one for me, which I think is very important as a Regina MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], is the Regina bypass. Time and time again you hear the members opposite talking about the Regina bypass, how it ballooned from a \$400 million project to a \$1.8 billion project. Two different projects, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Another big idea, another idea that our government put forward not simply for ... but most importantly for safety, for the safety of people travelling on provincial roads, but also for business, for growth, for truck traffic, for making trucks being able to travel around the city of Regina safely and more efficient, Mr. Speaker. And as a former person in that field, I know that the member from Saskatoon Westview appreciates transportation and logistics of how a bypass around a major city is good for our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Another big idea that I know the NDP have talked about, which ... This is a Chamber where we should discuss ideas, but the bypass has not been on the top of their list of good things for the province. And I do distinctly remember a couple years ago, the member from Rosemont got up and every day brought a petition about getting truck traffic off of Dewdney. I have not heard that petition in years. So just once — and maybe he'll be in the debate — just once be like, you know what, we don't agree on everything but truck traffic is off of Dewdney. Isn't it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I know that's a good thing for the member from Regina Rosemont.

But they get up and they talk about how big ideas . . . You want to hear big ideas, you want to hear ideas, new ideas, for the people of the province, like the initiatives talked about in this debate. But when new ideas do come up, they're mostly against them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think they call them CAVE people, citizens against virtually everything. I think there might be a couple over there. I know you hear that on a certain radio host's show every now and then, and you hear a couple of permanent callers coming in.

But another big idea project that came forward that was for the province of Saskatchewan was the children's hospital, a wonderful initiative in the city of Saskatoon, bringing forward a big idea, a program that's going to help the people of Saskatchewan. And they always now are talking about, oh, are you going to be able staff it? Do you think you can staff it? I don't think you're going to get enough people to staff it.

So when the member from Lakeview stands up and says we need to talk about big ideas moving forward, every time this government's brought forward a new initiative, a big idea, there's been 9, 12 members standing up against it, which is a bit confusing. She's kind of being a bit counterintuitive right now.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a few more. Doctors and nurse recruitment, setting the goal and trying to set a goal to recruit more doctors and nurses. This side did set a goal. Policy initiative by this government set a goal, and we reached it. I remember a former member on that side, Mr. Taylor, said when he was asked about why does the new Saskatchewan Party government set goals, he's like, I don't know. Why would you set a goal? What happens if you don't reach it?

[11:45]

What a flawed logic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Something where I think that's still . . . A defeatist attitude in this province has gone by the wayside because there's a new optimism in this province about growth, about being able to secure a future for your families and secure good jobs, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a couple of more big initiatives: the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. A big initiative, Mr. Deputy Speaker, big initiative, big idea. And I think it's something that will serve the people of the province well. That hospital was 100 years old.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 13 new long-term care homes, another big initiative. Twenty-one new schools were opened last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 21 new P3 [public-private partnership] schools that brought forward new schools that were able for the people of the province, the youth of our province to go and ensure that they had the opportunity to learn in a fantastic facility, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I know the member for Elphinstone is yelling over, what are we talking about? Well when we're listening to speeches from colleagues from either side of the floor, we talk about ideas, initiatives, incentives and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is what this government is putting forward — new ideas, new initiatives, new incentives to attract business to our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think when it comes down to it, there aren't many new ideas on the other side of the House. So that's probably why they're a little upset about having to discuss new ideas in this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is ironic because these two new incentives, which are *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act*, for the member for Elphinstone, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that the fact that there are new ideas coming forward, but they're agreeing with them.

I think last 75-minute debate we had a talk about pipelines, right? We had to talk about pipelines in this Chamber and they agreed. This week we're having a discussion about two different new tax initiatives, with tech start-up and AgriInvest initiatives, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think they're going to agree with these two initiatives, which begs the question to all of us on this side: why did they vote against the budget a couple of weeks ago?

All these were in the budget: pro-pipeline initiatives and initiatives on start-ups for technology and for AgriInvest. So why did they vote against our budget and the new initiatives brought forward to better the lives of people in Saskatchewan?

I think that's what it comes down to. When it comes down to it, we keep on bringing forward investment ideas for the people of the province. We want to make the world know that Saskatchewan is one of the best jurisdictions in the Dominion of Canada to invest their hard-earned money, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's what these two new initiatives are for, to ensure people realize that Saskatchewan is the place to come and to invest money, create jobs so that people can have a great quality of life for their family and their children.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one thing we know about the side opposite — that will not create investment in this province, will not create jobs in this province — is the one policy they're sure about, and that's they are in favour of a carbon tax. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the one policy that this side of the House will never put up with. We'll stand with Saskatchewan people. We'll ensure carbon tax is not foisted upon us by the Trudeau Liberals so that we can make sure that Saskatchewan continues to be the place to invest. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to be able to rise in the debate today because I've been thinking about some of the comments that have been made and thinking about what a great province we live in and the amazing people that live here and come up with innovative ideas.

And this has been going on in Saskatchewan for a long time. Obviously when the First Nations occupied the lands, there was all kinds of innovations that they would make. And then when our European ancestors started arriving here and introducing an agrarian life, then the innovations began in terms of agriculture and livestock innovation. So if you just think about over the last even 100 years, Mr. Speaker, the technological innovations that our forefathers and foremothers have come up with, definitely we see that continuing on in Saskatchewan here today.

And one of the things that struck me as we were discussing this

topic of technology start-ups is comments that I heard about big data for agriculture, Mr. Speaker, and the innovations that are occurring right now and the amazing technological changes that current agriculture producers are part of the renaissance here of what's happening.

And I was at a Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority session just before we started session here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And there was a speaker there from Farm Credit Corporation, and he is well known here in Regina, Marty Seymour. He used to be involved with the Agribition organization.

He gave a really great talk, Mr. Speaker, about some of the very exciting technological changes that are coming for agriculture, and in particular applications of things like glyphosate for weed control. And some of those technologies, Mr. Speaker, involve applicators that can actually isolate a particular weed and apply the glyphosate specifically to that weed, therefore reducing the amount of glyphosate that is needed, which helps the producer's bottom line. And it also helps prevent as many types of these chemicals being, you know, passed on through the watershed into the water system, Mr. Speaker.

So those kinds of brilliant innovations and the technological changes that we've seen in agriculture in the last few years just makes me reflect that this is not new in Saskatchewan. In fact that kind of brilliant innovation has been going on from day one. And I think about my own brother as a farmer and the things that he was able to innovate on his own machinery just to make it work a little bit different so that it'd be more efficient.

I can think about my niece's brother-in-law who works for a manufacturing company. It may be Bourgault. It's one of the ones out in the Humboldt area. And he is an inventor, Mr. Speaker. He's hardly 30 years old and he has I think several patents with his name on it for innovation in the technology of farm machinery, Mr. Speaker, agricultural machinery.

You think about the genome work that's going on at the university right now and just the different sort of ways that we're able to map the human genome and animal genomes. And we look at the work at VIDO [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization] when it comes to viruses like the porcine flu and things like that and that kind of brilliance that I think really reflects our province and our people and the things that people here can do.

So both of these targeted incentives deal with things that are very, very important to our province. And I know my colleague from Elphinstone said it's like a tool, Mr. Speaker. We can use tools for good; we can use them for bad. I think one of things that I'm a little concerned about is the government's approach to these incentives and what sort of work goes into planning which is the best incentives to provide, whether or not it's refundable or non-refundable kind of tax incentive. And we've seen the disaster that occurred when they got rid of the film employment tax credit because it was a refundable tax credit. And in fact we have the premier speaking about that and talking about winning and losing. And he seemed to have a real problem with this type of incentive for a particular industry.

Now I want to just refer to one of his comments that he made

on December 31st, 2013. This was Premier Brad Wall who's in a year-end Q & A [question and answer] with CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Regina. And he was asked about, well they were talking about potash and different sectors in the province, the potash sector, the manufacturing sector. And he said, "So in terms of other sectors, what are your plans to leverage that?" And this is what Brad Wall said as a quote, Mr. Speaker. He said:

I think we have to stick with the fundamentals. We've said, as a government, that we're not going to try and pick winners and losers. In the past, governments of all stripes have used taxpayers' dollars to provide grants to companies, and we've found that that just doesn't work. When we took office, we said we would stop that and focus on the basics. The basics, for us, are competitive taxes. The basics for us is a labour legislative environment that's also competitive with other jurisdictions.

So, Mr. Speaker, that was the premier. I'd like to know, maybe has there been a change in this Premier's views in terms of what his predecessor said? Because he said, Brad Wall said, the basics are competitive taxes. Now when you create tax incentives, that is picking winners and losers, Mr. Speaker.

And as you know, my colleague referred to a special tax incentive that was created a couple years ago. I'll just refer to it properly, Mr. Speaker. And this was an incentive that was meant to encourage steel production. Mr. Speaker, we know that that was a targeted incentive for a particular corporation. The same goes . . . Oh yes, it was the corporation income tax rebate for capital investment in primary steel production. And to date, that incentive hasn't been made use of, Mr. Speaker. But we know there's been a downturn in the economy so perhaps it will be used eventually. But at this point in time it's not even being used.

There was another one introduced last year on the oil processing investment incentive, and we know that this was specifically targeted for some form of a refinery in Stoughton, Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that tax incentive hasn't been made use of yet either. So it's just kind of interesting how these things are chosen, you know, picking winners and losers.

The other thing I did ask the previous Finance minister, how it was that these decisions were made, Mr. Speaker. And he didn't have a . . . I want to find that quote as well, Mr. Speaker. We were talking about the . . . They introduced a new refundable R & D [research and development] tax credit. Now remember the premier was not a big fan of refundable tax credits. But I said, so why are you bringing this back? It used to be non-refundable, and they brought it in as a refundable tax credit. And he said . . . This was the patent box incentive tax credit as well. We were talking about that in the finance committee. And anyways he went on to say: ". . . a refundable tax credit is a direct expense for the Ministry of Finance. A non-refundable tax credit is a loss of revenue for the province of Saskatchewan."

So I said, where are you getting ideas from, Mr. Speaker, and what kind of businesses are you losing if you don't have this credit? And he gave me a list of several anecdotal examples, Mr. Speaker. And I was a little concerned that that was the

approach of the government. And it happened in a conversation, a happenstance conversation and that's when these tax incentives are brought in. So I'm not sure that there's been any kind of specific analysis. He talks about the premier and one tax incentive, and this is the patent box one. He says:

He met a couple of doctors from New York on some type of trip who told him to come down to this particular facility in New York because that's exactly the kind of thing they were looking for, and they had incentives in the state of New York to provide them with the necessary cash flow to develop it.

He goes on further to say, "I came across an accountant in Saskatoon when I was up there [who does a lot of books]." So he said, "I admit to you it's anecdotal based on the feedback I've received and the Premier's received and the Minister of the Economy, for that matter, has received."

So I worry about the analysis that goes into these, Mr. Speaker. But I certainly applaud the smart and bright and innovative people of Saskatchewan. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the business climate is crucial in attracting investment and inspiring entrepreneurs in this province. Both of these tax credits will help with our competitiveness in the province. You know what would kill, what will destroy our competitiveness? A carbon tax. And I do remind the members opposite that in addition to supporting a carbon tax, their leader's \$2.5 billion per year spending plan somehow includes no new initiative to increase competitiveness.

My question is to the member from Saskatoon Nutana. What is your plan to keep Saskatchewan's business climate effective after you try to implement your job-killing carbon tax?

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank the member opposite for his question. I think what we really should be talking about here is the technology and agricultural industries, and making sure that they are properly supported here in Saskatchewan in order to do what they do best and that we continue to grow our tech start-ups. And you know, I have a friend who was one of the co-founders of Vendasta and I have another friend who was a tree planter who is on the board of Co.Labs, and I think Wes Jickling should certainly be commended for the work he's done in this area.

So there's some good people in there, Mr. Speaker, and I think if the question related to the actual motion it might be easy to answer, but we need to be talking about these tech start-ups and we need to be talking about value-added agriculture.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Just to ask the member from Saskatoon University whether or not he agrees that a targeted incentive that generated \$44 million of annual economic activity in return for \$1 million through a tax credit, whether or not that's a good idea. And to, you know, make the example a little more plain, Mr. Speaker, that's based on the analysis conducted by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce around the film industry and the film employment tax credit. So does he think that's a good idea, Mr. Speaker?

[12:00]

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we have lots of good ideas that come out of this place and a lot of good ideas that come from this side of the House, not so much from the other side there. But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is focusing on taxpayer priorities like health care, social services, and education. And since 2007, 51 per cent increase in health care investments or forty-six and a half billion dollars invested.

Mr. Speaker, this incentive that we're putting in place specifically for technology companies will help those companies access capital that's waiting for it but we haven't been able to access. That's private capital. That's not capital from the government or taxpayers' dollars. We need to spend our taxpayers' dollars where they're needed most. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce has indicated that if we want to see tax incentives they really should be directed in the area of indigenous entrepreneurship, Mr. Speaker, because those are areas that need some attention. So does the member for Saskatoon University agree with the chamber of commerce that perhaps we should be developing incentives that help support indigenous entrepreneurship?

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I agree. I agree that we should be incentivizing Aboriginal entrepreneurs. We should be incentivizing all entrepreneurs in the technology field, and that's exactly what this incentive does, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I was at the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge last year, and I saw Aboriginal entrepreneurs — at Dakota Dunes is where we were — I saw entrepreneurs that come from Aboriginal communities. One of them, in fact one of the winners, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I brought down here; she came down here. She had a great idea, a technology company. We talked to the deputy minister of Health, we talked to officials, and I'm sure that they took a look at that and said, hey, this is a great idea.

That is important. That is part of this program and part of this

initiative, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Aboriginal, non-Aboriginal, they'll all benefit from this program to access private capital.

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

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you. As seen federally, massive increases to spending and huge new taxes hurt our country's competitiveness in regards to investment. The Trudeau government's plan is similar to the members opposite, from the carbon tax and spending increases to the lack of support for these value-added incentives. The government has worked hard to make our province have some of the most competitive tax breaks in Canada, and those credits will only strengthen this.

My question is to the member from Regina Lakeview. Seeing the negative impact the federal government's plan has had on our country's competitiveness, will members opposite drop their reckless economic agenda that will be just as damaging?

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. Well speaking of relevant debate and reckless economic agenda, I'm looking at an article from April of this year, talking about again, Steve McLellan, CEO of the chamber of commerce. From a real impact on businesses, the changes to the PST on restaurant meals and construction labours are the real challenges that our communities are facing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members opposite to take a look in the mirror with regard to their reckless agenda and their billion-dollar tax on the people of Saskatchewan before they start casting stones on this side of the House.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, we remember the days when Bill Hutchinson and Kevin Doherty and Brad Wall were all saying that the film employment tax credit was a bad idea because it was a refundable tax credit. And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering about why this government, who didn't like those kinds of refundable tax credits before, has now just found religion and is now reintroducing them, when they've actually destroyed an entire industry in Saskatchewan as a result of that backwards kind of approach.

So I'm wondering if the member from Saskatoon University knows exactly how many jobs were lost in Saskatchewan as a result of the cancellation of the film employment tax credit.

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the short answer to that is no, I don't know how many jobs were lost because of the changes that were made. What I do know, what I do know is that our government is focusing taxpayer priorities like health care, social services, and education.

The NDP lost taxpayers' money on film production companies at a time when health care workers were picketing out front of this very legislature, because the NDP had no money for health care workers and closed 52 hospitals. That's what I do know, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan is home to approximately 35,000 farms, and in 2015 these agriculture producers generated \$14 billion in gross farm sales, representing 20 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP. It is evident that the agriculture industry in this province is in high demand, and we have the local talent and drive to continue to provide our high-quality product to the world while continuing to support our local economy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the member from Regina Lakeview: do you stand with the Saskatchewan ag industry and support our government's value-added ag incentive?

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question, if that actually is the question. Do I support value-added ag and do I support our farmers? The answer is yes.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again to the member from Saskatoon University, because he wants to get off into these false equivalencies and avoid answering the question, in terms of the film employment tax credit, something that generated \$44 million of economic activity for \$1 million on a tax credit, Mr. Speaker, what has he got against the people in the film industry? What has he got against the people that made a living for that, and that have now had to relocate to other provinces? Not unlike, I guess, their premier, Mr. Speaker.

But I guess the question is, why wouldn't they take up a measure that's generated economic activity, created jobs, and diversified our economy? Why is that so wrong?

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And thank you for the question once again. I'll go back to the facts right now. Our government is focused on taxpayer priorities like health care, social services, and education. The NDP lost money on the film production companies at a time when health workers were picketing out front of this legislature because the . . .

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

## SECOND READING

## Bill No. 606

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Forbes that **Bill No. 606 — *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into debate here this afternoon as it relates to Bill No. 606, the Act that would get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And you know, it's interesting. I've entered back into this debate here today with Bill 606. I had brought forward before, along with our team, Bill No. 602 in a previous sitting of this legislature, this same bill to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics.

Sadly that bill wasn't passed. We brought it forward. We pushed it. We called on the premier to support it. Of course that was a premier who had filled his pockets with a top-up, Mr. Speaker, with, certainly in part, big money from donors far outside Saskatchewan, big corporations, Mr. Speaker.

But this is an important bill. It gets to a matter of trust for a government. It addresses questions of influence for a government. And it's about putting democracy back in the hands of Saskatchewan people, and from our perspective they deserve nothing less.

We have a bill that we've brought forward here today. As I say, we brought it forward in the past. We have it here again. This is an important measure to build trust with Saskatchewan people and to revive our democracy here in our province. And you know, I appeal to members opposite to support it.

It's a common-sense measure, measures in this bill, Mr. Speaker. It eliminates out-of-province donations, Mr. Speaker. It eliminates corporate and union donations, Mr. Speaker, and it caps the individual donations, ensuring fairness for all people in the province, ensuring that one's wealth doesn't allow greater potential influence in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

We're the wild west, if you will, of electoral finance laws across Canada, Mr. Speaker. Every other jurisdiction has stepped up and provided their residents, their citizens measures that have brought democracy back. To Saskatchewan people, but here we're still . . . We've got the wild west under the Sask Party, and of course it's been to their benefit to leave it that way, Mr. Speaker. They've had no trouble filling their pockets with millions of dollars of out-of-province corporations and big-money interests, Mr. Speaker.

They had no trouble in fact to fill the pockets of the premier that just departed, Mr. Speaker, with a top-up, with a top-up, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine, on top of the pay, the very good

pay that the premier received as being the premier of Saskatchewan.

And the questions across . . . I'm getting members heckling across, their typical level of engagement in these affairs, asking questions they should know the answer to. Their question is, did former NDP premiers receive top-ups? And the answer to that is absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. From Lorne Calvert all the way back through Douglas, Mr. Speaker, top-ups weren't something that those members accepted.

But what we know about the former premier who just recently left of course to Calgary, Mr. Speaker, the recent premier who left after he brought forward that devastating budget that was a threat to our Crown corporations, that foisted massive taxes on to Saskatchewan people, we know that that premier received close to half a million dollars in top-ups, Mr. Speaker. Half a million dollars in top-ups from money coming from, in part, big money, Mr. Speaker, in part from those donations, those dollars from corporations far outside Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So this gets to a question of trust and what's guiding our choices. And what we realized with this self-interested Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, is that they've broken trust with Saskatchewan people. And you have to start to wonder what's motivated the decisions of this government, the government that had said to Saskatchewan people that they wouldn't sell off their Crown corporations, in an election. Actually they said it election after election after election. They said it just a couple of years ago in that last election, Mr. Speaker.

But of course that wasn't the case, because right after that election, Mr. Speaker, they went at our Crown corporations. Went after them with a sell-off attempt, put them at risk. They sold off the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], the public transportation company, Mr. Speaker. They put a bill on the table, if you can imagine, right after they had promised Saskatchewan people that our Crowns were safe from privatization, that would have allowed the potential sell-off of up to 49 per cent of all of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

And when you look at the dollars that are flowing into this government, when you look at the dollars that are flowing into, by way of a top-up, into a Premier who is paid very well publicly to serve the people of the province, people have rightful questions about who are they serving, Mr. Speaker. And it's a matter of trust.

And now we see it with this, you know, we've got this broken, tired operation we see opposite at this stage of the game, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, certainly broke by way of dollars, Mr. Speaker, tripled the debt in their period of time, a period of time where they presided over unprecedented revenues that should've been a blessing, not for the government but for the people of the province. This is a government that failed to capture and seize a historic opportunity that presented to the people of the province, and now of course they're there looking through the couch cushions for dollars, Mr. Speaker, looking at any spot that they can find some dollars, throwing taxes onto the private sale of used cars, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker.

[12:15]

And now they're looking to try to sell off the people's assets, Mr. Speaker, the people's assets. You know, the one that stands out to me — and I just heard the debate here just a few minutes ago in this Assembly — but this is a Sask Party that actually shuttered the film industry, that made the deliberate choice to drive away investment from this province, to drive away jobs. And now they're looking, if you can imagine, to sell off the sound stage, Mr. Speaker. Who are they looking to sell that off to? This is the people's assets, Mr. Speaker, and today the sound stage, tomorrow SaskTel. Who knows what's next with this government, Mr. Speaker?

And who knows what's motivating them? Because we have the wild west of election finance laws in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have a Sask Party government that has filled its coffers, and of course a member in the case of the former premier who had filled his pockets with those dollars, Mr. Speaker. And it is a serious matter of trust for the people . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I would caution the member in his remarks not to reflect on or impugn the honour of members of this Assembly. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And of course what we have is a trust that's been broken with the people of the province.

You know, and at one point this is a party that had gone out in earnest and had done some hard work. And they reached out and they earned the trust of very good people all across this province in many corners, and you see that. You see that with a large majority with many seats over there, Mr. Speaker. But of course they weren't straight with Saskatchewan people when they went about that work, Mr. Speaker. And when we see the dollars that flow into this government's party, so many questions that are raised as to who they're serving.

At the end of the day, a government in this province, a premier in this province is there to serve the public's interest. They're there to serve the people of this province and there should be no question, Mr. Speaker, as to any other motivations.

And we've seen a government as well that's been scandal plagued. You know, we think of that former minister that was flagged with scandal after scandal after scandal, Bill Boyd, Mr. Speaker. We think of that deal out there at the GTH that in fact enriched, in a major way, donors of that Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. Actions of government that ripped off nuns, that ripped off taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, but filled the pockets of donors of that party. And in that case, actually the minister, Mr. Speaker, that minister was in fact in a business relationship with one of those parties that made out with I think \$6 million in this case.

And of course it wasn't long ago that there were some members on that side that were sort of intimating that maybe the time is now for a little bit of transparency on this front. I heard it actually from the Deputy Premier. I thought he had a really solid message on this front, that there should be a full inquiry into the GTH to get to the bottom of it.

And I don't always agree with the member from Meadow Lake. I get along with him when we're talking hunting and fishing.

We sometimes depart in opinions on matters before this House. But I sure thought he was bang on when he called out the GTH as something that needed a full spotlight on it. And that was a former minister of the GTH who was actually up in this Assembly day after day after day, trying to defend the actions of Bill Boyd, the former premier, that cabinet in this deal, Mr. Speaker. And at the end of the day, if they have nothing to hide on matters like this, let's put a spotlight on what's gone on. Let's shed some daylight on these dealings.

So we brought forward a bill here today that would bring democracy back to Saskatchewan people, that would rebuild trust for Saskatchewan people, that would work to end out-of-province donations, Mr. Speaker, out-of-province donations. Why should people outside Saskatchewan be having a say in Saskatchewan politics, Mr. Speaker? It should be for Saskatchewan people. And it would also end donations from unions and corporations, erasing questions of influence on either front, Mr. Speaker. This bill is something that's popular with the people of the province, that's common sense, and builds trust for the people of the province.

And you have to wonder why this government relents in their head-in-the-sand approach on this front. You have to wonder why the new Premier wouldn't take the opportunity to do something the past premier wouldn't, and that would be to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics and build trust, Mr. Speaker, as well making sure that we put a cap on individual donations across our province, making sure that those that have, you know, significant wealth can't exercise significantly more participation in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

So we have a bill that's before this government. We have a choice for this government opposite to, I guess, decide how to proceed here. It's disappointing, disappointing that we're here again this year when we've been here years previous with a bill before. It was 602 before. Now the bill is 606. The content is the same. The premise is the same. It's that people deserve to have trust in their democratic process and that we need to get big money out of the democratic process.

You know, we've been out all across the province on this front. This is something that people appreciate in every corner of this province. And I'd implore members opposite, I'd implore the new Premier to apply some fresh eyes to this file. This is an important measure for the people of the province. It's problematic that we are out of line with the rest of Canada. It's problematic that Saskatchewan people are losing faith in their democratic process because of things like the question of big money and the question of influence and the question of who a government is serving, if they're filling their pockets from large big-moneyed interests over here, but then supposed to serve the people of the province over there.

And I think ultimately we have the resources in this province. We have incredible people in every corner. We have world-class businesses throughout this province. There's simply just no need to have money flowing in and filling the coffers of a governing party — or any party for that matter — from far outside Saskatchewan. And I think that if those members took the kind of heckling and noise they're making here today, and their unwillingness to bring forward a very basic reform like this to their constituents, I think they'd find that they're on the



wrong side of this issue in a very, very serious way.

And the member from Wascana Plains, you know, shouts out no. And I would urge that member to ask that question to her constituents, maybe not just those that donate to her. What I would ask that member to do is to ask her constituents, the rank-and-file people in her constituency that are working day after day to build and better this province, the rank-and-file entrepreneurs throughout her constituency, Mr. Speaker, the teachers throughout her constituency, those that work for the Crown corporations that are being put at risk by her government, Mr. Speaker. Those are the people that I would be asking, Mr. Speaker.

I think that, you know, these . . . too often, members opposite have been caught up in a bit of an echo chamber, Mr. Speaker, with their donors and pals, Mr. Speaker, and that they've lost touch with the people of the province, that they've lost touch with the reality that so many people face, and I believe that if they reached out in a sincere way on this front, they would hear that this is important.

And we hear the member from Moose Jaw, you know, Wakamow. We don't hear him say . . . You know, when do we hear the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow or any member from Moose Jaw speak in this Assembly anymore, Mr. Speaker, other than heckle? The answer would be not much. And the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow chooses to heckle me and my speech. That's fine here today, but what I wish the member for Moose Jaw would do is bring his voice forward for the people of Moose Jaw day after day in this Assembly to build a brighter future. And I suspect the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow would find that he's highly offside with the hard-working people that he serves when he tries to defend to them that somehow his party needs to be able to fill its pockets, its coffers, Mr. Speaker, with large out-of-province money, big-money interests, Mr. Speaker.

I know the people of Moose Jaw Wakamow are good folks, hard-working people who deserve to have full faith in our democratic process. And I bet you they'd find it pretty strange and offensive that the very rare entry into debate by the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow would be to push back from a measure that would provide a level of democracy and improving our democracy and our province.

You know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and I watch the member, he's heckling, so . . . He doesn't listen though, Mr. Speaker. That's probably the issue as well in that caucus in general. It's probably why he fails to serve his constituents, Mr. Speaker. He was mentioning unions, and so let me slow it down and explain one more time here, Mr. Speaker. The bill that's brought forward here would eliminate — would eliminate — corporate and union donations, Mr. Speaker.

The bill that's brought forward would end out-of-province corporations, Mr. Speaker, and it would put a cap on individual donations in the province. And you know it surprises me in this day at times what members opposite, you know, what positions they'll take. And it's strange on this one because I think that this is something that we can do for everyone in our province.

And I believe we should be taking every measure, every last

one of us regardless of the party that we serve, to improve the trust in the democratic process, a trust that has been eroded, Mr. Speaker, and questions that are serious of this governing party and who . . . questions of who they're serving, Mr. Speaker, and what motivates the choices that they're making, the choices that are hurting people today, the choices that are limiting the future of our province, the choices that clearly aren't in the economic interests of our province, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll continue to stand and to fight to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics, as the official opposition, as the Saskatchewan New Democrats. I know that there's tons of people across political lines that support other parties as well, Mr. Speaker, who support this position. And I know that Saskatchewan people will be very disappointed by the lack of support by the Sask Party on this front. And it only further causes Saskatchewan people, who have really lost trust in this tired, worn-out government, mismanaged government, Mr. Speaker, it only erodes that trust even further.

With all that being said, Mr. Speaker, we brought forward, I brought forward Bill 602 along with our team a year and some ago. That government failed to do the right thing at that point in time. That was at a time though where we had a premier in place, who of course, was receiving additional dollars — a top-up, if you can imagine — on top of his pay to serve the people of the province with party money that would float in, of course, in part, from big-moneyed interests outside Saskatchewan. So maybe that was the holdup for the then premier and the cabinet, the fact that he had received so many thousands of dollars on that front. We have a new Premier, and there's a new cabinet, and there's backbenchers over there that, I think, know that this is the right thing to do.

So I would urge members opposite to apply some fresh eyes to this, to do the right thing, to pass this bill, and get big money out of Saskatchewan politics, and put democracy back in the hands of Saskatchewan people.

At this point in time as it relates to Bill No. 606, I'll adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 606. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:28.]

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