



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

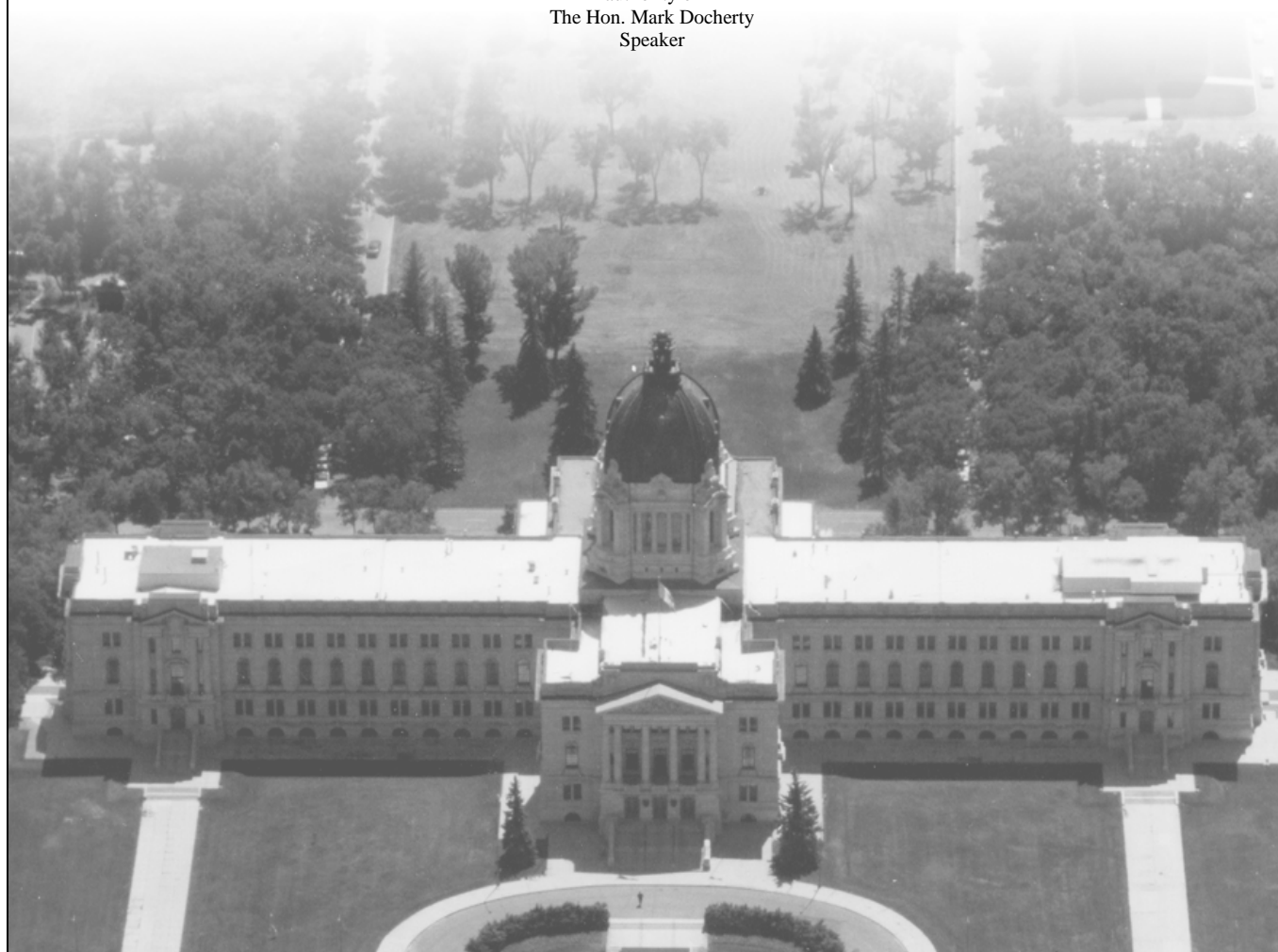
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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The Hon. Mark Docherty  
Speaker



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

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

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**Makowsky**, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)  
**Marit**, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)  
**McCall**, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)  
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**Michelson**, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)  
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**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)  
**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)  
**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

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**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce some very special guests that have joined us here today, Mr. Speaker, and that is some of our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, Mr. Speaker, their teams, and their families that are here today. And, Mr. Speaker, it's just a few months removed from the Winter Olympics in South Korea, and at those Olympics we saw Canada and Saskatchewan put in another outstanding performance.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today we had the opportunity to celebrate those performances here at the legislature and to acknowledge the tremendous commitment of our athletes and those who support them — the coaches, the officials, and the families. Some of these special guests are with us in our Assembly today and each of them will be introduced by their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. Mr. Speaker, our athletes deserve our respect, our admiration for the effort they put in to compete against the very best in the world.

And it's been said that the will to win means nothing without the will to prepare. Well preparing for the Olympics takes years and sometimes — and many times — decades. Years of training for performances that often come down to just a few seconds. Mr. Speaker, you have to be a very special kind of person to make that kind of a commitment. You need to have very special people supporting you in your journey. And in Saskatchewan we're fortunate to have an abundance of those people, and they are a tremendous representative of our province.

They did us proud in South Korea with their performance and with the dignity, grace, and class that they brought to their competition, to our competition, Mr. Speaker. And in Saskatchewan we are proud of these Olympians and Paralympians, and I would ask all members to welcome our guests to their legislature.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Premier in welcoming the athletes, officials, and coaches who have joined us today — Olympians and Paralympians. It was incredibly inspiring to get to join you earlier today and hear some more of your stories, the drive and determination that you've demonstrated, the commitment to excellence and, as the Premier said, the years you've put into this. I just want to join the Premier and ask all the members to join me in thanking these athletes, officials, and coaches for joining us today and for doing what they've done to make Saskatchewan and Canada proud.

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

Wakamow.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce Marie Wright, bronze medallist in wheelchair curling at the PyeongChang 2018 Paralympic Winter Games. Marie is from Moose Jaw and has taken curling by storm in the 10 short years since she began playing the sport.

Marie was part of the first Saskatchewan team to be represented at the Canadian Wheelchair Curling Championship, and was second to skip Jim Armstrong at the 2017 World Wheelchair Curling Championships.

When Marie is not on the ice, she is volunteering her time officiating curling, including being a timer at the 2010 Winter Games. Thank you, Marie, for all your commitment to sport, both on and off the ice. And please join me in welcoming Marie to her Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, somebody that I spent a lot of time with playing hockey when we were growing up, and that's Curtis Minard, originally from Weyburn. Curt is a para-snowboarder. He competed in the men's snowboard cross and banked slalom in the 2018 Paralympic Winter Games in PyeongChang.

Mr. Speaker, Curt has a lot to be proud of. Since he began competing in para-snowboarding in February of 2016, including winning the Canada national championship and taking home bronze in the 2017 World Cup final, not only has Curt competed in snowboarding, but he also helped Canada capture gold in the 2012 world championships with the standing amputee hockey team. Mr. Speaker, Curt truly exemplifies the motto that he lives by, that results are limitless if you believe in yourself. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Curt Minard back to Saskatchewan and back to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's a pleasure to introduce — actually re-introduce — Wayne Kiel, head coach of the bronze medal-winning wheelchair curling team at the Paralympics this past year. This is the second time that Wayne has represented Canada on the coaching side at the Paralympics, being an assistant coach in Sochi, and of course this year in PyeongChang with the, as I said, bronze medal-winning team and Marie Wright, who was already introduced.

Wayne is a veteran when it comes to curling. Somebody said he began curling in 1960. I don't believe that, Mr. Speaker. He had to be one at that time. But, Mr. Speaker, he's been involved in the provincial game for a very, very long time. His involvement in Saskatchewan includes being a CurlSask high performance coach for many years, helping develop the youth curlers of our

province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Wayne and the province wants to thank Wayne for his drive, his passion, and dedication and the love of our provincial sport. Mr. Speaker, he's truly made a difference in our provincial game and we want to thank him for that. Please welcome Wayne to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce Kali Christ, long track speed skater at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. Kali competed in the 1500 speed skating long track. This was not her first Olympics that she appeared in. She competed in the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014 in the 1500 and the 1000-metre team pursuit.

Kali's been skating since the young age of three and she became interested in speed skating at the age of seven after she saw it on TV. She honed her speed-skating skills as a member of the Regina Speed Skating Club and developed into an Olympic athlete, competing in two consecutive Winter Olympic Games. She has made Saskatchewan very proud. Please join me in welcoming Kali to her Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much.

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce Marsha Hudey, an Olympic speed skater who hails from White City. You could say Marsha was born into speed skating. Her father, two brothers, and her sister are all speed skaters, so this obviously paved the way for her. Since then, Marsha has placed in many international competitions and was part of the PyeongChang and Sochi Olympic Team for the 500-metre speed skating. Congratulations, Marsha, on your outstanding accomplishments. Please join me in welcoming Marsha to her Assembly.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Adam Burwell, snowboard coach for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. Adam has been Olympic snowboard coach for both Sochi and PyeongChang Olympic Games, coaching Saskatchewan's own Mark McMorris to two bronze medals, Mr. Speaker.

When Adam is not coaching, he is working on telling stories through film. One of his recent pieces is the documentary film *Unbroken: The Snowboard Life of Mark McMorris*. Congratulations, Adam. Please join me in welcoming Adam to his Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Arm River.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce Ken McArton, an official at the 2018 games. Ken was a curling game umpire for the Olympic Games in both PyeongChang and Sochi. Ken began volunteering as an officiator 30 years ago. Since then, Ken has been an umpire for many national and international curling events, watching one

rock at a time and seeing the progression of the sport over the years. Thank you, Ken, for your hard work and dedication. Please join me in welcoming Ken to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add a few comments to what we've heard already from various members. Our Olympic athletes not only brought excitement to our living rooms this past winter as we cheered them on, but through their commitment, dedication, and hard work they brought our province inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, we have some of the world's best athletes among us here today, all of whom are deeply connected to our great province. They have shown our youth, our province, and our country that your dreams of wearing the red and white on the international stage are obtainable. I want to thank each and every one of them for contributing to sport in Saskatchewan and for being great role models to our youth.

I'd like to mention, if I could, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Olympic and Paralympic athletes who are not able to be here today, just to put that on the record.

Paralympian Brittany Hudak competed in five events at the winter games and won a bronze medal in her performance in the twelve-and-a-half-kilometre biathlon.

Kurt Oatway took home a gold medal in men's super G para-alpine event in addition to competing in the men's downhill, slalom, giant slalom, and super combined sitting events.

Coach Ken Babey was the head coach of the para-ice hockey team.

Kaspar Wirz was the para-nordic coach for the Republic of Korea.

Emily Clark and Brigitte Lacquette helped Canada's Olympic women's hockey team win a silver medal.

Linden Vey is a bronze medallist with the Olympic men's hockey team.

Ben Coakwell competed in the men's four-man bobsleigh.

Mark McMorris. Mark won bronze in the snowboard slopestyle event as well as competed in the big air event.

Ben Hebert competed on Team Koe in Olympic men's curling.

Willie Desjardins and Dave King were coaches on the bronze medal-winning men's Olympic hockey team.

Morgan Alexander and Lyndon Rush coached the Olympic bobsleigh team.

Kelly Shafer represented her home country with Team Scotland in curling.

Curling coach Gerry Adam coached Team Switzerland in PyeongChang.

Thank you very much for your commitment to sport and for serving as role models in our communities. You make our province so very proud. Thanks for being here today.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are a number of people that are seated in the gallery. There are a lot of people actually today that are seated in the gallery. I want to recognize a few that are from my constituency, as well as a couple of others. I would like to . . . Because it's very common for us to recognize the athletes and the coaches, but we know there's a lot of support behind them. There has to be a lot of support behind them.

So in the gallery is Margaret Kiel, Wayne's wife who is a tireless — I can't see her but I know she's back there; I saw her earlier — she's a tireless volunteer in the Balgonie area. In pretty much every activity that goes on, you'll see Margaret working, and just does an amazing job and obviously a great support for Wayne.

Their daughter Kimberly Reynolds is also in the gallery, who's an amazing artist and has artwork in many different galleries across Saskatchewan and Canada.

As well as Ken Bakken is up there as well. Ken Bakken also is a tireless volunteer when it comes to curling. He along with Wayne have got so many youth involved in the game. We don't have people just start at the Olympics. We have people start at the grassroots, and that's where Wayne and Ken have done such an amazing job to make that happen.

Also in the east gallery, Mr. Speaker, are Barb and Brian Burwell, Adam's mom and dad, who have raised an amazing son obviously, but also have had him away from home an awful lot.

And who I was thinking was here but just could not make it was Adam's wife, Jennifer Burwell, and their young son who

obviously couldn't be here.

But you know, when you think of the athletes and you see the pictures of them and you see them in the red and white and how proud we are, we have to remember all the work that other people have done and the sacrifices, not only the athletes, but the family and the family members have put in so that our athletes can hopefully — and they do — make us very, very proud.

[13:45]

So I just want to recognize those family members that are in the gallery today, not to mention the countless family members that aren't here today that go a long ways to making us proud as citizens of the province.

And last but certainly not least, I'd like to introduce my wife who is seated in the gallery as well, Cindy. I think about every four years I get to introduce her. Thank heavens there are Olympics because she would not show up in this building. So anyway I just . . .

It has been a very trying year, a little over a year, I guess probably about 14 or 15 months. You know, sometimes when you go through injuries, naïveté is great. But when you're part of the medical profession, you don't get to be quite as naive as I was. And certainly it all worked out. But certainly her medical profession background and her support allowed our family to get whatever recognition it got.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to welcome these guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the member from Indian Head-Milestone in recognizing some family members that are joining Curt Minard here at the Legislative Assembly.

Before I do, I don't want to forget though. I do want to introduce 16 students, grade 7 and 8 students from Gladmar Regional School in Gladmar. They're here with their teacher, Chris Abtosway, as well chaperones Hayley LaBatte and Tannis Axten. Mr. Speaker, we've already had an opportunity to meet and they had some questions. They also got a tour of the building, as well as got to see the cabinet room and meet the Premier and see the Premier's office.

I also want to recognize Chris. He's not just a teacher in my constituency, but was a neighbour just down the hallway at residence in university. And I got to know Chris at that time, Mr. Speaker. He's brought a couple of classes now to the Legislative Assembly. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming the students from Gladmar Regional School.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet and back to the original reason why I got up, Mr. Speaker, so I just want to recognize a couple of individuals that are here supporting Curt Minard. Mr. Speaker. I'll just say this: I don't have time to do it today, but Curt has an incredible story, Mr. Speaker, and I would encourage everyone to find the story and the journey that

he has been. I first learned about that incredible journey when his dad Brian Minard came to see me in my constituency office, Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions and talked about really the battle that Curt was fighting. And so I want to recognize Brian and his wife, Irene, who is here, as well as Curt's fiancée, Heidi, for them being here at the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And so I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, in the nearly 12 years that I've been a member of the Legislative Assembly, I think this is the first time that I have an opportunity to welcome my mom to the Legislative Assembly. My mom is here today. She's good friends with Brian and Irene, and so she wanted to be here. She did a lot of work in supporting Curt at the Paralympics and getting a flag signed by people from in and around Weyburn.

And, Mr. Speaker, knowing my mom as I do, I know she's sitting up there on pins and needles, nervous for what is about to take place in this Chamber. And I would just say, it's okay, Mom. I think I'm getting the hang of it; I think we'll be okay. And certainly the members of the opposition can help me out with that.

Mr. Speaker — and I had an opportunity to share this with the students from Gladmar — I was in about grade 3 or grade 4 when I first toured this building as a part of a school trip. A group of students from Halbrite School toured this building, and that night I went home and told my mom that I knew what I wanted to do, what I wanted to be when I grew up. And, Mr. Speaker, so to that point I would just say this: Mom, you could have talked me out of this. We could have had a discussion about this.

But no, I want to thank my mom for all of her love and support, and I also want to acknowledge Lee Anderson who is my mother's partner, soon to be my stepfather. They are getting married this summer — crazy kids — Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I can say on behalf of my family and my brother and my sister that we are very blessed to have Lee in my mom's life and in our life. And so I would ask, Mr. Speaker, to welcome my mother, Laurie Tracey, as well as Lee Anderson, to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a tremendous honour to have so many esteemed guests and champions within our Assembly here today. To you and through you, it's an honour to also welcome guests seated in the east gallery and on the floor of the Assembly here today. These are many people that are living with disabilities within our province, and many people, many advocates for people living with disabilities in the province. I want to say thank you to this group for their courageous personal stories, their voices for others around quality of life and around rights, and to let them know that their work is important.

I also want to recognize one of my constituents that's here today, Jamie Ellis, on the floor of the Assembly here. You won't find a bigger Pats fan than Jamie. It's an honour to have you here today, Jamie, and I know he would've been pulling for the Pats all the way through to that final game within the

Memorial Cup.

I ask all members to welcome these very fine guests to their Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Mr. Speaker, today in your gallery I'd like to introduce to everyone students from the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program, which is a strategic initiative led by the Saskatoon Tribal Council. You're going to hear more about each of the individuals from individual members, as well as through a member's statement.

But we have student representatives from the AEC [Almightyvoice Education Centre] Business Club from One Arrow First Nation, Muskoday First Nation Business Club, the Mistawasis Nêhiyawak Business Club, and the Kinistin Saulteaux First Nation Business Club.

But I'd also like to especially recognize the Aboriginal youth entrepreneur coordinator, who is Joe Taylor — he's from Tisdale — who is supposedly retired, but I know is spending countless hours motivating our Aboriginal youth in the province. I'd like to ask all members to welcome our Aboriginal youth entrepreneurs and their mentors to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce three individuals seated in your gallery. I believe all three of whom are which, or at least two at least, are constituents of mine: Chris Gust, who is here; Serge Dubé, who is also here; and his partner, Wendy Saul, who are all here this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Chris is an individual I've had the opportunity to know for the past few years since getting involved in politics. He's a huge leader in the community. He's a big, passionate advocate for community supports for workers, and it's great to have him here. Serge is also a leader in his community as well. He has had a long history of teaching in Regina. And I won't give much more away because he's here for a member's statement that I'll be giving later.

It's wonderful to see all three of them here in this gallery this afternoon. And I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I'd like to introduce the group individually from the AEC Business Club from One Arrow First Nation, and I'd ask them to rise as I read off their name. First we have Stephan Littlepine, Skylar Prosper, Eddie Prosper, Alexis Almightyvoice, Chanelle Smallchild, Eve Daniels, and Alida Kaskamin. And their mentor is Patrick Gardypie.

Now from the Muskoday First Nations Business Club, and I'd ask them also to please rise: Braiden Crain, Tessa Tait, Aleah Taite, Alexander McGillivray, Shanice Beauchene, Kassandra Bear, and their mentors, Barry Bear and Cheryl Murphy.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to take to my feet in this Assembly and acknowledge a guest seated in the east gallery. I note with us here today is Leslie Blyth, and Leslie started her teaching career in Lang, Saskatchewan, I believe. And I'm just thrilled to have the opportunity from this place in the Assembly to wish her very well on her impending retirement I understand is coming up very soon.

Leslie was an inspiration to many learners in that small school and I know she's ending up her career teaching in Balgonie. And I just wanted to take this opportunity and invite all members to join me in wishing her well, thanking her for her service to her students, and wishing her well in her retirement.

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

**Mr. Goudy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have teams from the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program here today seated in your gallery. And I would like to introduce to you and through, the Kinistin Saulteaux First Nations business club and also the managing owners of Tasty Towne Catering. And I'm looking forward to them catering one of our events.

We have with us here today their mentor and teacher, Cyrus Smokeyday, and Cyrus, I'll ask if you'll stand. And the team's up-and-coming entrepreneurs: Justin Night; Wesley Braebant; and the Scott boys, Liam and Tanner.

We also have here with us today, Chris Ochuschayoo, and he's from the Mistawasis First Nation. He's another young entrepreneur who is building and marketing eagle feather boxes. And if I'm not mistaken, he managed to secure a sale to our Minister of First Nations and Métis Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, we also have here in your gallery a group of grade 7 and 8 students from the town of Star City and they're my first school group, so I'm pretty excited about that. And unlike the students from the constituency of our Minister of Environment, they didn't get to see the Premier or his big office, but they did have ice cream sandwiches for lunch.

So, Mr. Speaker, these young leaders are here with their teachers Dwane Burke and Morag Wagner. And I would like all the members to help me welcome them, as well as the entrepreneur teams from Kinistin and Mistawasis to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join the minister and my colleagues from the government side in welcoming all the Aboriginal business

students that are here today. I just want to say from the perspective of the opposition . . .

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

And in my own language, I'd just tell them I'm so proud that they're here today and to not be afraid to take their rightful place in this Assembly. This building belongs to you. Because as an Aboriginal person from the North, I'm very proud when we have students that join us and their leaders, the business leaders that are teaching them the basic skills of business development.

And I too, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome the students here and I encourage you to continue on your path towards economic and social justice for the people, the indigenous people across the entire province, and wish you the very best in your studies.

And also, another Aboriginal hero of mine, Chris Gust, who is with us today. Mr. Speaker, I'm so very proud of the many Aboriginal people that have taken their rightful place, and to point out to them, you're the best; keep it up.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Seated in the west gallery we have 51 grade 4 students from École St. Angela Merici school here in Regina — that's a lot of kids — accompanied by their teachers Rachel Courchene, Natalie Savoie, Sarah Honeysett, Mitch Draude, Tricia Saul, and Helen Waters. So I have an opportunity to meet with the students after question period and we'll have some time for questions and answers, and I look forward to spending time with these wonderful grade 4 students from Regina. Thank you very much.

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

[14:00]

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to you and through you I'd like to also welcome the students from St. Angela, but one special student in particular: Cassidy Oyka. She has become a very good friend of ours. Her mom and dad are great friends with our family, and she is just a brilliant young girl. She's a great dancer, and actually her and her sister are part of the reason I got elected, because you just can't say no to those two girls on the doorstep.

And they've been very good. They go to the same daycare as our kids, Jameson, Nickson, and Claire, and Cassidy kind of looks after them when we're away and she always has a smile on her face. So I want to say welcome to your Assembly, Cassidy, and we'll see you soon. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple of introductions as well. First I'd like to introduce a former constituent of mine sitting in your gallery, Parker Parent. Stand up, Parker. Parker and his family recently moved to Regina, is

now a constituent of Regina University. Parker was very helpful to me for many years, including campaigning, door knocking, attending parades, and many other events. Parker has taken a great interest in politics on a provincial, federal, and municipal level, and he has even gone as far as to create a PowerPoint presentation for his class to help explain the different levels of government and how they operate.

His dream is to become a lawyer and a politician when he's older. We might have to talk about that. But Parker is also busy in his community helping with food drives, donating toys to the hospital, and adopting families at various holidays. Parker is looking forward to helping out in his new constituency. And he's also very excited that his favourite team, the Washington Capitals, are playing for the Stanley Cup this year. I would like all my colleagues to join me in welcoming Parker to his Legislative Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, there's a gentleman seated in your gallery that's familiar to quite a few of us, Mr. Tony Fiocco. Tony, he ran for us in 2007 and 2011 and he works in Central Services for IT [information technology] as a regional support analyst. And on top of that, in his spare time runs a company called First Choice Designated Driver Service with 18 people he works with here and eight in Saskatoon, helping make sure our people get home safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's an honour to join with my friend opposite to welcome Tony Fiocco to his Assembly. I think he's seated behind the clock. There he is right there. Tony's certainly a good person and has a wonderful family and he runs a really important business and service within our community as well. I've gotten to know Tony and his family over the years. I've had to run against him twice in two different elections, Mr. Speaker. He's a very impressive and dedicated candidate as well. He's somebody who's active as a citizen within our community. So it's my pleasure to welcome Tony Fiocco to his Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — I ask for leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I really don't want to ask this question. The member has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I get going, I want to give a shout-out to the Minister of Agriculture, who says he's feeling left out. He hasn't been introduced, so we'll just . . . And the only other two people in the gallery who have not yet been introduced, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to them for this, but my parents are here.

And it's the very first time I've had the opportunity to welcome my parents into the legislature. My father Lloyd, if you could wave. There, yes. They're mad at me right now because I'm making them do that. But you know, I have the luxury, Mr. Speaker, of going home every night to my family, unlike many of my colleagues here. And my parents have played a really instrumental role in making sure that my family is looked after when I'm not able to be there. And so I'm very grateful to them for that.

My father was a tradesman and a small-business owner. He helped create a lot of jobs for other people and a livelihood for our family. He's a fisherman and a game hunter. He competed in the Walleye Trail throughout Saskatchewan, and so I've had the distinction of visiting most of the lakes in the province, probably at a time when I didn't appreciate it quite as much as I should have. My mom worked for the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] for many, many years and also travelled around the province teaching payroll classes. She was a great sleepover host and very fierce with a wooden spoon for my sister when she misbehaved, of course.

I just want to thank them very much for all they do to keep my family going when I'm not able to be around. They're great grandparents to my kids. I'm very proud of you, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased not to request an extended leave. Well, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you in your gallery I'd like to introduce Dennis and Hildred Richardson. They're sitting in the back row. While they're both mostly retired, Mr. Speaker, Dennis had worked as a financial planner in the banking industry and I, along with the Minister of Justice, had the good fortune to serve alongside Hildred on the Saskatoon Public School Board, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you the spirited debates that we've had in this legislature kind of remind me of some of those days that we had on the school board when we were there. We certainly valued Hildred's contribution to the school board, Mr. Speaker, and some of the ideas that she had brought forward back then formed the framework of a number of things that we did on the school board, Mr. Speaker, that are still being done by the school division today.

Mr. Speaker, politics is never far from Hildred and from Dennis and certainly not without their opinion, whether that's Saskatchewan politics, Mr. Speaker, or the current situation that is going on in British Columbia.

But they spend, Mr. Speaker, most of their time in Comox, British Columbia, but they have a number of reasons to return to Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. They have a cabin at Emma Lake, just down the beach from my brother. But in spite of that, they still come back to Emma Lake, Mr. Speaker. And their son, Mr. Speaker, who works in Executive Council here in the building, we certainly value his contribution, Mr. Speaker, and his friendship. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd welcome all members of the legislature to welcome Dennis and Hildred here today.

**The Speaker:** — I'd like to welcome a number of guests as



well. Leslie Blyth, good luck on your retirement. Good seeing you. Anybody else didn't get introduced? But I welcome everybody, and thanks for your patience.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to provide trapping licence exemptions for residents 65 years or older. The trappers are a very important group of people that maintain traditional values in Saskatchewan; the fur harvesting industry provides many economic benefits to the province, and the province has exemptions for fishing licences for residents over 65 years or older, but there are no age exemptions for trappers yet.

And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly call upon the Sask Party government to immediately show their support for Saskatchewan trappers and provide a trapping licence exemption for Saskatchewan residents over 65 years of age.

It is signed and supported by many good people of the North. I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Recognizing the North Central Hockey League

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a minor hockey league in northern Saskatchewan keeping kids busy playing the sport they love. The North Central Hockey League has teams from Montreal Lake, Pinehouse Lake, La Ronge, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Stanley Mission, and Southend. There are a total of 16 teams in the novice, atom, and peewee divisions, and over 250 hockey players in the league are now registered with Saskatchewan Hockey Association. Each division plays a 12-game regular season schedule, followed by playoffs.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to the atom and peewee final games in Stanley Mission on March 8th. I was asked to do a ceremony puck drop for the games, and I could feel the energy of the rink as the teams played.

Hockey helps so many of our young people in the North, keeps them active and builds friendships that last a lifetime. It helps to build leadership skills and teaches our young people how to work hard and deal with challenges in their lives.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the North Central Minor Hockey League's board, coaches, parents, rink attendants, and fans for all they are doing to keep our youth busy, healthy, and active.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Fundraiser Held for Dome Café Chef

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night, along with well over 300 community members including many members from both sides of the House, I attended a very special event for a very special friend to many.

Mr. Speaker, Trent Brears has worked as chef at the Legislative Building for over 25 years, developing strong relationships with many here, including myself. This year Trent was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lung cancer. Trent's faced hardships before, losing his first wife, Bonnie, to cancer. Through this darkness, his faith in God and positive attitude rarely have wavered.

Last night, it was an honour to speak at the fundraising event called Help Trent Kick Cancer in the Butt. Funds were raised to support Trent's travel and additional expenses.

Thank you to CJ Katz for emceeing and Ken McDonald for running the live auction, as well as country music artist Justin Labrash for sharing special music.

Mr. Speaker, in 2000 Trent led Saskatchewan's first-ever culinary Olympic team in Germany, taking home three silver medals and two bronzes. No easy feat. He could have travelled the world with his career, Mr. Speaker, but chose to make Saskatchewan home for a stable life for his kids and his family.

Mr. Speaker, his wife, Liberty, along with son Bryce and daughter Erica, did an excellent job speaking at the event, acknowledging Trent as a loving husband and father, as they shared stories and meaningful scripture and prayer.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to the chefs who donated their time to this incredible four-course meal, as well as the volunteers and attendees for making this event so special.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in providing our thoughts and our prayers to Trent and his family during this difficult time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Regina French Teacher and Advocate Retires

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize a constituent of mine, Serge Dubé, who recently announced his retirement after nearly 30 years of teaching in Regina.

Serge is a leader in Saskatchewan's francophone community, recognized for his enthusiasm for languages. Serge moved from Quebec in 1981 and has been teaching in Saskatchewan since 1990.

In addition to teaching French language to school-age kids, he has been sharing his love of language with adults through the Institut français at the University of Regina and through the French for Parents program where parents of the students he taught could develop language skills to help communicate and better support their child's learning.

Serge has been well recognized for his passion for learning, winning the Inspiring Teacher Award in 2015. His love for teaching and positive leadership has been an inspiration for his students and his community as a whole. I would like to thank Serge for his contributions to education and in the promotion of French in Saskatchewan, and for his work enriching the lives of the students and parents he taught over his career.

I'd like to call on all members to join me in congratulating Serge Dubé for his enthusiasm and a constant commitment to lifelong learning, and wish him the very best in his retirement.

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

### **Early Childhood Intervention Program Week**

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize this week's early child intervention program, or ECIP, week in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to put into words to describe the invaluable impact that ECIPs make on families and children across this province. Today and every day, we recognize each individual who works to enhance children's development in the areas of speech and language, motor, cognitive, and social skills, and beyond. We know that the earlier children experiencing delays receive help, the better the outcome.

ECIPs work with agencies and communities to ensure families and children receive the support they need for the success in school and across their lifetimes. This government understands the significance of ECIPs, Mr. Speaker, and I am proud to say that this year we are investing almost \$4 million into the 14 ECIPs across the province and the over 1,200 children and families they support.

I want to again thank each ECIP across the province for playing a crucial role in the success of many individuals. Your work is so very valued, not only by those who directly support, but the province as a whole. I ask all members to join me today to show their appreciation for ECIPs across Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

### **Young Entrepreneurs Participate in Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge**

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we heard earlier, today we are joined by members of the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program under the mentorship of Joe Taylor. The students participated in the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge which took place this past January and February. AYIC [Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge] is a business plan competition for Aboriginal youth between the ages of 16 and 35 sponsored by Enactus at the University of Saskatchewan. These students were by far the youngest competitors.

The challenge starts with a series of four day-long workshops which teach the participants the importance of a business plan and the steps and information required to take their idea from conception to reality. The Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneur Program was honoured to be three of the final five chosen finalists. Tasty Towne Catering from Kinistin Business Club,

Sewer Vent Extension Kits (It Stops the Stink!) from One Arrow Business Club and the Eagle Feather Box Company from Mistawasis Business Club made their pitches the evening of the gala. The Mistawasis Business Club won the third-place prize of \$1000 for their amazing product and pitch.

[14:15]

This business plan competition is a fantastic opportunity for these young students to meet, interact, and network with a diverse group of like-minded individuals. It also gives them the chance to showcase themselves, their schools, and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the students and the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneur Program for competing with pride and winning such a great award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **History of the Shaunavon Courthouse**

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Shaunavon is home to one of the oldest courthouses in the province. Shaunavon's courthouse is one of five identical courthouses constructed in 1926 and '27. The ground floor held the sheriff's general office and the waiting room and the private office, and the one side was built to hold the vault. This first floor of the courthouse rooms the judge, the jury's office, the witnesses, and the holding cells were located in the basement.

Shaunavon's courthouse officially opened . . . opening was in April '27. The guest list for the opening banquet included members from government, members from the legal profession, and about 60 local citizens. Mr. Speaker, in 1958 the province asked the town if the courthouse could be used for the town hall. The town agreed and signed a lease for a dollar a year to rent it from the provincial government.

Later the building underwent extensive renovations, and in 1984 was declared a municipal heritage site. In 1995 after years of negotiations, the town, who had been paying rent for the building, officially purchased the building for one dollar, including all the furniture. Today the courthouse remains one of Shaunavon's most impressive buildings and retains much of its original character.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage everyone, when in the Shaunavon area, to stop by and see all the history and heritage of this unique building. And thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota.

### **Saskatoon Athlete Wins Silver at National Badminton Championship**

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the spirit of sport, I'm delighted to rise today to recognize a constituent of mine, Madison Ong. Madison, along with her badminton partner, Brandon Redekop, won a mixed doubles silver medal at the 2018 Yonex Under 23 and Junior National Championships

in Burlington, Ontario on May 19th. This performance isn't Madison's first success at this tournament. She also received the Sportsmanship and Fair Play Award in 2016.

And not only is she a talented badminton player, Mr. Speaker, she is also a gifted Ultimate Frisbee player. This year Madison was named on Canada's world junior team and will be representing Canada at the 2018 JFDF World Junior Ultimate Championships held in Waterloo, Ontario. She is currently our only Saskatchewan athlete who's represented on the roster, so we're very proud, Mr. Speaker.

And I ask that all members please join me in congratulating Madison on her silver medal at the badminton Junior National Championships, and we wish her all the best on her quest for gold with Team Canada at world's for Ultimate this summer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Status of Crown Corporations

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a good day for Saskatchewan. After a public outcry like we haven't seen in a very long time, this government finally decided to repeal Bill 40 once and for all. And that's a good thing to do. The people of this province have been crystal clear; they have no interest in seeing a sell-off of Saskatchewan's Crown corporations.

But, Mr. Speaker, if past behaviour is any predictor of future behaviour, this latest move doesn't guarantee anything. We've seen this government's privatization agenda in action for the last decade, and we know we can't trust them with our Crowns.

The Minister of Justice said that they need Bill 40 to scrap and sell off STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], our public transportation network that connected our province. Does the Premier believe he still has the ability to wind down and sell off any of our other Crowns without the provisions contained in Bill 40?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And we stand on this side of the House in support of the Crown protection Act that both sides of this House voted for, Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago.

With the relation to trust, Mr. Speaker, in this government, I think the people across the province of Saskatchewan — and I've travelled most of it in the last year — do have a degree of trust in the government that they have elected to operate and to govern on behalf of them, Mr. Speaker.

And we will continue to reach out to people across this province — as MLAs in our geographic areas, as ministers, as legislative secretaries — to engage with people across the great province of Saskatchewan to ensure that we continue to make good decisions, Mr. Speaker, decisions that they can be proud of on the economic files of government to ensure that we can

continue to have the economic growth in our communities, Mr. Speaker, the population growth in our communities, and to continue to provide the services that the people of Saskatchewan expect their provincial government to provide.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question was of course about Crown corporations, and Saskatchewan people deserve clear answers and commitments on what this government's plans are for Saskatchewan's Crowns. Even with Bill 40 off the books, we know this government has been very creative in their privatization of our Crowns. And no wonder the doubt exists as we travel the province and hear people truly concerned about the future of SaskTel and other Crowns.

They sold off STC. They told us it was a wind-down. They sold off ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], 40 liquor stores, SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]. We know it was no accident that they removed SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] out of the Crown protection Act.

Again, to the Premier: can he commit today, on the record, that Saskatchewan people can rest assured that all of our Crowns will remain under the ownership and control of the people of Saskatchewan under his watch?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, we support the Crown protection Act that was voted into law in this province by both sides, Mr. Speaker, supporting that over 10 years ago. I don't know how much more clear we can be with that, Mr. Speaker.

And we support the services, the services that our Crowns provide to people across the province of Saskatchewan, provide on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we salute those that work within our Crown corporations that provide those services to our communities and our families across the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And we continue to promote a strong economic environment here in the province of Saskatchewan so that we can continue to have people in those communities, Mr. Speaker, to create jobs in those communities through the private sector to ensure that we have the growth in the communities, the growth in population, the growth in our economy and the opportunities, not just for the people that are moving here to our province, but the future for the next generation, Mr. Speaker — for my children, the members' opposite children, and all of the next generation in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

#### Costs and Benefits of Carbon Capture and Storage

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are waking up to the news that we're set to pay for another big ticket fix at Boundary dam. We've learned that SaskPower's put out a tender for external engineering to help address shortfalls with

the amine scrubbing technology.

On top of millions paid in penalties to Cenovus each year and millions spent replacing amine each year and millions spent last summer replacing CO<sub>2</sub> compressor coolers, we're now spending millions on mobile amine reclaimer units because the processes still don't work. Is anyone else seeing a pattern here?

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower ratepayers shouldn't be the guinea pigs for a never-ending experiment, and they shouldn't have to keep footing the bill for the never-ending fixes at Boundary dam. How much more will Saskatchewan people pay for these amine reclamation issues, and how many rate hikes will be needed to pay for it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to correct a number of things. I want to correct a number of things in the gentlest way that I can, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the member says that it's not working. In fact, that is not the case. I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that the CCS [carbon capture and storage] unit was online 100 per cent of the time in January, 100 per cent of the month of February, 99.7 per cent of the month of March, and 95 per cent of the month of April, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that the member raises is not new. In fact, the president of SaskPower wrote about this on a blog post in December of 2016, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is working with the vendor Cansolv, is also looking for some outside eyes as well. But I can report that the degradation factor of the amine solution is actually decreasing. This is certainly good news, moving forward.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, we appreciate that these things that are happening will need fixing, and that it's a learning process, but how much longer should taxpayers be on the hook for this journey that has no end in sight? The public investment in this project is staggering, and it balloons each year.

Now we were told to expect a decision on the CCS expansion to Boundary dam 4 and 5 by December of last year. Well it's almost June, and we're still waiting. It should be clear. With the original business case blown out of the water, it makes no sense to move forward with expanding CCS to BD [Boundary dam] 4 and 5. Will the minister commit today to stop experimenting with taxpayer dollars and guarantee that Saskatchewan people will not be paying for CCS expansion at Boundary dam 4 and 5?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to make that commitment today because the due diligence hasn't been done, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, these are big decisions that we have to make, Mr. Speaker, and big decisions that we have to analyze before we

can move forward in making those decisions.

I find it odd though, Mr. Speaker, that in the first set of questions from the Leader of the Opposition, the questions about protecting the Crowns, well, Mr. Speaker, we support that. In fact, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower, as a Crown utility emits carbon dioxide. And if the point of all of this is to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Mr. Speaker, then Boundary dam 3 is an important part of that solution, not only for the province but the entire world, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in fact the United Nations indicates that in order for us to decrease global temperatures by two degrees, we need CCS across the world, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this project, the Boundary dam 3 has sequestered 2 million tonnes to date and, as I indicated, has been online more than 95 per cent of the time for the first four months of this year, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is something that I think the people of Saskatchewan can be proud of.

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

### Global Transportation Hub and Drainage Issues

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, last week we again pushed this government to do the right thing and get the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] to take responsibility for their drainage ditch. Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister tried to dump on the farmers in the area, but that's really not fair. Those farmers are doing their part. But they are frustrated because for years they've been trying to work with the GTH, and the GTH has not been a good neighbour.

Last week the minister said, "The plan is for the Global Transportation Hub to take ownership of that ditch, but currently it's actually owned by the city of Regina." Well, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't quite jive with a March 10th, 2014 letter from the city of Regina to the GTH, where they said, "The city confirms that the Global Transportation Hub Authority as the controlling authority will assume responsibility of operation and maintenance of the channel going forward."

Well, Mr. Speaker, the city handed over responsibility four years ago, but the GTH has shirked it ever since. How does the minister explain this contradiction, and when will the GTH get its act together and take responsibility for this ditch?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first I did not dump on the farmers, Mr. Speaker. What I pointed out is that there are a number of landowners that all have drainage projects in the area, including the Global Transportation Hub, the city of Regina, and neighbouring farmers, Mr. Speaker, and many of those projects, many of those drainage works are not in compliance, including the farmers. And so would the member opposite like us to take the same tack with those farmers as she's requesting that we do with the city of Regina and the Global Transportation Hub, Mr. Speaker? That was what I was saying last week.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the actual drainage ditch, it is

currently owned by the city of Regina. There's an agreement in principle in place, but as with these issues, it's with the lawyers, Mr. Speaker. The lawyers need to finish the legal work in terms of the contract, Mr. Speaker, and long term, the plan is for a watershed association involving all of those entities to be brought together and to work together and be in compliance going forward into the future.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister is blaming lawyers for the GTH's failure to take responsibility? Now I wonder, I wonder if the former deputy minister to the premier, Alanna Koch, was called in to a meeting to deal with this WSA [Water Security Agency] issue because it's likely the government only needed her services when it came to the scandal-plagued Bill Boyd.

But to the matter at hand, in a December 2016 letter to a local producer, the WSA rightly puts the blame on the GTH when it comes to filing the proper paperwork to drain their swamp. But then the WSA threw up their hands in surrender, saying they can't do anything. The minister won't take responsibility. The WSA won't enforce the law. The GTH won't follow the law. Wow, Mr. Speaker, talk about the gang that can't shoot straight.

Either to the Minister of the WSA, when will you enforce the law? Or to the Minister of the GTH, when will you follow the law?

[14:30]

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Again, Mr. Speaker, would the member opposite like us to enforce the law equally across all of the landowners in the area? Because that would mean applying it to the farmers that she just accused the government of dumping on in her first question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is an agreement in principle for the GTH to take over the ownership of that. But, Mr. Speaker, what I have been advised is that the lawyers for both sides, including the city of Regina, are working to finish the contract, Mr. Speaker. The GTH has engaged with contractors to begin maintenance of that ditch. Nobody is trying to shirk their responsibility, and certainly we are working in collaboration with all of the entities, trying to bring them all in compliance, Mr. Speaker, and form a watershed so that there is one entity moving forward that can be in compliance going forward.

I think this is the proper approach. I think this is the right approach, rather than what the member opposite wants us to do, basically, Mr. Speaker, is apply the law unequally on the Global Transportation Hub or the city of Regina who actually owns it currently, and not apply it to the farmers that she's advocating on behalf. We're working with all of those groups together and want to see them all brought into compliance, Mr. Speaker.

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

## Supports for Refugees

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thousands of people come to our province every year as refugees. These are folks who want to work and support their families but often need additional language or job training before they can land a good full-time job. Refugees enrolled in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada, or LINC, classes used to be eligible in some cases for the provincial training allowance, but now they're cut off.

That means they have to quit their part-time jobs and collect social assistance in order to get the English training they need to improve their skills and secure better jobs in the future. This simply doesn't make sense. Why won't the Sask Party invest in skills and job training for refugees who want to make Saskatchewan their new home?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is, as far as funding for refugees in year 1, that's done by the national government, Mr. Speaker. There's a program in place under which the Government of Canada funds job training and language training.

After that, after year 1, then it becomes a responsibility of the province. And those newcomers are at that point entitled to all of the services that would be applicable for any other newcomer to the province, Mr. Speaker. So that would include a provincial training allowance. That would include adult basic education. Any of the resources or opportunities that would be available to any other newcomer or any other resident would also be available to refugees, Mr. Speaker. We take that seriously, and we have worked closely with newcomer communities in making sure that those services are available.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister knows that this is a program that has been cut. We had this discussion in committee, and we have some serious questions about it. It doesn't matter if it's a provincial issue or a federal issue.

The Sask Party government offers the training allowance. These folks live in Saskatchewan and need training, and it just makes sense to extend the PTA [provincial training allowance] to English-language students. Forcing LINC students out of the workforce and on to welfare is short-sighted and indicative of this government's lack of vision. They'd rather pay for newcomers to sit idle on a Saskatchewan assistance plan than see them working and studying English at the same time.

It defies logic, Mr. Speaker. How can the Sask Party justify forcing refugee families to go on to social assistance to access job training?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well Mr. Speaker, the reality is that this government in the last 10 years has seen, and this province has seen, over 160,000 newcomers come to this province, Mr. Speaker. Over 100,000 of those newcomers have come from

outside of Canada, Mr. Speaker. It's a rate of growth that we have not seen and a rate of in-migration and international in-migration that we haven't seen into this province since the 1920s or '30s.

Members opposite can heckle all they want, Mr. Speaker, but that's the reality and those are the facts. And those are facts that we are very proud of. We have worked closely with newcomer communities. We've worked very closely with the national government as well in designing what we feel, and I think, is regarded by many as the best provincial nominee program in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, one that's seen year-over-year increases, reflecting the fact that the national government as well see this as one of the best provincial nominee programs in the entire country.

So we're going to continue to work with newcomer communities. We're going to continue to welcome newcomers from outside of the country, Mr. Speaker. We think it's the right thing to do, and we are very proud of the record on this side of the House for doing so.

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

#### Provision of Transportation Services

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, for Kelly Wills, a 58-year-old Gravelbourg man who uses a wheelchair, the sell-off of STC has been devastating. On April 19th he sent a letter to the Premier. He wrote:

I'm a physically disabled individual struggling to keep a roof over my head, food in my stomach and medicine in my body while having the means to travel to my scheduled appointments.

Your government first stole my means of transportation from Gravelbourg to Regina for my medical needs when you cancelled the STC bus.

Now I have to beg for rides . . . I have already missed appointments because I couldn't find a companion with transportation for the day.

[In his letter, Kelly asked the Premier] . . . would you be willing to set aside 6-8 hours of your day to drive your car and wait all day for someone you barely know?

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: what's he have to say?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've said many times in this House, the decision to wind down STC was not an easy one and not one that this government took lightly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but the fact is that the subsidy had gone from, in 1997 it was \$6 per ride, all the way up to \$97 per ride when the decision was made to wind down STC. Now that, Mr. Speaker, is just unsustainable and the ridership had continued to decline, Mr. Speaker. And I would mention, Mr. Speaker, that across

Canada there is no other, there was no other provincial transportation system, Mr. Speaker. And in fact, STC when in existence, Mr. Speaker, served less than half of the communities in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we're hoping with the introduction of ride-share into the province, that this will also provide additional opportunities for these people to get assistance, Mr. Speaker. So we're optimistic that that will take place. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that minister's facts don't hold water. The people in this Assembly know that an Uber will be no solution to get from Gravelbourg to Regina.

Mr. Speaker, joining us in the Legislative Assembly today is Michael Huck and Shirley Toth. Shirley's kidneys have completely shut down, and she requires dialysis treatment four times a week. Each treatment is three and a half hours. Shirley used to commute from her home in Bethune to Regina utilizing STC. When the Sask Party destroyed STC, they had no choice but to sell their home in Bethune and to move to Regina. The financial costs were enormous, larger mortgage, and house renovations to make it wheelchair accessible. Shirley was forced to leave her rural community along with Michael and the social ties and relationships that it had.

What does the Premier have to say to Michael and to Shirley? And will he finally do the right thing and restore public transportation and ensure that people living with disabilities in rural Saskatchewan aren't prisoners in their own communities?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll say it again: it was not an easy decision, the decision that we made to wind down STC, Mr. Speaker. It was one that we did ponder over. We knew there would be some unintended circumstances that would happen after that, Mr. Speaker.

But I will remind the member opposite, less than half the communities were saved. I had a friend, Mr. Speaker, who would leave my home community of Prince Albert and drive out to his . . . who was not serviced by STC, so he could pick up his parents and take them to appointments, Mr. Speaker. That's what he would do. That's what he would do, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the member opposite that when the opposition was in power in this government, Eldon Lautermilch who was then minister — Mr. Speaker, this is back when the subsidy was only \$6 — he brought up the fact, Mr. Speaker, that that was unsustainable. At \$6 per ride it was unsustainable. And that was under a former NDP government, Mr. Speaker. And 10 years later he was still saying it was unsustainable, Mr. Speaker, and . . .

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, of course the Sask Party betrayed Saskatchewan people and weren't straight with them about the sell-off of STC. But they deserve one heck of a lot better than a blabbering minister sharing facts that aren't consistent, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — That's out of order. I would ask the member to withdraw and apologize.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Withdraw and apologize, that comment. They deserve better than a minister who's putting facts that don't hold water on the table, ignoring the reality of people like Michael and Shirley that are here today.

My question to the Premier of Saskatchewan: does he not think that Saskatchewan people deserve better than responses like that? Will he not commit to restoring public transportation in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I know that that member, when he was running for leadership — which he lost, Mr. Speaker — that member when he was running for leader of that party, he promised a new transportation system which he said would only cost \$10 million, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, you don't have to go to school to learn math to know that it would cost way more than \$10 million to provide transportation services to every community in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And maybe he should ... [inaudible] ... a little bit better before he asks a question like that. Mr. Speaker, that's what he should be thinking about, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

### Strategies to Address Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday we were happy to hear that the Minister of Justice recognizes that regular reviews like the *Domestic Violence Death Review Report* are "necessary and essential" and that the government has accepted the 19 recommendations laid out in that report. We are also happy to have heard that the Minister of Justice plans to add additional resources to the creation and implementation of a domestic violence strategy in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Justice to clarify when the domestic violence strategy development will begin and when they plan to have it completed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's under way now. I had indicated earlier when I did media on this, that we did not want to wait months or years for a comprehensive announcement, that we'd announce things as they were ready to go. So over the next few months you'll hear announcements that we're doing this, we're doing that, this is our response to the specific issue.

The issue that the member opposite raised is one that all members of this province understand and realize the importance of. We want to work with the providers all the way across the province. We want to make sure that they're adequately resourced, that we're not duplicating in some areas and undersupplying in some others. We want to make sure that we do everything we can to do the best for the victims in our province. And as a province, there should be nothing less that we do for them than the very best to make sure that they have a good quality of life going forward.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, for months on this side of the House, we have been reiterating the need for both a domestic violence strategy as well as a sexual assault strategy for Saskatchewan. And yesterday in this House, the Minister of Justice said yes to the development of these strategies and committed to including recommendations from the *Domestic Violence Death Review Report*. We very much thank the minister for that commitment, and look forward to the ways that we can work together to implement that goal.

The minister however was not entirely clear as to the timeline of the development of a sexual assault strategy. So I will ask the Minister of Justice today to clarify. When will the government begin the development of a sexual assault strategy for Saskatchewan, and when do they plan to have that completed?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite take some issue when the two issues are answered together. The reality of it is, in many cases, it's the same service providers that are dealing with the issues.

We know that they are two separate issues, and we want to deal with them separately. But to the extent that funding flows to the same entities, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to work with and make sure that the agencies are funded. We will work and have announcements as we go along. We understand the needs that are there, and we'll work and continue to do that. And we thank the members opposite for raising the issue. This is something that's important to all of us, Mr. Speaker.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

[14:45]

### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017* with amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017* and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize the minister.

#### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

##### Bill No. 76 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First and second reading of the amendments.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 76 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing

Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 115, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 115, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2017* and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 115 — *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2017*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 115, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2017* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report



Bill No. 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act* with amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act* and that the bill and its amendments be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize . . .

### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

#### Bill No. 121 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First and second reading of the amendments.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 121 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act* be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

#### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 122, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018*, a bilingual bill, without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 122, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018*, and the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 122 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018/Loi de 2018 corrélative de la loi intitulée The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I move the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 122, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018* be now read a third time and passed under its title.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

### Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its fifth report. I move:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

I recognize the Chair . . . Which one are you? Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Cox:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act* with amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — I request leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*, and that the bill and its amendments be now read a third time.

Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the amendments be read a first time? I recognize the minister.

## FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

### Bill No. 114 — *The Vehicles for Hire Act*

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First and second reading of the amendments.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

## THIRD READINGS

### Bill No. 114 — *The Vehicles for Hire Act*

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — Moved by the minister that Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act* be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Cox:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — I request leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017* and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 112 — *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a third time and passed under its title. Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Cox:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*, and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 82 — *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — Moved by the minister that Bill No. 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a third time and passed under its title. Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of Standing Committee of Crown and Central Agencies.

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Cox:** — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its fifth report. I move:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 301.

**The Speaker:** — Tabled, 301. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 302 through 306.

**The Speaker:** — Ordered, 302 to 306.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Committee of Finance.

**The Speaker:** — I'll now leave the Chair for Committee of Finance.

[15:00]

### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

**The Chair:** — Okay. Members, I'll call the Committee of Finance to order. The item of business before the committee this afternoon is Executive Council, vote 10. Before I call the vote on subvote (EX01), I will just make a few comments about the Committee of Finance for the benefit of the new members and members who perhaps haven't had that much experience as to how this committee operates, and for our viewing public.

The Committee of Finance is a committee that all members of the Assembly are members of this committee. This committee, the rules of operation are somewhat different than the standing committees. One of the things that differs from the standing committees, in the standing committees the individuals asking and answering the questions remain seated; in this committee the members asking the questions and the members answering the questions stand. A major difference is that only members can participate. Officials cannot participate in the committee but they do participate in the standing committees.

I would just caution members not to interact with the officials, and I'll caution officials not to interact with members. And the way we've operated this committee in the past is that when we have a question-and-answer segment, the Premier and the leader and other members who perhaps may be asking questions just interact between themselves. As I mentioned to both the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I would prefer when, if we enter into debate, that comments be made to the Chair.

So with that, Premier, I would ask you to introduce your officials that you have here with you this afternoon.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. As we're nearing the end of the legislative session, that means that we've come to the point where estimates for Executive Council are given the full and proper consideration of the Assembly. And, Mr. Chair, I would just take this moment to introduce: to my left is Shannon Andrews, the chief of staff to the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan. To her left is the deputy minister, Kent Campbell. To my right, Mr. Speaker, is the special adviser to the Premier, Mr. Reg Downs. Directly seated behind me, Mr.

Speaker, is Mr. Jarret Coels who is the executive director of House business and research. And immediately to Jarret's left, Mr. Speaker, is Bonita Cairns who has just retired from her role as executive director of corporate services in Executive Council, but has agreed to come back here today for this Committee of Finance. Thank you.

### General Revenue Fund Executive Council Vote 10

#### Subvote (EX01)

**The Chair:** — Thank you, Premier. We will now call subvote (EX01), central management and services. Premier, I would ask if you'd like to make a short opening statement.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And I failed to mention in the chair where the Attorney General is, we will cycle some ministers in and out of that chair, maybe starting with the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker, as we require information throughout the afternoon that we'll have the opportunity to spend here today, Mr. Speaker.

I'm very fortunate to serve alongside these experienced and capable not only elected members, Mr. Speaker, in the Government of Saskatchewan, but all of the individuals that contribute to the government here in the province, the staff members that I introduced and the others that serve in this building and across the province, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank them for the work that they put into each and every day that they arrive at their career, Mr. Speaker, but the work that they put into preparing for today.

And I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite in advance for the questions that they'll ask on behalf of the people of this province here today, Mr. Speaker, an important role in our governance system.

Mr. Chair, we meet at a notable moment in the political history of our province, at least for our generation, as we gather in this Assembly during a time of change, beginning, Mr. Speaker, quite obviously with the chair that I sit in. We have a new Premier, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you, as I said, it's a great honour for me to succeed the previous premier for a decade in this province, Mr. Brad Wall who was an inspirational and visionary premier for nearly a decade on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, an outstanding party leader for more than 13 years, Mr. Speaker, and a hard-working MLA for nearly 18 years on behalf of those constituents in the community and constituency of Swift Current.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a new Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, we've had . . . This is the eighth new Leader of the Opposition over the last decades, Mr. Speaker, but we're confident that the new Leader of the Opposition is bringing the unity and stability to that side, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And I think that's a good thing for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to have a strong opposition in this province.

We have a new Speaker in this Assembly, Mr. Chair, and I want to thank him for overseeing the proceedings of this House each

and every day, with a very careful manner that he performs at. And I know he's watching so I'll mind my comments very carefully and they'll be complimentary.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, and finally I think of note, this session was opened a few months ago with the Throne Speech read by a new Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Speaker, His Honour Thomas Molloy. His Honour is perfectly suited to the role of Lieutenant Governor in the province of Saskatchewan as an accomplished, compassionate, distinguished gentleman with deep roots in our great province.

There has been a revitalization of sorts, I think I would put forward here, Mr. Speaker, with all of these new roles in this legislative session. And here's something else I think that is very notable as well, and I've said it before, Mr. Speaker, but it bears repeating. The budget speech this year was delivered by our Finance minister, the member from Humboldt, Mr. Speaker, the first female Finance minister in the history of the Saskatchewan Party government, only the second female Finance minister to deliver a budget in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And she delivered this budget, this budget address, in difficult circumstances. Being the MLA for the constituency of Humboldt, she delivered that budget just days after a terrible tragedy involving our Humboldt Broncos. Mr. Speaker, I know the members opposite join us in expressing our gratitude to the Minister of Finance, the member for the constituency of Humboldt, for a job well done on that day.

Mr. Chair, the budget released last month showed that the province's finances are on track. We're on track to balance, Mr. Speaker, the budget — Mr. Chair, my apologies — balance the budget within the three-year time frame that we set out last year.

In this last fiscal year, Executive Council, Mr. Speaker, part of the purpose of these estimates, but Executive Council underspent its budget by nearly some \$340,000, and that money was returned to the provincial treasury. We are operating today with 46 fewer staff members than the previous government did in 2007. That's a 26 per cent reduction in the staff in Executive Council. Overall, salary expenses for political staff in this building are down more than \$286,000, or down about twenty-three and a half per cent.

Travel expenses incurred by the Premier's office and by ministers and their staff have also been reduced. Compared with a decade ago when the members opposite were in government, the number of out-of-province trips is down some 62 per cent and the cost of out-of-province travel is down 67 per cent. Ministerial travel costs are down from nearly just over a million dollars, or about a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, to just over \$300,000 last year, a decrease of about 70 per cent.

Overall, the Executive Council budget this year is down a further 1 per cent from last year's budget. Last year's budget was down 5 per cent from the year previous. So, Mr. Chair, the expenses have been controlled within the Executive Council of the Government of Saskatchewan, and we expect that trend to continue this year and into the years ahead.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I won't take up a lot of time here today. I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite for their questions in advance, and I want to leave the bulk of the time, Mr. Speaker, for those questions on behalf of the people of the province. So with that I will conclude my remarks, thank all of those involved here today, and I look forward to the discussion in the next few hours.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I'd just like to join the Premier in thanking everyone who's here today, thank the officials who are joining us for this session and all of the officials who've been part of this season of estimates and have put in so many extra hours, late hours. I want to thank of course the folks at the Clerk's table, the Pages, and Hansard. And this is work that is done by many, many people and the elected members may be the ones who show up on the camera here, but the work is certainly done with a lot of people behind the scenes who actually make it possible to make this even resemble like we know what we're doing.

You know, I also want to thank — speaking of resembling that we know what we're doing — I want to thank my MLA team and the caucus staff that we have on this side of the House. I've been so happy to have their support in this new role and the work that we've been able to do this session. I think it's been an exceptional session, as the Premier noted, something I've noted a few times as well.

This is a season of change. I like to believe that change is just beginning but it is a season of change and it's a great opportunity for us to reset a little bit. The Premier did say when I was selected for this role, he said he looked forward to working on areas where we agree and a vigorous debate on areas where we disagree. We've had a chance for some vigorous debate and the occasional moment of common ground over this last session, and I hope we can find more. And I do want to congratulate the Premier. We're nearing the end of his first session. Congratulations again on his selection and on the work so far.

To get forward now with the questions, Mr. Chair, I'll start to turn my questions towards the Premier. We have a guest. Mr. Campbell here is the interim deputy minister to the Premier, as I understand. And I'm just wondering if a decision has been made when a permanent person for that role will be selected.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the question. Mr. Campbell began serving as the interim deputy minister to the premier, the previous premier, last September, and has been serving in that role up until today. We have not made a decision on making . . . on canvassing that position for a permanent position as yet, Mr. Speaker. And we're thankful that Mr. Campbell has served in this position for this period of time and we'll ask him to continue to serve until we make a permanent decision with respect to who will serve as the deputy minister to the Premier.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thanks very much. The predecessor to the Premier broke with long-standing tradition and selected someone who was quite partisan, quite involved in the Sask Party, as the deputy minister to the premier. Will this Premier

be continuing with that tradition of sort of fostering candidates within the civil service, or will he be choosing someone who isn't so partisan in their connections?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I won't speak to the decisions that were made by the previous premier with respect to his selection, but as we move forward with any opportunities that we have or decisions that I would be involved with, including the decision around who would serve this great province, Mr. Speaker, as deputy minister to the Premier, most assuredly I'd make that decision on who I feel . . . who a number of people feel, Mr. Speaker, within the government, in both elected and in the public service, Mr. Speaker, would be the very best in that position to serve on behalf of the people of the province. It won't be a partisan decision in any way, Mr. Speaker. It'll be a decision on who brings the best tools, the best qualifications to the table to operate the public service in the province.

**Mr. Meili:** — Speaking to the person who was in the role previously, Alanna Koch, who then ran for leader of the Sask Party, we note that her name is no longer listed in the government directory. Does she still work for the Government of Saskatchewan?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, Ms. Koch is currently on paid leave from her position as deputy minister to the Premier. She'll not be returning into that position as deputy minister to the Premier. We continue our discussions with Ms. Koch regarding the next steps, Mr. Speaker. There've been numerous discussions to date and they will continue, and we expect this decision or this situation to be resolved in the very near future, Mr. Speaker. But in the interim we're fortunate with the strong public service we have, the steady hand of Mr. Campbell as he continues to serve as the interim deputy minister on behalf of the people of the province.

**Mr. Meili:** — There was a word in there that I just wanted to make sure that I heard correctly. This is a paid leave. And was that paid leave . . . Was she on paid leave during the leadership or did it start to be paid leave after the leadership?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. With respect to Ms. Koch, she was on unpaid leave for a period of time until the end of the leadership race, at which point she took, used up the holidays that she had banked over the years. And it's just recently that she's been on paid leave, Mr. Speaker, and as I said we're very close to having this situation resolved, Mr. Speaker, for not only Ms. Koch but on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Campbell had served and continues to serve as a deputy minister to Intergovernmental Affairs here in Executive Council, Mr. Speaker. He continues to serve in that role as well as the deputy minister to the Premier because we have not backfilled that role, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Campbell is serving in both roles at the present time.

**Mr. Meili:** — The person we're discussing, Ms. Koch, if we're looking at how long she's been in that role, now in a paid leave position, so how much salary would she have now received during this period in which she's not running for leader and also not providing a direct service? And also as you're talking about

resolution, is that resolution likely to be a new position or are you looking to settle a severance package?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you. April 6th was the day of return. I don't have the exact figures of what that would be, Mr. Chair, with respect to the exact salary that would be paid from then.

As I said, this is a conversation that we expect to come to resolution shortly. And we've been in discussions with respect to whether that would be a position, as there is much to offer, Mr. Speaker, to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, given the rich agricultural background of the individual, Ms. Koch, Mr. Chair. And so there is a discussion with respect to that opportunity, and if that opportunity is not able to occur, Mr. Speaker, then there would be the discussion around, as per the public service, any termination agreement within the public service.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you very much. It does appear to be quite an unusual situation and it is an unusual situation: someone within the public service having a leave to run for leadership and then should that leadership not be successful, having a position or a severance waiting for them.

If you're not able to provide those figures now, I'd ask that you would table those. And if you could tell me as well the annual salary that she did receive so we can also do some of that math on our own.

[15:30]

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. That actually is not exactly correct. There's individuals, and there's examples on both sides of this House over the last number of years where individuals have chosen to take a leave from their position wherever that may be, in the private sector or in the public service or wherever that position may be, and run either in a nomination or run in an actual general election. And, Mr. Chair, there is always that pretense that those individuals quite often and in many cases have the opportunity to go back to their position.

It's not uncommon. There's examples of just that on both sides of the House. I know of people that have went back to their previous occupation after running in a nomination, taking a leave in time to run in a nomination, to run in a general election, to run in a second general election, sometimes some four years later, and then at some later point in time went back to their previous place of employment.

So that is not unusual, Mr. Chair, with respect to people having a career, taking some time away from that career on leave to serve in public office, and then returning to that career at a later date.

**Mr. Meili:** — What's truly unusual about this situation is the consideration of a severance, that someone in such a high-level position that they couldn't return to after having chosen that role, the public would then be on the hook for a severance payment, and we'll be very interested to see if that happens.

I did ask a direct question, however, about tabling the amount of salary she's received thus far, and also telling us now what

her annual salary was or is, I should say, so that we're able to do some of the math while we're waiting for you to table those numbers.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the question. With respect to the annual salary, the annual salary is \$267,948. There's been no agreed-on termination compensation or anything in that nature. With respect to people leaving, taking a leave of absence from their position to run for public office, again, Mr. Chair, that actually is not just commonplace or not just, you know, common in the private and public sector, but it is in legislation that people can take a leave of their position whether it be in the public service or wherever that is and can return to that position at a later date. And that is . . . As I said, there are examples of that on both sides of this House. There's likely people in this House today that have taken leave from their position, whatever their career was prior to serving in public office. But that is the annual salary that is available on public accounts, available through the order-in-councils that have been released, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Meili:** — So we're looking at at least 26,000, probably closer to 30,000 that's been received since she returned to being on a paid leave, being paid, having run for leader of the Sask Party and now being paid to not provide services for the people of Saskatchewan. However, there was just one piece of the answer missing there. I asked for a better number than what I'm able to do in my head and the math. Can you just commit to tabling those numbers to date, and by when you can table those for me?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Yes.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thanks very much. We would appreciate that in the usual standard of less than 24 hours. I do want to get on to some other topics although we can continue within . . . So I'll ask for a time frame. That would be ideal, but I'll ask for a time frame and within 24 hours seems quite reasonable.

But we'll continue on where we'll talk a little bit more about money and politics. Recently your government made an unusual decision to vote against some recommendations that we made, a bill that we put forward that would change the structure around campaign financing here in Saskatchewan. We have a situation in Saskatchewan where you have high levels of corporate donation and union donation, a lot of that money coming from out of province, and also no cap whatsoever on the donations from organizations or individuals or whether those donations come from in or out of province.

So my question, just the very first small one is, by when can you give me those numbers? And the larger question is, really what's behind your government's decision to really double down on keeping what has been described as the worst campaign finance structure in the country?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And yes, just maybe a couple of comments with respect to the question. We've been consistent throughout the 10 years of governance with respect to electoral finance laws here, and we operate under the same electoral finance laws that we have for a number of years, that the members opposite had operated under during their years in government as well. And we have never . . . We are not

doubling down and saying that we won't change those laws. We're consistent, been consistent, in our support for the existing electoral finance laws that we have here in the province of Saskatchewan.

I do not hear on the street that these laws are out of date or in any way problematic. As we know, all registered parties must publicly report any donations that they have to Elections Saskatchewan, any expenses that they incur through a writ campaign of any type, whether it's a by-election or a general election. So this information, both inflows into the party and their expenses, is transparent. It's available to anyone that would care to look online on Elections Saskatchewan. As well, many parties do it on their site as well, that are involved in this process that we have. The information is also filed in the party's annual report with Elections Saskatchewan each and every year. I think there was one filed just not too long ago. Any of those donations that are over \$250, as we know, are recorded and are publicly reported as per *The Election Act*, that we have agreed with through our time in government.

And you know, there are claims at times that there are a few large donors that fund one party or another. The fact of the matter is that there's large donors that are to both parties, Mr. Chair. But the fact of the matter is as well, and I've said this in this House a number of times this past year, we filed — we're proud to file as well — we had 26,000 individual donors that donated to our party in this past year. That was filed, as I said, with the public report as per the elections Act with Elections Saskatchewan.

So with 26,000 donors, Mr. Speaker — both sides have larger donors and we can talk about who they are and that, Mr. Chair, if we choose — but this party here is proud to file an elections return with that number of individuals.

**Mr. Meili:** — At the current time there is no cap whatsoever on the amount that a company or an individual can give to a political party. Does the Premier think that that's appropriate, that an individual could give hundreds of thousands, millions of dollars to a party, having outsized influence on the outcome of an election compared to other individuals in the province? Do you think that's appropriate?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you for the question, and with respect to hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars donated, those are donations that we've not seen on this side of the House from any individuals or corporations.

I think what is important as we have this discussion with respect to electoral finance, and understanding that we operate under the same electoral finance laws for a number of years now, and we've always been consistent that we feel that disclosing who donates time and in-kind donations to any party that's running to be the elected government here in the province of Saskatchewan, disclose where and how much those donations are above \$250, that is done.

As well, Mr. Chair, we feel it's important to ensure that any of the expenses that are incurred, whether that be in a by-election or in a general election, that those are also disclosed for full viewing of the people of the province.

With any of this conversation often comes the pretext or the thought that, well if you're receiving a donation from someone, well then they must be buying time or they must be looking at influencing what you do as a government. And I would say this on behalf of the members of this side, Mr. Chair, that that most assuredly is not the case for members over here.

We're not influenced by people that will help in donating time or dollars. This is part of the political system we have. But we do assure all of those that are involved in any election, whether it be financially or time, is that we will provide the very best governance that we can. We will listen to all of the people that we represent, and we will endeavour to provide the most sound, the most honest, Mr. Chair, the most transparent, and the most engaging government that we can on behalf of the people of the province. That's the commitment that we provide. I would hope that's the commitment that all parties in this nation provide.

**Mr. Meili:** — Now the Premier's of course not wrong to state that the laws we have now are laws we've had for some time. However, when it comes to the word on the street, perhaps we walk down different streets. But we should be reading the same newspapers and reading the same reports and understanding the ways that laws have changed.

And you spoke about a season of change as we came in here. Over the last decade, the majority of Canadian provinces and the federal government have made these changes, eliminating corporate and union donations, eliminating or adding caps on individual donations.

I will continue with the question around appropriateness and the Premier's beliefs. Didn't really get a clear answer on whether you think it's appropriate that an individual can give an unlimited amount to a political party. I'd still like an answer on that, but let's add another one. Do you think it's appropriate that an out-of-province individual or corporation or organization can give an unlimited amount to a political party within the province? Is it appropriate that an entity not even located in this province should be influencing the outcome of the election?

Now we can talk later about influencing the actions of the party, but donations influence the outcomes of elections. Should we have what are essentially external forces influencing the outcomes of our elections?

[15:45]

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — What we have here in the province of Saskatchewan is a system where any of those donations, any of those expenses are disclosed. They're disclosed to the people of the province, the voting public of the province of Saskatchewan. They're disclosed to the voting public of the province of Saskatchewan, all of those that choose to have a look online and see who has donated to any political party, how those political parties have spent those dollars.

With respect to out-of-province donations over the past 10 years, over 90 per cent of the donations to this party — I'll speak on behalf of this party — have been from within the province. There are donations that come from entities from outside the province, entities that have significant operations within the province of Saskatchewan, significant employed

people in communities across the province of Saskatchewan in some of our sectors that we have here, whether that be the energy sector, whether that be even the agriculture sector or our manufacturing sector or our mining sector here in the province of Saskatchewan. So those entities that will donate from outside the province for the most part to this party are entities that have significant interests in people that live in our communities across the province.

That being said, parties can choose not to take these dollars if they have an ideological belief that they don't want the help from an individual or an entity, whether it be from in the province of Saskatchewan or outside, Mr. Chair. That is the prerogative of the party, if they choose to do or to not receive those donations. We on this side have received donations, as I said, over 90 per cent from individuals and organizations within the province and a few donations from outside over the last 10 years. But those are from entities that have significant, in many cases, significant interests with employees in the province of Saskatchewan.

It's a fair question, Mr. Chair, as we . . . Well maybe I'll leave it at that.

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Premier, the matter of disclosure is something that of course we're in favour of. We certainly want to know who's donating to whom. That, however, that disclosure does nothing to prevent individuals or agencies with donating large sums and influencing the outcomes in a way that's disproportionate to what's available to others within the province, and even having external agents such as companies that are not located here in the province contributing a large sum. We've seen millions over the last decade to the Sask Party. There's nothing disclosure does to prevent that.

However, you talked about whether we believe that that's something that should change. The fact of the matter is that the people of Saskatchewan believe that's something that should change. The vast majority of Saskatchewan people, when polled, say that we shouldn't have corporate or union donations. The people of Saskatchewan recognize that this isn't a fair situation, that they're not competing at a fair level, that they've got very wealthy individuals or corporations that are able to influence elections in a way they can't. What do you say to those people who say this isn't a fair system?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — The system that we have of disclosing our donations over \$250 and disclosing the expenses that candidates or parties may have in our general elections is the same for all sides. And it's a fair system here in the province of Saskatchewan. It's a system that we've operated under, as I said, for a number of years. It's also a system where the people of the province can see who is participating with each of the parties that are filing within the province of Saskatchewan.

It's a system where I said we have over 90 per cent of our donations to the Saskatchewan Party coming from within the province. And those from outside that choose to donate, in many cases have significant interests in people that are employed in communities across the province of Saskatchewan. And that's all available online, Mr. Speaker, either at Elections Saskatchewan or other places online for the people of the province to see who is donating to the governing party in the



province of Saskatchewan.

It's also the way, in the case of the members opposite, where people can look on the website and they can understand that they also have people with interests in Saskatchewan but organizations that have also . . . are national in scope, such as the Canadian Labour Congress that provided \$35,000 to the members opposite. Or the United Steelworkers that did \$37,000 donation. Or Unifor, Mr. Chair, who provided a \$54,000 donation. Or the UFCW [United Food & Commercial Workers] who provided \$81,000. Or also in there is over \$7,500 that's been provided by John Horgan's provincial British Columbia NDP, and that's come up in this House before, Mr. Chair.

But I think this is an opportunity that the people of the province have to see who is donating to all of the parties that participate. All of our donations are online as are the members' opposite and I encourage the people of the province of Saskatchewan to go have a look at those lists.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you. The people of Saskatchewan have been looking and seeing what's happening from a disclosure point of view, and they're not happy. The majority don't agree with the system. We have a system that's been described by experts around Canada as the worst system of campaign finance in the country.

And one of the things that that disclosure shows us members is . . . One of the things that that disclosure shows us is that in 2016, 53 companies who donated a total of \$1 million to the Saskatchewan Party won \$100 million in contracts from Crowns and executive government. So we talk about influence. We talk about removing influence. Now whether that actually results directly, whether this is something where this government looks and says, here's the companies that support us; they'll get the contracts, or whether it just looks that way, this sends a very clear message to the people of Saskatchewan that there is a real problem with campaign finances.

So I ask the question, Mr. Premier: would you be open to changes in the legislation that modernized us, that got us in line with the rest of the country and helped avoid even the perception of any influence based on people who donated to the party?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. I actually don't agree with the pretext of that question. And I had clarified that earlier in my answers that the commitment that we make on this side of the House is to provide that open and engaging government on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. But under those thoughts, under those thoughts, those names that I just read off would . . . The question would very quickly come back at the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite. Are they beholden to the four union organizations that I said have given them well over \$100,000, or are they beholden, most notably on a day like today, when we are as a nation investing in a pipeline to Canada's coast, are they beholden to the position of John Horgan and the British Columbian NDP with respect to that infrastructure project that's in the national interest?

**Mr. Meili:** — I hear from the member that it goes both ways. And it certainly does, which is exactly why our party put forth

legislation that would eliminate corporate and union donations for all parties. We're in no way beholden to any company. And you also must note, you also must note, Mr. Premier, when thinking about this, that we are not in a position to give out \$100 million in contracts to 53 companies that donated to our party.

So there's a very important distinction there, that we have a real perception out in the public that this place is bought and sold. And you know what? That damages each and every one of us. That cheapens the work of each and every one of us when that perception is out in the public, Mr. Speaker.

And now I want to just ask a question which . . . We had a situation here in this province where some of that money, that corporate out-of-province money, those big dollars that were flowing into Sask Party coffers, were also flowing into the pockets of the former premier. So I have a question for the new Premier: have you restarted the practice of taking top-ups from the Sask Party to pad your own salary?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — No. This Premier will not be taking a stipend from the party. Mr. Chair, I have not done that nor will that be the practice of this Premier.

With respect to being bought, the question again comes right back to the Leader of the Opposition with respect to, he is running to be the premier of this province on behalf of the people of the province. And if he was to become premier, I think the people of the province would like to know whether or not they would represent them on economic issues like narrowing the differential on our energy products that we ship to Canada's coast, or would he represent the people of the province of Saskatchewan? Or because of a donation from John Horgan and the British Columbia NDP [New Democratic Party], would he be beholden and bought by John Horgan and the BC [British Columbia] NDP?

**Mr. Meili:** — The Premier seems to have forgotten that just a few days ago we voted against corporate and union donations or any donations from out of province in this province. This Premier voted to keep them.

Now something else that this Premier did . . . And I just want to say I'm glad to hear it. I'm glad to hear you're not taking the top-ups from the party. That was never an acceptable practice.

Now something that was another change in practice under the previous premier was around legislative secretaries. We had the elimination of extra funding for legislative secretaries. Something you chose to do just a few days ago was add not 1 or 2, not 3 or 4, but 13 legislative secretaries.

So I guess my question for you, Mr. Speaker, what's the value-add to the province of those added legislative secretaries? And are we going to be able to see that work? Is that going to be provided to the public?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to follow up on the previous topic quickly and then some comments with respect to the engagement of our legislative secretaries. There was a vote the other day in here, Mr. Chair, but they still took the money from John Horgan and the BC NDP. That needs to

be noted and it needs to be on the record. They still took the money from the union organizations from across Canada. They still took those dollars, Mr. Chair.

The legislative secretaries here in the province of Saskatchewan that were appointed the other day will have a \$3,000 annual stipend to their salary, and they will work very hard for that on behalf of the people of the province. Now all MLAs on both sides of this House, I know, engage with respect to their geographic area that they represent, their constituency, as I do in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook and through my office and through the opportunities that I have there.

And I know all members — I'll speak for on this side of the House, but I believe across the House — do engage within their constituency as an MLA should. And I think we can all note times when maybe that didn't happen, and very quickly the people in the particular area chose someone else at the next opportunity. So it is important to engage within our constituency, but it's also important for us to engage on the number of sectors and the number of ministries that we have across government with the stakeholders that we have across the province of Saskatchewan.

[16:00]

If there's anything that I learned — and I know a couple of the members opposite would likely concur with this — in my travels over the past year through a leadership race, Mr. Chair, as well as the travels that I've had the opportunity to partake in as leader of the party and Premier of province, is that we need to continue with the type of engagement that we had for that, for those months, into the future.

Ensure that . . . We won't make all good decisions, Mr. Speaker. At times we'll have to change some things, but ensure that we are making the very best decisions that we can by talking to people across the province of Saskatchewan. And that's what this engagement will be about with these individuals in the caucus.

We have individuals that will engage with teachers and with students and with parents across the province in communities across Saskatchewan and ensure that that information and those opinions of those people is coming directly to the Minister of Education's office. We have an individual that will engage with our agriculture stakeholders, our stakeholders in our communities and pertaining to servicing the most vulnerable in our communities through Social Services. Mr. Chair, these are important engagement initiatives that I feel strongly need to continue.

With respect to the remuneration of \$3,000, the full remuneration for legislative secretaries is about \$14,000. And they're not receiving the full remuneration. They're receiving a portion of that because we are in a challenging financial times here in the province of Saskatchewan, that the engagement that they're going to perform is well worth the \$14,000 and beyond, but they're willing to do it for much less than that on behalf of the people that they serve across the province of Saskatchewan.

So this is an important role as we move forward, to ensure that on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and the relevant

ministers and ministries, that we are getting the very, the most current, the most direct information that we can possibly get. Mr. Chair, this is a decision that I made. This is a decision that I think is important in our service to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and I am proud of the legislative secretaries that we have appointed this time. This is not a new initiative. We have had legislative secretaries in the government previous and we will into the future.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thirteen is the largest number that has ever been seen in this province. Suddenly there's a need for 13 legislative secretaries, at the same time as there appears to be, from this government's point of view, a need to cut the wages of workers by 3.5 per cent. Mr. Chair, there's still a lot of discussion going on about cutting various contracts by that exact amount.

And so what I would like to know is, how do you explain to the people of Saskatchewan — who you're expecting to be accountable, who you're expecting to take a hit on their wages — that the members here are going to get an increase in wage, but no accountability? Because the question that was asked was a very clear question: in what way are we going to see the work? In what way are they going to demonstrate the value for money of that added duty?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — To begin with there are some inaccuracies in the premise of the question. First of all the three and a half per cent is a return to our 2016 wages here in this Assembly for all members, so it's been zero over those years, taking the three and a half last year. I believe it works out to, over the past four years, point four per cent a year over the past four years on average, Mr. Chair, with respect to that.

With respect to our legislative secretaries, who will see the work that the legislative secretaries are doing are the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That's why they're appointed, is they will be out in communities on their relevant files, engaging with people and gathering that information to ensure that we have that information being brought right from our communities, right from those front lines of people offering services, engaging with those people to ensure that we have that information brought right into the minister's office, right into the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chair. So that is the people that will see the work that the legislative secretaries will be performing.

And I would put forward this, with respect to the \$3,000 remuneration that these legislative secretaries will have, is a little bit under \$40,000 for all of them over the course of a year. I believe the member from Saskatoon Centre had stated in the scrum the other day that he received \$12,000, a little more than \$12,000, when he served as a legislative secretary. So under those remuneration packages, I can see that we could only have three. We would only be able to have three under those packages to keep that within the \$40,000 limit that we've put forward, Mr. Chair. With the remuneration package that we've worked with members on this side of the House, we're able to actually provide 13 and greatly enhance the engagement that we will have with people, organizations, those organizations that the Government of Saskatchewan needs to continually be involved with.

**Mr. Meili:** — The Premier appeared to get a little confused on

that question. I was asking about the workers all across this province who you've been telling need to take a pay cut. How should they take this news that the members in here, 13 of these members, are getting a big raise without any accountability, that they won't be able to see how that work was done? You've continued to not be accountable to that question as well, yourself. I've made it very clear: what will we see for the work?

Now I'm going to move on a little bit, however. And you can answer that if you like — I would appreciate it — but I'm going to move on to a couple other topics. One, trappers across this province would like the same treatment as people who fish for sport. When they turn 65, people in this province, fishing licences are free. However trappers when they turn 65 would also request that they no longer have to pay their trapping licence. Now is that something the Premier would be open to?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And I'd spent a little time on this a number of years ago, and so I do have some recollection, but I was greatly helped out by a colleague of mine with the exact wording. There is no licence requirement for a traditional sustenance use of the fur resources for those that are exercising their treaty and Aboriginal rights. Commercial use, including the sale of the pelts, is not considered part of these rights, and a licence is then required when those pelts are being used for commercial use. And we would make the point that the licence for northern trappers is half the cost of the trappers in the South. I met with the trappers on a number of occasions over my time serving as Environment minister.

I would also put forward that a portion of the revenues from the sale of those licences are used to support initiatives such as the humane trapper education program, which is administered by the Northern Saskatchewan Trappers Association, that directly benefits youth that are interested in becoming or involved in continuing their families' participation in trapping. And the resources allocated for these initiatives have exceeded the revenues derived from the sale of licences.

In the case of recreational fishing licences, here in the province, those that are 65 years or older do receive a fishing licence for free, here in the province of Saskatchewan. That's our province's senior.

But as I said, the sustenance licence, when practising our Aboriginal treaty rights, for trapping and fishing for sustenance is free. But in the case of commercial use, there are licences that are required for that.

**Mr. Meili:** — Now the question really applied to folks over 65. Looking at the very minimal income that would actually be connected to commercial trapping, would it not make sense, recognizing the importance of having elders out on the land working with younger folks, having them have that access to this traditional way of life? Would it not make a lot of sense to remove that as done in fishing for folks over 65?

The Lac La Ronge Band is partnering with the federal government to build a wellness centre on the reserve in La Ronge, and this would be a great opportunity for the provincial government to join into this partnership and be part of a project that would assist a lot of people in accessing primary care where it's much needed. Would your government consider

something as forward-thinking as partnering on a health and wellness centre on-reserve?

[16:15]

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is a conversation that has occurred under the previous premier with Chief Cook-Searson. A number of ministers were involved. I think the current Minister of Finance, a couple of Health ministers, and others were involved in that meeting where they did have a discussion with respect to a wellness centre, Mr. Speaker, on-reserve in the community to, you know, address those health needs most close to home which is always, always, always the goal.

The meeting was left with respect to there would be an openness to partnerships if we were able to have conversations with the federal government. And this question is best placed to the federal government, being an on-reserve initiative. And this is not . . . The federal government has not come forward in any way to be a partner with this project as we speak.

This raises a similar concern that was raised in Yellowknife last week at the meeting of the western premiers and the territorial premiers with respect to the partnership that we have with the federal government when it comes to health care and providing health care in the provinces. What started at about a 50/50 partnership, we're down to about a 21 per cent federal share in our health care funding here in the province. And I would just quote one paragraph out of the communiqué that came out of that meeting, and it says:

Western Premiers also expressed concerns over the declining federal share of overall health funding and called on the federal government to meet with provinces and territories on appropriate long term arrangements. The health needs . . . are not well served when provincial and territorial governments do not receive [their] fair and sustainable funding through the Canada Health Transfer.

Mr. Chair, this is a conversation that the relevant ministries, the previous premier, have had with the community. It's a conversation that I would say would be ongoing. It's a conversation that we would look to the federal government to be a partner in any services that would be provided on-reserve in the community, Mr. Chair. But I think it should also be noted the initiatives and the effort that have been put forth by the current ministers of Health as well as previous ministers of Health, to ensure that people across this province do have access to primary health care services, to their physicians, to their medical professionals, their nurse practitioners, and to emergency rooms, in many cases, in communities across the province.

This has been a commitment by this government over the last decade. It's a commitment that remains. This is one of the services that the people of the province expect the provincial government to provide. And there's always a need to do better and to work more closely with communities, more closely on the services that are required that do evolve over time to some degree, but I think it's also important to acknowledge the effort and the initiative that has been put forward over the past decade.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you very much. Worth noting that especially in a community such as La Ronge you would have provincial patients able to access the on-reserve primary care clinic, and always that we are treating patients who live on-reserve in provincial facilities as well. So really an important opportunity to partner.

Another area in the North where we have some real struggles with health care services is in the community of Creighton. The closest large centre for services is Flin Flon, but folks from Creighton are often sent to Saskatoon for many of their medical appointments and procedures. It would appear to most to be much more cost effective to have people able to access that care in Flin Flon. You mentioned the recent meeting in Yellowknife with the western premiers. Is this a discussion that this government could take on in a similar way to the way things are arranged with Lloydminster, making sure that northern patients are able to access the nearest and best available services rather than those that are only delimited by provincial boundaries?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — With respect to services, health care services and long-term care services in the community of Creighton that are, in many cases, being provided in the community of Flin Flon to some degree, there has been some concerns in years gone by from individuals that the minister and Ministry of Health in Saskatchewan have continued to endeavour to work their way through. It's a little bit of a unique situation in these communities, as they are so close. They're separated by an interprovincial border. But the expectation of the Canada Health Services is that the individuals will receive the same level of care on both sides of those interprovincial boundaries.

In this instance the minister and the ministries of Health have engaged directly with Manitoba, the ministry of Health in Manitoba. And there's a little bit of uniqueness in the fact that this particular facility in Flin Flon is an agreement that the Ministry of Health has with that particular facility.

Nevertheless, the ministers' offices and the ministry continue to work with individuals that may have a concern with respect to the services that are being provided on either side of that interprovincial boundary. They'll continue to do that into the future and continue to work with not just the community of Creighton and Flin Flon, but with communities across the province of Saskatchewan so that we do have access, or the greatest access possible to the services that people expect in their communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

This has been an effort on behalf of the people of the province by this government over the last decade. These are numbers, you know, that we've heard before, but with 900 more physicians working in the province, some of those specialists getting ready to move into a children's hospital in Saskatoon, some of those working in the community where I live and communities that I serve in the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook and rural areas of the province, providing access to those people that in years gone by had to drive to communities like Prince Albert and Saskatoon to receive just basic health care services, a nurse practitioner or a physician visit.

So we have come a long way over the past decade. There's

always more work to do. And in the case specific to Creighton and Flin Flon, the minister's office, the Ministry of Health are very much engaged with the community as well as Manitoba Health services.

**Mr. Meili:** — Keeping in health care, we had a promise a few years ago from your predecessor promising zero waits in the emergency department by the end of 2017. Now the end of 2017 has come and gone, and so has that goal. The goal has changed to a reduction of waits by 35 per cent by March 31st of 2017.

Now speaking to colleagues within emergency medicine, they're telling me the story of what's actually going on in emergency rooms, where you've got patients being seen in hallways, in converted janitor closets, patients with chest pain being assessed while still sitting in waiting room chairs.

And just to put some numbers on that, since '13-14 we've seen an increase in physician initial assessment in Saskatoon, up by 20 per cent. We've seen time waiting for an in-patient bed up by 13 per cent, ED [emergency department] length of stay for people that are admitted up by 15 per cent, and non-admitted length of stay up by 12 per cent. So clearly we haven't made it to zero, and in fact we've gone backwards. Those waits have gone longer.

This was a major hoshin, for lack of a better word, in the former health region and in the health system overall to reduce ED wait times. Why has this gone so badly? Why are wait times actually getting worse?

[16:30]

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And the Leader of the Opposition raises, you know, a valid point. There is some data that is concerning as we move along, as demographics change, as the usage of our facilities change as we move along. But we do remain, you know, committed to providing the very best care that we can, including in our emergency rooms, with respect to our emergency room wait times and some of the statistics are there.

We must also acknowledge, Mr. Chair, the increase in population that we've had over the last decade. There has been investments to follow along with that increase. Investments, as I said, in 900 more physicians operating, working across the province, providing access to those services in communities right across the province, including in our larger centres.

We've increased the number of acute care beds in our larger centres as well by some 15 per cent, now 204 additional beds operating in our largest acute care facilities. We've invested in new acute care facilities, not only in our largest centres here in the province of Saskatchewan but in a number of our rural communities as well across Saskatchewan. We've invested a further 19 million that has been allocated specifically to reduce wait times here in our province.

Mr. Chair, four accountable care units are up and running here in the province, and now we have three units at the Pasqua Hospital here in Regina as well as one up at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. Since these have been established, I think it's

relevant to note as well that wait times, since the three units at the Pasqua Hospital have been established, the wait times for an in-patient bed at that facility have been reduced by 35 per cent. Wait times at the St. Paul's facility in Saskatoon since the introduction of the accountable care unit has been reduced by 24 per cent. There are plans to implement three new accountable care units to be up and running by the end of this year, Mr. Chair: another one at the Pasqua Hospital here in Regina, as well as two more at the St. Paul's Hospital in the community of Saskatoon.

That being said, we need to continue to work on this initiative because it is an initiative that's important to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And at some point in time many of us do end up in an emergency room with our children or ourselves, and this is a service that we need to continue to work hard on, on behalf of the people of the province and work diligently on to ensure that we're providing the very best health care possible, not only in our larger centres but in communities across the province of Saskatchewan. And providing that care is an initiative that we have been committed to on this side of the House for the past decade and will continue to be committed to in the years ahead.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you very much. I think, with all due respect, the wait times for question responses are up by 20 per cent as well.

Just in terms of that initial promise, right, you said much of this had to do with the growth in the population. Clearly in 2012, the population was already growing. Clearly you would have made that promise with, in mind, the idea that the population would continue to grow. So that just makes that initial promise of zero wait times, I mean it's not really a reasonable promise in any setting, but particularly reckless in that context.

Now my question for you today is, with the failure to meet those targets at the end of 2017 of zero, or even the 35 per cent anywhere, and the actual increase in wait times in our largest city, largest patient population, is that goal of reaching a 60 per cent reduction in wait times by the end of 2019, is that just out the window? Is that clearly a irresponsible pipe dream, or do you actually maintain that that's the commitment and that's what you'll achieve?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, thank you. We set targets in this province, and we continue to make every effort to address the targets that we set out. We set various targets specific to health care over the years. Some we have achieved in the time allotted, some we have not. But nevertheless, we will continue to set targets and continue to take initiatives to make every effort to achieve those targets.

In this case, we will be monitoring and assessing this very closely over the next short period of time as we approach that. And we do have, we do have confidence that the accountable care units that are up and running, the ones that will be up and running prior to the end of the year will be very beneficial in reducing our wait times in our facilities here in the province of Saskatchewan.

But we will not apologize for setting a target and making efforts and taking initiatives to meet those targets. In particular in

health care, the investments that have come to fruition over the past decade in health care must be noted in this province, as they are made on behalf of the people and communities across this province.

I mention the physicians that are working across this province in our urban centres, in our rural communities. Over 900 physicians now working, an increase of over 900 physicians working and providing care to the people of the province of Saskatchewan, the original 995,000 people and the additional 165,000 that have chosen to make this their home over the past decade. Over 3,700 nurses now working in our facilities across the province of Saskatchewan.

And investing in new facilities as well, as I believe there's 13 long-term care facilities and a few of those are integrated care facilities with acute, attached acute care facilities. We see a new hospital in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. We see a new hospital in Moose Jaw as well, Mr. Chair. And these are investments that the people ... Oh Humboldt, don't let me forget Humboldt, Mr. Chair.

These are investments that the people of the province expect of their provincial government. And to set targets to provide better care to the people of the province is something that has not come about lightly by members on this side of the House. And we've made every effort to achieve those targets or at least achieve the services that are being provided to the people of the province.

This is in contrast to years prior, Mr. Chair. This is in contrast, when we had a NDP Health minister in this province that said that they wouldn't be setting targets because they might not be able to meet them, they might not be able to meet them. Well we should never be frightened from setting targets on behalf of the people of the province to improve the services, even when you don't meet that target 100 per cent, if you get 92 per cent of the way to that target, Mr. Chair.

I think it should be noted that the care and the services that are provided to the people that we serve in this Assembly, in communities across this province, is as important as any target that is put forward, and we improve that care on behalf of the people, we'll continue to do it. We'll continue to put forward initiatives that will give us every opportunity to provide the services that the people of this province expect of their governing party.

**Mr. Meili:** — Yet clearly this government doesn't have a problem setting targets. For example, for emergency department waits, they set a target of zero by the end of 2017. Then they changed it to 35. Well they changed it to 60, and now they changed it to 35. They're setting targets all the time, the same target, moving their goal posts because they're failing to make any progress whatsoever because they're actually moving in the opposite direction. Now that's a pretty disappointing approach to setting targets. It's not enough to say, here's what I want to achieve. They actually have to have a plan to get there. Otherwise it's just a wish.

And when it comes to surgical waits, in less than three years the number of people waiting more than three months for their surgery has grown by over 7,000 people. We've got 4,500 more

people waiting more than six months for their surgery. Just a couple of years ago we were at 100 per cent of our benchmarks; we're now at 76. We've fallen below the national average on several wait time benchmarks.

This government injected money into the wait times initiative up until 2015, and then that ended. And at the same time as that ended, we see this big spike in wait times for surgery. So once again, you set the targets, you put the investment in. When it comes to emergency departments, no movement whatsoever.

Surgical wait times, you actually had some success. What's happened in the last three years? Why weren't you able to make the systemic change necessary to maintain those decreases in wait times?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And again with respect to the question, there have been strides that have been made, strides that have been made in this province over the last number of years, over the last decade, in our surgical wait times here in Saskatchewan through a number of different initiatives that have been invested in by the governing party on behalf of the people of the province that have brought our surgical wait times in this province to some of the shortest in the nation. Despite having increased in recent years, we remain in this province with some of the shortest wait times in the nation. As I said, we've had an increase in our population, an increase in our demand at our health care facilities, as we have an increase in the aging demographic of people in the province as well.

But the fact of the matter is, when you compare the record in the province to a decade ago, we are down. On those waiting 18 months, we are down 87 per cent. Those waiting more than 12 months, we're down 79 per cent. Those waiting more than 6 months, we are down 57 per cent. And those waiting more than 3 months, we are down 41 per cent. We have the shortest wait times when it comes to bypass surgery, bladder cancer surgery, unlike the members opposite who didn't set targets. They did not set targets with respect to wait times, with respect to recruitment.

There are initiatives that have been put forward by this government over the last number of years. I talked about, earlier, the 900 more physicians that are here. Some of that is going to be supplemented, as we go through the next number of years, by an initiative that was invested in by members on this side of the House, the governing party of the province of Saskatchewan, in ensuring that we went from 60 training seats at our College of Medicine to 100 for our doctors here in the province of Saskatchewan. Our residency seats, the good doctor I'm sure is aware of this, were from 60 to 120, Mr. Chair. This was an important investment to ensure that we are able to have sustainable medical professionals provided to the communities across the province.

Another initiative that this government put forward was the use of private surgicentres here in the province of Saskatchewan. One line, Mr. Chair, the one line where individuals waiting for surgery would ensure that they're in line, they get to the front of that line that would either go to a hospital, to a public surgicentre, or to a private surgicentre, Mr. Chair. And it's important to note that over the last number of years there has

been just under 70,000 — 70,000 — surgeries that have been performed at these private clinics.

[16:45]

There's also private MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] that are being performed now here in the province of Saskatchewan — 1,155 private MRI scans were purchased by patients, 1,155 additional MRI scans were provided to the people of the province, to the public system, to the people of the province of Saskatchewan for no cost, Mr. Chair. A total of over 2,300 MRIs that have been utilized involving private MRI scans here in the province of Saskatchewan.

So understanding the success and the number of private surgeries that have occurred here in Saskatchewan, understanding the number of private MRIs that have not only been provided and paid for, but the free MRIs that have been provided and shortening those wait times here in the province of Saskatchewan, I think the people of the province would like to ask the Leader of the Opposition, if he was ever to become premier of the province, would he continue with private surgicentres here in the province of Saskatchewan? Would he continue in setting those targets and being able to think outside the box when it comes to utilizing the private surgicentres with the one public lineup, to shorten the wait times in the province of Saskatchewan?

**Mr. Meili:** — Now the question was, of course, around surgical wait times and what would be done to improve the slide in those numbers. We didn't hear an answer, of course. Let's see if we get somewhere on this one.

We had an interview with the then future premier with the *Leader-Post*, where he was asked, should the portion of mental health spending be increased to 7 per cent of the health budget, as is the national average? Excellent question. This is an underfunded part of our health care system. A growing concern is mental health across the province — more and more people struggling all the time with depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses. And I was pleased to see the now Premier's answer: yes. However, that yes didn't seem to carry over into the budget, because the number is now 5.3 per cent in the 2018-19 budget. We do not see that increase to 7 per cent. Why has the Premier not followed through with that commitment?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. Not to miss out on the opportunity to point out when a question isn't answered, the question wasn't answered with respect to the Leader of the Opposition, whether he would continue with the successful practice of and implementation of private surgicentres in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chair, we'll continue to set targets here in the province. We'll continue to endeavour to meet those targets here in the province. And you know, this begs a question from the members opposite because it was stated in this House on May the 25th, 2016 by the member from Regina — the other leadership candidate, member from Regina Rosemont; I should never forget that — with respect to his call for the government to implement the Fyke report here in the province of Saskatchewan. Well, the Fyke report actually calls for the closure of 50 of Saskatchewan's 70 hospitals here, Mr. Chair.

And I think that's important to note, that this is how often there are differences of opinion across this floor. Although we may be just a few metres apart, there's very much a difference in opinion on how we treat our communities and the investment that we provide in the province of Saskatchewan. You contrast that with the investment in long-term care facilities, the investment in rural physicians, rural nurse practitioners across the province of Saskatchewan, because I don't think one of those 20 remaining facilities are going to be in towns and villages across the province.

Also with respect to the wait times here in the province and, Mr. Chair, with respect to an article that was out in December 13th, 2017, Saskatchewan continues with the second-shortest wait times in the nation of Canada. This has come about through initiatives and investments like private surgicentres, Mr. Chair, like private MRIs, and like focusing on these initiatives that are important to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

With respect to mental health and addictions investment here in the province of Saskatchewan, the Leader of the Opposition notes that through health care we have \$284 million invested in mental health and addictions through the Ministry of Health — \$284 million invested in mental health services, about 5.3 per cent of their budget. Across government in mental health and addictions we're at about \$367 million in this most recent budget year, up \$11 million I may add as well, this most recent budget year, a commitment to ensuring that we continue to provide the services to the people of the province that need them. And you'll see continued initiatives and efforts and focus on this in the months and years ahead if we are given the opportunity to continue to govern on behalf of the people of the province.

Inside the Ministry of Health, these investments support for example \$46 million directly into addiction services here in the province. They also support 1,200 mental health full-time equivalent positions across the province. They also support 390 addiction full-time equivalent positions across the province as well as 360 addiction treatment beds across the province, 232 acute in-patient beds for mental health services in the province of Saskatchewan, and 1,224 community residential beds across the province of Saskatchewan. There's construction not too far from where I live in the community of North Battleford, in the Saskatchewan Hospital there as well, an investment in a community but an investment more broadly in mental health services on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

Not recognized, but important investment on behalf of those same people that we represent, investment outside the Ministry of Health, unrecognized investment in mental health services include 30 million education and mental health resources in our education system, into our schools across the province of Saskatchewan; half a million dollars in anti-bullying initiatives across the province of Saskatchewan; \$2.4 million to our police and crisis teams and mental health custody services in the province of Saskatchewan; as well as our Farm Stress Line, provided through the Ministry of Agriculture to our rural residents involved in agriculture across the province of Saskatchewan.

So while the Leader of the Opposition rightly points out there's more work to do when it comes to mental health services in the province of Saskatchewan, we also must recognize the work that is occurring within the Ministry of Health, the increase of over \$11 million this past year, but also recognize the work that is occurring outside of the Ministry of Health as we continue to provide this ever-so-important access to mental health services here in the province, here in the province and here in communities across the province of Saskatchewan. And this will be a focus of the government as we move forward.

**Mr. Meili:** — That was a really long time to not answer a question. And it's always . . . I always kind of enjoy when the Premier gets into asking questions though. I like to see him auditioning for the role of Leader of the Opposition. You know, personally I think he's a natural for it.

Now I do want to come back to the question, however. Seven per cent was the promise from the Premier. Nine per cent is where most provinces are going. Why is this Premier not going to keep up with that commitment that he made and increase the mental health budget to 7 per cent of our health budget?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — This is a priority of the Government of Saskatchewan. As we move forward, we are going to make every effort to increase the funding on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan with respect to mental health and addictions and would make every initiative that we can, increasing it this year as well with some federal dollars, some provincial dollars. We'll continue to ensure that any federal dollars that arrive, that they are invested efficiently to provide the very best services that we can to the province of Saskatchewan and continue to supplement them, supplement those federal dollars with provincial dollars as we move forward.

The goal is to move our province's mental health and addictions funding to 7 per cent here on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And we will work towards that goal over the months and years ahead, ensuring that we are in constant communication with the people across the province to address the needs that they have, whether it be with mental health and addictions, whether it be the access to other primary health care services in their communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

Health care has been a priority of the Government of Saskatchewan for the last decade. That has showed with the increase in funding to the global health care budget that we have had in the province over the past decade, and that commitment continues to all the people in the province of Saskatchewan. And we'll continue to work with them to provide the very best health services that we are capable of.

**Mr. Meili:** — The Premier has noted that he likes to set targets and that he thinks that's a valuable thing. By what year will we see mental health being 7 per cent of our provincial health budget?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — With respect to the commitments that were made on the leadership campaign, we didn't make any commitments to close some 50 of our 70 hospitals, Mr. Chair. That was members opposite that were talking about

implementing any type of a disastrous Fyke report that would cause that heartache on the people of the province.

But we will continue to increase our mental health and addictions investment here in the province of Saskatchewan on behalf of the people of the province as finances permit. The goal is to get to 7 per cent of our health budget here in the province, and we'll make initiatives to do that as our finances permit into the future.

It's also important to note, of the \$284 million that we have in mental health and addictions funding today, that is a 52 per cent increase over what the members opposite invested in this when they had the opportunity in 2007. A 52 per cent increase in mental health and addictions funding, just in the Ministry of Health, never mind the funding outside the Ministry of Health. Over \$360 million across government in programs that are provided in other areas of government to people, the same people in the province of Saskatchewan.

This is a strong investment. This is an investment that we need to continue to be committed to into the future. We have a target of 7 per cent. We'll endeavour to make decisions, make investments, as we do in other areas of health care on behalf of the very people we serve, Mr. Chair, but that target will be met as our finances can allow.

[17:00]

**Mr. Meili:** — You know, I'm going to continue on. I see I'm not going to get a clear answer on that one, so we'll continue on to another question.

In that same interview during the leadership you told the *Leader-Post* when asked about access to reproductive health services, including abortion, you said:

We trust those in medical practice and will not interfere with their obligations or oath. There is no plan to implement restrictions on abortion services.

However during the same race you told an anti-abortion group that parental consent or parental notification for minors seeking abortion services is something you would consider. There have recently been demonstrations asking for this legislation in Saskatchewan. Now there's some inconsistency in his comments, so my question is, is this a conversation you've had as a caucus and are you considering proceeding with either parental consent or parental notification legislation?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — To clarify the comments with respect to the interview — and I don't have them in front of me, but if memory serves me correctly — the words that I used was a conversation around parental notification is what I would be open to. So that is the comments that I recall, from memory, making.

The fact of the matter is my first instinct was to indicate that if the Leader of the Opposition would like to know of our caucus conversations, he should come on over and join it, Mr. Chair, and he could be privy to those conversations. Apparently that was the incorrect answer, as I've been guided by a number of people here is that opportunity is not open, Mr. Chair. But I

would advise the House those conversations are not occurring, Mr. Chair, and there's not an intention to move forward with that.

**Mr. Meili:** — I'm going to continue on with that interview. We discussed this a little bit yesterday, but didn't get an answer from the Premier so I want to discuss it again. We had in that same interview, a question: do you support needle exchange programs and/or safe injection sites for drug users? And the answer from the then would-be premier was a flat no, stating that the province would continue to provide current services for people who are suffering with substance abuse.

Now aside from the fact that current services do include, although in a limited fashion, they do include needle exchange programs, there's a need for some updating on his information. I guess my major question is here, does the Premier understand the way in which harm reduction prevents HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and hep [hepatitis] C transmission, prevents overdoses, and helps to connect people to treatment? Is he really wanting to say that there's no interest in looking at an evidence-based approach to preventing negative outcomes and helping people get off drugs?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And I've been fortunate enough to get a copy of precisely what I did say. And the statement was, "No. The province will continue to provide current services for the people who are suffering with substance abuse."

With respect to those comments, I am aware that needle exchanges are operating in communities across the province, in a number of different communities. I'm also aware of some of the controversial discussion among community members in the province on whether or not they should be occurring, and in communities close to where I live, Mr. Chair.

But my comments were more with respect to safe injection sites, and as we move forward with that we'll look to the Ministry of Health, the Minister of Health, with the guidance that they would have, understanding that there are the same opinions across the nation. And there's differences in geography, differences in some of the challenges that we have here in rural areas of the province of Saskatchewan versus some of our urban areas and how we provide those services again on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. So those are the exact comments that I had in that particular article and to continue with the services that are provided today on behalf of the people.

**Mr. Meili:** — So just to clarify. The comments from the Premier are a little bit vague. So are you suggesting that because of some of those opinions out in communities, that you'd be looking perhaps to decrease the availability of needle exchange programs for people who are using? And secondly are you, in that comment, saying that you would be discussing it with the Minister of Health? Are you actually suggesting that there is some openness to exploring safe injection sites?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — With respect to the needle exchange, I'd say no. As I said in the article, we'd continue with the current services. And I'm referencing people that I talk to in communities, people that I know others talk to in their



communities.

With respect to safe injection sites, we are always open to, you know, ensuring that we're providing the most effective services on behalf of the people of the province. It's not the current initiative or the current direction of the provincial government of Saskatchewan, but we're open to conversations with people across the province as ultimately those are the individuals we represent.

**Mr. Meili:** — I'm certainly pleased to hear an evolution in the Premier's position there, and certainly would recommend that he continue to dig into the evidence around the best ways to decrease harm related to drug use.

Looking at some other harms in our province, one of the things that has changed significantly in recent months: since 2016, prices for a wide range of goods — of basically all items since 2016 — have increased by approximately 5 per cent. That's the highest rate of increase in Western Canada, much higher than Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, in fact the highest of all provinces.

And that has been largely attributed to the increase in PST [provincial sales tax], where this government chose to double the amount that they were taking in from the PST. And I'm just wondering if you are able to give any commentary on that increase in prices, the increase in cost, the decrease in affordability of life for Saskatchewan people, and what your plans are to help counter that fairly significant spike.

And I am quoting a chart here, happy to share that with you if you'd like to see it.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Notwithstanding challenges in last year's budget and in our initiative, our effort, and our move, we're moving away from our reliance in this province on natural resource revenues. And the efforts that we made and the tough decisions that we made in last year's budget in the start of our three-year plan to balance it, which this budget that we're discussing here today is year two of that. And as the Minister of Finance had indicated on budget day, and many of us on this side of the House many times since then, that we are on track to achieve that balance next year on behalf of the people of the province to ensure the sustainable investment, again on behalf of those people we serve.

The affordability in the province of Saskatchewan is an initiative that, again, that the Government of Saskatchewan has worked very hard on over the past decade, very hard to increase our export wealth here in the province and create jobs, over 60,000 jobs in communities across the province — all the while reducing the income tax burden on Saskatchewan people with a focus on those low-income earners here in the province of Saskatchewan, understanding that oftentimes they may be single-parent families, things of that nature, people that really do need those dollars, Mr. Chair.

So in the province of Saskatchewan, our residents have the second-lowest provincial tax and utility burden in the country at nearly every income level we have. We've removed in that lowest income level, 112,000 people off provincial income tax, the income tax roll completely, Mr. Chair. And it's important to

note that, as those are the people that most importantly need a hand up in this province. And those are the people that we have provided that opportunity in an income tax reduction here in Saskatchewan.

Also as we go through a number of different income levels here . . . And it's important for the people of the province to understand the affordability matrix that we have here. But with all of the PST changes and all of the tax changes that were in last year's budget — which were difficult decisions, Mr. Chair — we have one of the highest tax-free thresholds yet in the nation of Canada.

A single person earning 40,000 in income still will pay \$700 less than they did a decade ago, a 20 per cent reduction in their income tax bill. A family of four with a \$50,000 income will pay \$2,300 less than they would have a decade ago. That's a 77 per cent reduction in their income tax bill. A family of four with a higher income of about \$75,000 will still pay \$1,800 less than they did a decade ago — \$1,800 less, a 31 per cent decrease.

Mr. Chair, when you look across the nation in many other jurisdictions, numbers like this don't show up in many cases, as income taxes provincially and federally have been increasing.

In addition to that, they've been adding other taxes, Mr. Chair, which I'm sure we'll have an opportunity to possibly talk about because I know there will be a question on the economy and the growth of our economy, and the challenges and the headwinds that we're facing.

But to carry on, Mr. Chair, a family of four with \$100,000 income is still going to pay \$1,900 less than they did in 2007, again a 20 per cent reduction. Mr. Chair, this is a fair question to have in this Assembly, and to talk about the affordability, of where Saskatchewan ranks very, very, very well in the nation of Canada versus some other parameters that can affect affordability, Mr. Chair. But they're only one parameter in the entire affordability complex, if you will.

And one of those is again a discrepancy and a clear choice between members opposite and members on this side. We put in a formula a number of years ago that ensured that our minimum wage in this province would continue to grow. It's a formula that we consulted on at the time. It's a formula that we continue to believe in.

Members opposite are looking to implement what I've heard is a \$15 minimum wage bump here. Now, Mr. Chair, I think it's important for us to note that the leadership campaign of the current leader advocated for a \$15 minimum wage. He's asked some questions about it. He hasn't committed to it. We're going to ask if he will.

But a few weeks ago, the member from Regina Rosemont asked about youth employment, here in this House, in the province of Saskatchewan. A *Maclean's* magazine article from January of this very year notes that youth are the clear losers from a higher minimum wage. Their commentary has been supported by the Financial Accountability Office in Ontario, who calculated that a net loss of approximately 50,000 jobs due to minimum wage changes in that jurisdiction mostly affected young teens and young adults. The Bank of Canada, CFIB [Canadian Federation

of Independent Business], the Fraser Institute all echo this. They all echo this.

So this side, the governing party, on behalf of the people of the province, will continue to focus on affordability, with a focus on the affordability of those that need it. Our low-income earners here in the province of Saskatchewan are paying far less income tax than they ever did under the New Democratic Party in 2007, Mr. Chair. And it's important now for us, for the Opposition Leader to provide to the people of the province: will he cost youth and young adult jobs here in the province by standing behind a \$15 minimum wage?

**Mr. Meili:** — You know, the Premier has a better time sticking to the script than he does sticking to the question that was actually asked. I asked about prices and the way they've climbed, and didn't hear a thing about it.

[17:15]

I did hear however how income tax apparently is dropping. Well it seems that the Premier is actually committed to making sure people have less income. Why this Premier would stand up and actually brag about the fact that we have the lowest minimum wage in the country makes no sense to me.

But let's get back to the question at hand, and the rising prices. I heard a laudable commitment there. A laudable commitment, but laughable when you actually look at the application to a progressive approach to taxation.

Just last year when this government decided to increase the PST, increasing it by a per cent — adding it to things like children's clothes, and restaurant meals, construction, various kinds of insurance, now we've seen it added on to used vehicles — at the same time as they chose to decrease income taxes for the wealthiest people in the province, what happened as a result of that? If you were in the bottom decile of earners, your taxes went up by 2 per cent of your income. If you're in the middle of earners, your taxes went up by 1 per cent of your income. If you're in the top 10 per cent of earners, your taxes went down. They went down.

This is your commitment to progressive taxation? This is your commitment to making sure that people who are making less money are actually able to afford life? Why did the Premier make such a choice? Why did your government make such a choice to increase taxes in a way that disproportionately make life more expensive for lower income people?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. And again, you know, these numbers that came up in question period, I'm not just exactly certain where they are actually coming from. Because the fact of the matter is, is something quite different when it comes to the affordability of Saskatchewan residents, most notably the affordability of those low-income residents here in the province of Saskatchewan.

One additional change that we made last year was we enhanced the low-income tax credit by \$100 per adult, or \$40 per child, to ensure that that made up for any changes that may come with respect to changes that were in the budget, with respect to taking the PST from 5 to 6 per cent, Mr. Chair.

I have another document that I'd quote from, and from 2003 to 2016 Saskatchewan had the largest decrease, after-tax decrease in those earning low incomes here in the province of Saskatchewan. We had a decrease of 28 per cent of the population in the province of Saskatchewan being classified as low-income earners. This is an effect of a strong economy, but it's also an effect of a government that is paying attention to the affordability factors, all of the affordability factors, to ensure that not only are people working here in the province of Saskatchewan, but those that need a hand up that did not . . . Those low-income earners are not paying provincial income tax, Mr. Chair. And I went through the numbers on the reductions that they had under the members opposite.

With respect to who is paying tax here in the province, those earning less than \$40,000 in the province of Saskatchewan make up about 56 per cent of our taxpayers here in Saskatchewan. And they submit about 6 per cent of the actual tax burden here in the province of Saskatchewan. Those 40 to \$100,000 make up about 36 per cent of the taxpayers here in the province of Saskatchewan. They submit about 48 per cent of the gross tax that the province receives. And those earning over \$100,000 make up about 8 per cent of our province, Mr. Chair. The fact of the matter is, is that 8 per cent pays for about 46 per cent of the total of the tax income that the province of . . . tax revenues that the province of Saskatchewan has.

I think it's also important to note that we've worked very hard on this affordability complex, Mr. Chair. And it's also important to note that some of the debate that happens in this House with respect to taxes is important and it does matter. Because should the Leader of the Opposition ever actually happen to be the Premier of the province, Mr. Chair, he has committed — he has committed, as has his counterparts across the nation — in quickly implementing a carbon tax on the industries, jobs, communities, and families across the province of Saskatchewan. This is a tax that has proven not to work. It does not reduce emissions. There is nowhere in the world where a carbon tax on its own has actually reduced emissions, Mr. Chair. What it does do is it moves those emissions and those jobs to other areas of the world that don't charge it, Mr. Chair.

So it's important to note that while it's been the governing party, on behalf of the people of the province, over the last 10 years that has worked hard to reduce income taxes — in particular on those low-income earners in the province — to expand the economy, to provide jobs for those people that live in communities where all of us live across the province of Saskatchewan, that we will not be implementing those ineffective taxes that are hard and move jobs out of this province, Mr. Chair.

It's always members on this side of the House that will continue to engage with people across the province of Saskatchewan. And when it comes to initiatives or headwinds from our federal government, we will stand with the people in the industries in this province and the jobs that we have, each and every time.

**Mr. Meili:** — Just to remind the Premier, because he seems to get lost somewhere in that trajectory, the question was around why the increase in PST? Why the increase in PST and the cut in income tax, which resulted in lower income folks paying 2 per cent more of their income in taxes? That's including the

low-income tax credit.

Add to that the impact of having added that PST to construction, to construction labour. Now we've got a \$12.6 million decrease in construction activity from March 2017 to March 2018. We've seen a slowdown in the restaurant business. And this is what I see, and I know my members over here have been talking to businesses throughout their communities. We're hearing from businesses saying that their business is down. There are fewer customers; they're having to lay people off.

Mr. Premier, I guess I'm asking you. Mr. Premier, why have you chosen in a time of economic downturn to put tax in a place where it would actually slow down economic activity, slowing down the construction business, slowing down the restaurant business, in a time of economic downturn? What in the good name were you thinking?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — The decisions that were made in last year's budget and continue through this year's budget, Mr. Chair, have been, you know, fully discussed in communities across this province. I had the opportunity in some 130 communities across the province of Saskatchewan to discuss this directly with the people of the province of Saskatchewan and to hear their input with respect to the changes we made.

But those changes were made for very specific reasons, to shift our reliance, our revenue reliance in this province away from being reliant on natural resource prices. The price of oil, the price of potash, the price of some of our ag commodities should not determine our ability to hire 3,600 more nurses here in the province or 900 more doctors or to invest \$30 million directly back into our classrooms. That should be determined by the people of the province that expect those services and should not be determined on the price of a barrel of oil or potash revenues. And that is the initiative that we put forward, was to start to reduce our reliance on those natural resource prices.

The people of the province asked some other questions as well. And they understand the initiative that we have put forward here to continue to shift that reliance, not only to ensure that we can continue to invest in those services that people expect but ensure that that investment ability will be there for decades to come, but balancing the budget. And we're on track to do that, Mr. Speaker, with this year's budget. That's something I'm proud of.

As a new Premier of this province, I'm proud to serve with these members and to engage with people across the province. And it's something the people of the province of Saskatchewan want, and I can't say that for governments across the nation of Canada. There are not a lot of governments that are making what are sometimes tough decisions to ensure that we can sustainably invest into the next generation and leave that opportunity, the opportunity that we've had over the last decade, for my kids and your kids and other kids across the province of Saskatchewan.

But the other question that comes up from time to time is how the Leader of the Opposition, should he ever have the opportunity, pay for his two and a half billion dollars that he's put out there that he'll spend, Mr. Chair. How will that be paid for? And the only economic opportunity that he has put forward

is to impose a carbon tax on the people of the province to pay for the promises that he has, ensuring \$18 million, I think, in agriculture for some initiative that I'm not sure farmers are going to like a whole big bunch, Mr. Chair.

But with respect to something much more current, much more current — and even up to and including some decisions that were made today — we have a dynamic across Western Canada and across the nation that has caused our federal government to invest and invest heavily in a transportation mechanism, a pipeline, in the Trans Mountain pipeline, to provide product to Canada's coast, product that for the most part is going to come out of the province of Alberta. But the opportunity to enhance our access to that coastline with this product will start to diminish the differential that we experience in this province, increase our economic opportunities.

So the question I have in representing the people of the province — of which I said we will do always, Mr. Speaker, represent people and industries, the jobs across the province of Saskatchewan — is, has the Leader of the Opposition reached out to his federal counterpart, Mr. Singh, and talked to him? Because he has come out blatantly against this infrastructure project. Has the Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the \$2.6 billion that we're missing in our economy each and every year in this province of which he would hope to represent, has he reached out to his federal leader and said whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, just hold on here a little bit? You might not be on the right side of this? Has he done that, Mr. Chair? That's a question that I would have.

Has he reached out to Mr. Horgan, his provincial counterpart and leader in the province of British Columbia, and said hey, hey, hey, you know what you're doing here is you're getting in the road of a good project that'll put people to work at Evraz steel in Saskatchewan? It'll increase the economic opportunities we have in the province of Saskatchewan. This is a nation-building project. It's in the interest of all Canadians, in particular those in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Has he reached out to his counterparts, Mr. Speaker, and represented the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

**Mr. Meili:** — The Premier went so far on that question I think he needs a travel scout for future ones. Now this question was of course about PST and PST that's been added to children's clothes, PST that's been added to restaurants, PST that's been added to construction. We've had a very clear message from those industries, from insurance, from restaurant industry, from construction industry, that that is harmful for their business, for their bottom line.

Another new introduction this year of PST was onto used cars. And I just can't help going back to this quote from your friend, Mr. Wall, who said at the time that he was elected that "Government should avoid doing dumb things. And the idea of charging the PST on the same used car over and over again seems pretty dumb."

And you know, when I looked that up, I also looked up [donnaharpauer.ca](http://donnaharpauer.ca), a website that talked about the first hundred days of the Sask Party government, a list that has not, as my colleague said, aged well. Eliminating the PST on used cars was one of the top things there. Creation of Enterprise

Saskatchewan — a memory. Set election dates — well sometimes. Stronger balanced budget legislation — yes, not so much. Paying down the provincial debt — no, I think it's doubling the provincial debt seems to be the final message.

So I guess, you know, there was those heady days of the early days of the Sask Party government with so much hope, with so many plans to not do dumb things. What happened? Where's your vision? Why are you now going back on that early promise, adding PST to used cars? Where are you taking us, Mr. Premier?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, it's important to note, these were difficult decisions that were made in order for us to shift our reliance away from being reliant on natural resource prices here in the province of Saskatchewan, to ensure that the services that we're providing across the province are sustainable into the future, (a) by balancing our budget, (b) by ensuring we're not governed by the price of a barrel of oil or any of the exports that we have here in the province. And it's working.

Over the past decade, 10 years ago, under the members opposite, 32 per cent of the provincial revenues came from natural resources here in the province. This past year, 10 per cent, 10 per cent are from natural resources. In all of this time, in reducing our reliance on natural resources from 32 per cent under members opposite to 10 per cent, we're also able to . . . Each of the members that I went through in their different tax groups pay less tax than they did a year ago as well, Mr. Chair.

[17:30]

We have been focused on the tax burden on the people of the province of Saskatchewan. We've been focused on shifting our reliance on resource revenues here in the province of Saskatchewan, and that has made for some difficult decisions. And some of those decisions we have changed over the course of that decade. And I think it's important to note that from time to time political parties and leaders will change their policy platforms.

And I will point one out. In 2011, the NDP under then leader Dwain Lingenfelter, they ran on a policy of resource revenue sharing with First Nations across the province of Saskatchewan. They didn't win that election. They didn't do very well in that election, Mr. Chair. But near the end of 2015, the then leader, Mr. Cam Broten, he very quietly reversed that policy and he said the NDP no longer supports resource revenue sharing with the First Nations. He aligned the NDP with the already position of . . . and the only position of the province, the people's government and the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Chair, as we believe that resource royalty is used for highways and the schools and hospitals for all members of the province of Saskatchewan.

So at the time that Cam Broten quietly tried to reverse that policy, he called it the . . . The now Leader of the Opposition was very critical of that. He called it an embarrassing step backwards and it was inconsistent with party policy. He openly criticized the then leader of the NDP. Since becoming leader this past March, he hasn't said too much about revenue sharing with First Nations.

So the question that we have today is: will the Leader of the Opposition clarify, is he with the NDP caucus and the Government of Saskatchewan, or does he continue with his opposition?

**Mr. Meili:** — Once again the question was around PST, as have the last several questions been, but none of the answers. There was a statement made, however, that I think requires some correction, that folks who are lower income pay less tax than they did prior to last year's budget. The opposite is true. They're paying more tax and a higher percentage of their income in tax.

Now the restaurant and construction industries have been very clear that that introduction of PST has been damaging for their business, as has the insurance industry. And we're seeing the way in which decisions by this government are harming the economy, and that's resulting in more people out of work — 43,000 people unemployed today in Saskatchewan; 1,800 fewer jobs, year over year, with the most recent numbers compared to last April. We've got more and more people out of work. And that's a real problem when we've heard no plan. We've only heard a comment from this government saying, well things were good five years ago. Right now people are out of work and they need help.

You know, I want to talk about some very particular people who are out of work, the people who used to clean this building and who were let go by this government, and the people who are about to be out of work who we see every day when we go to the cafeteria.

This government, the members opposite, walk through the halls, walk down there, say hello as they're getting their meals, when they know that their decision has been to get rid of the cafeteria services and make the people who are serving them every day be, instead of there on the lunch line where they've been working with us for years and years, on the unemployment line. Where's the moral compass? Is it Compass Foods?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, with respect to privatization of cleaning services here in the Government of Saskatchewan, it's actually saved the taxpayers of the province three and a half million dollars. Important to note that 49 former employees continue to work with organizations that are still cleaning those facilities, and five of 13 contract businesses are actually employee owned.

And I find this interesting as this is the economic answer that the member opposite comes forward with, is to ensure that we are hiring more civil servants, more into the public service here in the province of Saskatchewan.

A quick tutorial on how this province has grown over the past decade is we have had the opportunity to add value and volume to the exports in the province of Saskatchewan. We have come from some \$16 billion in exports in 2007 to about \$30 billion the last year or two here in the province. That has created over 60,000 jobs across the province of Saskatchewan. That has caused reason for people to move here from all over the world. Over 100,000 people have moved to Saskatchewan from around the world. But it has also created the opportunity for our next generation to stay here as they have a career that they can

choose in a community across the province of Saskatchewan.

That's something we haven't always had here in this province, Mr. Speaker, under years of an NDP government. So these again are challenging decisions that this government makes with respect to ensuring that we are utilizing the public dollars, the public taxpayer dollars, and stretching them to the greatest opportunity possible.

But we will continue to advocate for a strong economy and strong, strong, strong job growth across this province, Mr. Speaker. We've done that the last decade and we'll continue to put initiatives forward over the next decade that will continue with that, including two tax growth initiatives in this budget.

**Mr. Meili:** — The people who cleaned this building, the people who make the meals here, these are steady jobs. They're decent jobs. They're not high-paying jobs. And I just don't understand why this government would talk to the people who clean their offices, make their meals and say, you know what? We just can't afford those jobs even though they're in the lower end of civil service jobs. We need you to go. How do you look them in the face? How do you look yourself in the mirror?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — I look in the mirror each and every morning, Mr. Speaker, and I look in the mirror and I commit to representing the people of the province of Saskatchewan. The very same question can come to the Leader of the Opposition and members in that side, Mr. Speaker.

How do they look at people in the energy industry, the mining industry, and the agriculture industry and stand and say they want to tax that industry with an ineffective carbon tax that will move jobs to other areas of the world? How do you look at those people across the province of Saskatchewan, is how I ask. How do you wake up in the morning, look in the mirror and, Mr. Speaker, and look at those people?

How do you look at the people at Evraz, Mr. Speaker, and tell them that I haven't reached out to Mr. Singh, our federal leader who doesn't want a pipeline built in this nation? How do you look at the people at Evraz when you haven't talked to Mr. Horgan, your NDP counterpart in British Columbia who's holding up this pipeline which is in the national interest, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of not just the province of Saskatchewan but provinces like Saskatchewan to continue to be contributing members, contributing financial members of this great nation of Canada?

So the question comes right back to the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite: how do they look at the hard-working people of the province of Saskatchewan when they stand on their soapbox and say, what you really need here is a carbon tax?

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Chair, it really is hard to see that room, the rest of this room, clapping, pounding their desk in favour of firing the people who cook the meals in this building, in favour of firing the people who clean the offices in this building. It's embarrassing.

And the plan we heard last year, that they were going to just cut everybody's wages by 3.5 per cent, that was the big plan. That's

how they were going to get us out of debt, save \$350 million. They didn't succeed in doing that. That plan didn't make sense so now the plan is, let's get rid of 1,250 jobs in the civil service.

Mr. Chair, there's so much work that needs to be done. You go into any public service field, into Health, into Social Services, front-line work needs more support, not less. Why is this government looking around and saying, you know, the best thing for Saskatchewan people is to lay them off?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that there are still people, you know, working, cleaning the facilities across the province of Saskatchewan. It's important to note that there will still be people working in the cafeteria here, Mr. Chair.

I guess the question again comes back to the Leader of the Opposition. Who was working in the 52 hospitals that they closed across the province of Saskatchewan? Those people were laid off and left this province, Mr. Speaker. Who was working in the 176 schools that the NDP chose to close in the province of Saskatchewan?

Mr. Speaker, more recent and relevant to that, who will be working if the members opposite ever got their way and supported Justin Trudeau and we had a carbon tax imposed on the industries in this province? The thousand workers that are directly employed at Evraz steel, Mr. Speaker, when that company could make a decision to move to the United States or to China, Mr. Speaker, who will be ... How will these members opposite, Mr. Speaker, look those members in the face, and who will have those jobs, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward?

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Chair, traditionally these estimates are a chance for us to get clear answers from the Premier, for him not to sit down and let the ministers answer, for him to actually come and listen to the questions and respond. The showboating for 10 minutes at a time and not giving us any answers at all, it's really embarrassing. You know what? We've got some more questions to ask though, and we'll keep trying. We'll keep trying; maybe we'll get an answer at some point.

You know, there was a very major change this year in the way that this government reports their finances. They introduced actually including the pension accrual numbers in their summary statements. Now this was the recommendation from the beginning. When you go to summary statements, that's what that means, a summary. You include everything. Now up until now because of interest rates, to include that pension numbers would have actually made it appear as though the deficit were higher.

For the first time those numbers were actually positive and suddenly this government found religion. Oh, those need to be in the summary statements. It has to be there. You know, there was a former minister of Finance, I think he's now working as a special adviser, Ken Krawetz. He said to the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] in 2013, "It's been the position of this government that we do not include the pension liabilities."

Now I guess my question is, why did the Premier suddenly find religion on this? Why did he suddenly change his practice?

Because to all observers the only real explanation is you made the numbers look better, and made it look like they had less of a deficit than they actually do.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And this shift from GRF [General Revenue Fund] reporting on the government financials, Mr. Chair, the shift from reporting on the GRF basis to a full summary basis is a shift that has happened and occurred over a number of years, Mr. Chair. For many years, this government, under members opposite, as well as the first number of years under a Saskatchewan Party government, reported on a GRF basis, as well as they reported a summary financial. The auditor had called for us to shift to a summary financial reporting basis, of which we did over a number of years, Mr. Chair.

I think it's important to note, with respect to the pension adjustments that were included in a line item in all of the summary documents and were moved up into the full body of the document — but they were not moved up in the release of this budget for any reasons that the member opposite puts forward — they were actually moved up in Q3 [third quarter] of last year, Mr. Chair. And it's important to note that the pension adjustments were moved into the full accounting of the summary financials in Q3 of last year. This is part of the transition to a full reporting on a summary basis. It's a transition that has went over a number of years, and it's the way that we are reporting in this year's budget, starting with Q3 of last year.

**Mr. Meili:** — The Premier is correct to note that it was added in Q3 of last year, which is at the time when the numbers were actually going to increase the bottom line, and make it appear as though the government wasn't running as much of a deficit last year as they actually did, that they hadn't failed, that they hadn't blown the contingency fund entirely, that they hadn't failed to find the savings in the decrease in people's wages that they promised they would.

So I guess my question to you again, Mr. Premier, is can you give us any other reason, except that it looked good in Q3 of last year, that you actually made this change?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — In Q3, Mr. Chair, when the pension fund was included in the full summary statement, it didn't make any difference in that particular budget, Mr. Chair. This is part of the full evolution to summary financials that has evolved over a number of years, Mr. Chair, and the evolution is, for all intents and purposes, close to or complete now.

[17:45]

So this is a decision that has been made over the last number of years to report the finances of the province of Saskatchewan on a full summary basis. There's challenges in this as well, as we move forward, Mr. Chair, with respect to what that actually encompasses across the province of Saskatchewan in some of the entities that we have.

But I think what the people of the province are more concerned with than precisely different accounting methods that we abide by over time is the fact of the matter that every initiative has been put forward by members on this side of the House and our

Finance minister and treasury board to ensure that we are accountable with the people of the province's money — that's whose it is — and ensuring that we are on track to balance the budget here in the province of Saskatchewan.

That's what the people of this province are concerned about, is that their children will have the opportunity to sustainably invest in infrastructure projects in schools, not close them. They want to invest in replacing and building new schools in the province, and hospitals, Mr. Speaker. That's what the people of the province want. They don't want it just this year or next year; they want it for decades to come so that their children have every opportunity to enjoy the growth that we've had over the last decade. That's what members on this side of the House are focused on. That's what members on this side of the House will continue to focus on on behalf of the people of the province.

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Chair, after a year of . . . or a decade, should I say, a decade of record revenue, now what do we have? We have record tax increases, record debt, and record unemployment. And now that record debt doubled in the last five years, and set to triple by 2022. What is this government's plan to deal with that growing debt?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, it's important to know . . . And I went through the numbers on the taxes paid, and I was comparing actually to the taxes that were paid by Saskatchewan residents under the members opposite, a decade ago. They're down in every income category, Mr. Chair, and that's important to note as we move forward with initiatives that are being put forward by the members opposite, like lack of representation when it comes to getting our products to market, like imposing silly and ineffective taxes like carbon taxation on the people of the province.

But the fact of the matter is this: we can do some comparisons with respect to debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] across the nation where Saskatchewan fares very, very well. We're third lowest, Mr. Chair. And this is all hidden in the budget documents, but we're 26.1 per cent of our debt-to-GDP here in the province of Saskatchewan, below us being Alberta, but they're very quickly going to catch us with a stat that I'll bring up here closely. They're at 14.3, and British Columbia at 25.6. Ranges as high, Mr. Speaker, as 74.6: the larger provinces, 62.6; 66.9 in Manitoba; Ontario, 45.1, Mr. Chair. I think it's important to note that Saskatchewan's trajectory to balance the budget next year will give us every opportunity to continue to hold our debt-to-GDP ratio at a low level, and continue to advocate on behalf of increasing the GDP number as well, Mr. Chair, as we have opportunities here in this province.

Where we are today with this budget — a \$365 million deficit this year, on track to balance next year — is we're running, Mr. Chair, about two and a half per cent of our revenues in deficit here this particular year. Just next door to us, under an NDP rule, they're running over an \$8 billion debt there this year, Mr. Chair, deficit which will be added to their debt and very quickly change the numbers on their debt-to-GDP. That's 18.4 per cent of their revenues in that province, Mr. Chair, and it's important to note.

2.5 per cent of revenues is our deficit this year, on track to balance. 18.4 per cent, I believe my memory, in the province

next to us, on track to balance with their virtual budget that was released not too long ago that is dependent on a pipeline that the member of the opposition refused to advocate for, Mr. Chair.

So the fact of the matter is, is the trajectory and the effort and the initiatives that we are putting forward on behalf of the people of the province with the budget that's in this year, in our second year of our three-year plan to balance, we're on track to balance that budget next year. That's what the people of the province of Saskatchewan want. That's what they've told all of us in our travels, Mr. Chair, and we'll continue in that initiative. And we'll continue to represent people across Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Meili:** — By the time he gets done his answers, we've forgotten what the question is, and apparently so has he. Now the Premier's memory has been a pretty significant question in recent months, a pretty significant question in recent months. And I want to ask a few questions about the Premier's memory.

We had the issue where Mr. Boyd had the irrigation plan for which he was charged and convicted of environmental infractions. And in the lead-up to that, those infractions, in the lead-up to those charges, he was applying for a permit through the Water Security Agency, for which the Premier was the minister at the time. And so I have a few questions that remain and that have still not been answered.

One, there was a question of how often you had the kind of meeting that took place during that series of events, where you had the deputy minister to the Premier, deputy minister of Agriculture, deputy minister of the Environment, and the Minister of the Environment himself, coming together to look at an individual's application for a Water Security Agency permit.

So my question is to the Premier, and I've asked this before, but the team over there has chosen not to answer. How often or how many other times did you have a meeting of that magnitude that involved the deputy minister to the Premier during your term as minister of the environment?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, with respect to how often senior officials in the Government of Saskatchewan would meet on the application — any application essentially that I'm aware of — is not ever, Mr. Speaker, and nor did we in this case. There was a meeting with respect to the environmental violations that occurred, sometime later. There was never a meeting with senior government officials with respect to any application in this case or any other case, to my knowledge.

I think it's important to note here, because what's being put forward in this House, a number of times been put forward in the rotunda, that there's some sort of favour curried or anything of this nature that happened, just simply isn't the case. If that was the case, somebody probably wouldn't have been charged. But in this case there were four charges laid on this individual when there was a violation. He pled guilty to two of those charges and he was assessed one of the largest penalties, one of the largest penalties under this environmental law.

And further to that, a very . . . A step that I have not seen taken or that I cannot recall taken, is when some of these inferences are put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, we saw actually a letter written from the president of the Water Security

Agency to clarify some of the concerns that the Leader of the Opposition was putting forward. And I'd like to read a few of them into the record, Mr. Speaker. And it goes on, this letter to Mr. Meili from Susan Ross, the president of the Water Security Agency, and I quote:

I would like to clarify some misunderstandings on this file. I noted that in the legislature and in the media you state that Mr. Boyd was treated differently and used back channels to advance his application for a water rights licence. This is not the case. I can assure you that Water Security Agency officials are professional public servants and acted appropriately throughout this case.

Mr. Boyd inquired about the steps to obtain a water rights licence and was referred to the water rights licensing division, as is the normal case. He was provided with information and application forms. It was simple, and all of this is reflected in the emails being referred to in the media.

Water Security Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Environment officials acted in coordination and took the appropriate actions in bringing forward this file, which ultimately ended up in enforcement actions against Mr. Boyd. He was treated as any other citizen would have been, had he or she taken the same actions.

Mr. Speaker, I submit that to the record.

**Mr. Meili:** — It's certainly not the officials that we're concerned with. It is the former member and this Premier who, as the minister of the Environment, also met with Mr. Boyd to discuss the project in question. And we've asked this a few times, but I think it bears asking again because we still haven't got an answer. And the Premier has had time to consult his staff, even to call his old friend Bill and ask.

Who was at that meeting when you sat down with Bill Boyd? Was it just the two of you? Were there other people? Were there staff with you, or were there associates of Mr. Boyd at that meeting with you?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, this was not an official meeting. It was a meeting that Mr. Boyd presented me with some plans. And I had advised him to get in touch with the officials, the officials that are governed by the president of the Water Security Agency that provided the informative letter to Mr. Meili with respect to how they have handled this particular case. So that happens in this place, Mr. Speaker. I've met with members opposite throughout my years as being a minister, of being an MLA in this Assembly, Mr. Chair, and I've met with members on this side as well.

So that meeting, I believe it happened in, I think it was last year's session, spring session. It had happened, just a meeting where Mr. Boyd had showed me the project that he was going to embark on. And I had put him in touch with the Water Security Agency or told him who to get in touch with through the Water Security Agency and others to ensure that he could provide the proper permits, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Meili:** — The question remains. And yes, it's been

remarked in the media that it's fairly unbelievable that the Premier would not be able to identify whether or not the two of them were alone or whether there were others in the room. So I'll ask the question again: was it just you and Mr. Boyd or were there other people either with him or with you? And were any notes taken at that meeting?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — I've answered the question to the best of my recollection, Mr. Speaker. I don't recall all of the meetings that I attend as a minister of whatever file I've served. It was over a year ago, Mr. Chair. I've recalled the events as best I recollect them. There are not records of this meeting, as we have checked, Mr. Chair. So I've recalled the events as best as I recollect them.

But the fact of the matter is this individual was put in touch with the relevant organizations and advised that he could obtain the relevant permits there. Again, Mr. Chair, the member opposite puts forward that something untoward has happened here. If something untoward is saying to any individual, as I would across the province, that you need to get in touch with the Water Security Agency, apply for the relevant permits for whatever project you're looking at, if that is something untoward — guilty.

**Mr. Meili:** — It's extremely improbable that one would remember the details of the conversation and not be able to recall whether or not there were more than two people in the room. Extremely improbable.

And I do want to come back to the *Leader-Post* survey that we discussed a little bit earlier. There was another question, fairly straightforward question: will you sell the GTH? And the then would-be premier said:

We should look at opportunities to move the management and quite possibly the ownership of the Global Transportation Hub to an entity that can ensure that it will become the asset to our economy that was originally envisioned.

I'd like to know if looking at opportunities to move that management and possibly the ownership is something that the Premier has proceeded with since he was chosen to fulfill this current role.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I stand by those comments with respect to this facility that was envisioned under the members opposite when they were in government and was executed under the current government, and the need for the free flow of goods in and out of the province and the opportunity for a generational investment that will truly benefit the economy in the province of Saskatchewan and that will happen over a generation.

[18:00]

I can confirm that that need is as important today as it has ever been, and I stand by those comments. You know, as we move forward through the months and years ahead, we will be looking for partners, for opportunities I would say, with respect to achieving just that vision and just that goal with respect to the Global Transportation Hub.

What I can confirm is that we have not had secret meetings in hotels here in the city of Regina, secret meetings with the city of Regina in hotels, Mr. Chair. Those have not occurred, or to my knowledge those have not occurred, Mr. Chair. We have not had other engagements with other private entities with respect to the Global Transportation Hub and moving it in the near future. But I think it is worthy of the conversation on ensuring that that facility can become the generational investment that will benefit the economy, not just in Regina and the surrounding area, but the economy of the province. And there are opportunities for that as we move forward, and we'll be sure to engage in those opportunities as they arise.

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Premier, unfortunately you haven't given us much cause to trust in your memories of meetings. I do have another question on this. Again it wasn't answered whether or not you were currently looking at opportunities to move the management. My question is if you were, if you were going to sell the Global Transportation Hub, to whom could you sell it? What sort of entity would be required for it to be able to maintain the special tax status, the free trade zone that it currently is?

[Interjections]

**The Chair:** — Order.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, as I had indicated, we're not currently in discussions with respect to the sale of the GTH. I'm not here to answer hypotheticals on what if or what could be. But if the member opposite and the provincial NDP are interested, we would be more than willing to have those discussions. If they would like to take on ownership of the Global Transportation Hub, maybe we'd take Tommy Douglas House as a partial payment or a down payment, Mr. Chair, but we can have those discussions if the interest is there.

**Mr. Meili:** — Now we do know that the RCMP has investigated actions around the GTH and that those have been referred to Manitoba prosecution. Has the Premier or any of his government received any information? Have they been in touch with you with any indication of when a decision will be made, where we are in that process?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — No.

**Mr. Meili:** — We've also got some questions around social housing where we haven't had an answer. A question that's been posed many times to the Minister of Social Services is around the vacancy rates for social housing, where there are apparently 3,000 units that are vacant. How many of those units are actually accessible and could be used by people with disabilities?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — As has been explained in this House and in the rotunda by the minister and myself as well, I believe, it's important for us to clarify that no one is being removed from the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement. We'll be pausing the program as we move forward. And vacancies across the province have increased in our major centres. Vacancies have increased and our Saskatchewan Housing Corporation does have a vacancy of about 13 per cent at current.



The fact of the matter is, is when it comes to accessibility for those that may require housing here in the province, is disabilities are different. And so it is looked at on a case-by-case basis. And if the individual qualifies, there are opportunities to adjust that particular unit to that particular individual's disability to ensure that, you know, an understanding that not all disabilities are the same. But it's worked on on a case-by-case basis, understanding the specific disability of the qualified applicant of the time.

**Mr. Meili:** — Should people's circumstances change — for example, if they should gain employment and no longer require social assistance but then lose that employment or have some other difficult circumstances — and they've been off for more than three months, they're no longer eligible. They wouldn't be allowed back on the program.

This is a real concern as we see too many times when people are on social assistance that there are barriers to leaving that. This just introduces one more barrier where anyone who chooses to seek work, succeed for a while, might find themselves without the kind of support they need. Why has this government actually made the welfare wall worse? Why have they made it harder for people to take the risk and get work, knowing that they will no longer have rental housing support if they're unsuccessful?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Chair, we continue to invest \$46 million in the rental housing supplement here in the province of Saskatchewan. And when individuals have the opportunity to become wilfully employed in this province, Mr. Chair, then they'll be covered by the low income tax rates that we have here in the province of Saskatchewan to give them every opportunity for a hand up and to succeed in whatever career they're able to participate in here in the province. Mr. Speaker, if anybody, whether you're on a rental housing supplement or not and become unfortunate enough to lose your employment here in the province, we have ample supports in place to ensure that we are taking care of those people in our communities across the province.

We've invested. We have invested heavily in Social Services, Mr. Speaker, up again 4.8 per cent this year. That's on the heels of a large increase from last year. \$1.18 billion in Social Services, Mr. Speaker, as I said . . . or Mr. Chair, up 54 million. We continue to invest and increasing the dollars that are going to our front-line CBOs [community-based organization] here in the province with a \$10 million lift in CBO funding here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Chair, it's important to note that this again is one of the investments that the people of the province expect of their provincial government, is to invest in our communities' most vulnerable, those that may have fallen on hard times for a short period of time or those that need ongoing support, Mr. Chair. And we most certainly do that with over a billion dollars invested in this year's already challenged budget as we talked about, in investing in ensuring that those most vulnerable in our communities have the services that they require.

This is a time for us to reflect a little bit I think, Mr. Chair, as well, as we hear a mixed message coming from the members opposite when they talk about investing or spending in social

services, corrections, policing, justice, and health care. Actually they have said that that does not represent an investment. And that was put out on an NDP tweet here a number of months ago, that that investment, that \$1.18 million is not an investment in the people in our communities, an investment in our communities' most vulnerable, Mr. Chair.

And then every day we see the NDP, including today, come in here, march into this Assembly and ask for more spending in exactly these areas, more spending in health care, more spending in social services, more spending in the rental housing supplement. And when we increase the spending in these areas, which we have each and every year, Mr. Chair, they criticize it. So there's no winning in this place, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to questions from the opposition. They want you to spend more, invest more. When you do, they don't call it an investment, Mr. Chair. It's an ironic situation to say the least, Mr. Chair, and if we have the opportunity to get an economic question we'll talk a little more about the differences we have between the two of us.

**Mr. Meili:** — This year when the budget came out there was a stack of press releases, as there always are, and for the second year in a row that stack of press releases had one about Social Services that was boasting about the highest budget in Social Services in the history of the province. And you know what? That could've been a great thing. That could've been an indication that there was an investment, that they were following through on some of the promises made on the poverty reduction strategy, promises we have not seen followed through on.

But that wasn't the case. What we saw was an increase because of an increase in utilization. There are more people, between SAP [Saskatchewan assistance program] and TEA [transitional employment allowance] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], requiring supports. What this is, is a press release boasting about more people living in poverty.

How is it that this government can look at that after having cut special diet supports, cut supports for people who die on social assistance, cut their funeral supports, cut the rental housing supplement, and still having to spend more on utilization of these programs? How can they look at that and boast and call that progress?

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, we will be there when there is utilization pressures here in the province of Saskatchewan. We've proven that with \$125 million increase to our Social Services budget over the last two years.

But I would put forward this — and this is exactly what I'm talking about, Mr. Chair — is when there is investments made and called for, rightfully so in some cases in this Assembly, when that investment is made, it's not acknowledged. It's got, well that's for utilization or that's for some other reason.

Mr. Chair, the fact of the matter is over \$10 million is provided in this budget, a very challenging budget again, directly to our community-based organizations providing front-line services across the province of Saskatchewan. Has provided two of those CBOs, through talking to them, understanding the challenges that they have, and through a commitment of

members on this side to ensure that they could have the lift that they had asked for so that they can continue to provide the services that they do in the communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

This includes another \$24 million, Mr. Chair, in this year's budget and a very challenging budget. And a further increase is aimed at supporting at-risk children in the province of Saskatchewan and adults with intellectual disabilities. That includes \$700,000 for children and youth with exceptional medical behaviour challenges. That includes four and a half million dollars for extended family members caring for at-risk children and youth, keeping them connected not only to their family but to their community and their culture.

Mr. Chair, these are important investments. These are investments that the people of the province of Saskatchewan have asked for. It includes almost \$10 million to continue moving people from the Valley View Centre to new community-based homes across the province, some of which I've had the opportunity to visit. And the people in those homes with those intellectual disabilities, and their families, many times they're moving closer to the community where they were raised, Mr. Chair. And their families are closer, are so thankful for the opportunity to have those loved family members close to them where they live, close to the community where they were raised.

That's happening with almost a \$9.9 million investment in this year's budget, Mr. Chair, and it's happening across the province. It includes \$9 million provided for services for children with intellectual disabilities aging into adult care, Mr. Chair. That has been raised in this legislature, in this session, in previous, as well as for adults with intellectual disabilities whose needs have increased and who are in crisis.

So, Mr. Chair, there have been investments made. There have been investments made in this budget — this second, this budget, albeit a tight budget. But as we plan to balance our budget next year, we have a commitment to the people of the province to make the decisions necessary to ensure that we can continue on our three-year plan to balance, Mr. Chair.

And it's important to acknowledge that in the scope of those tough decisions, we have been able to continue to invest in the core services that the people of this province want their provincial government to invest in. To continue to invest in health care and health care services that we have in all communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

To continue to invest in education, we're investing directly into our classrooms in this year's budget with \$30 million directly into the classrooms, into people that will ensure that our children, our next generation, have every opportunity to succeed in their education and succeed in their career choice here in the province of Saskatchewan, with an economy that will be strong into the future.

We've continued to invest in our communities in the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, with a \$125 million investment directly into social services over the last two years. Investing in our community-based organizations, investing in those people in our communities, moving them back closer to their

communities, Mr. Speaker, all the while continuing in our second year on our plan to balance our budget on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, so that the next generation, our children have every opportunity that we've had in the last decade, Mr. Speaker. And I am pleased that this budget continues to keep us on track on that plan, Mr. Speaker.

[18:15]

**Mr. Meili:** — Well thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you again for the opportunity to ask some questions here. Certainly many more remain. Many serious concerns remain about the direction of this government, however we'll move on today.

I do want to say thank you, a special thank you to Bonita Cairns, a long history of public service, and thank you for coming back today, coming out of retirement to help us out today. Thanks to all the officials, everyone who's here today, and thank you to the members on this side for all the support in preparing for the questions today. And thanks to you folks too. Have a great night.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I would also like to just close with a few thank yous. First and foremost I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the questions that he asks on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, as the Leader of the Loyal Opposition here in our great province. And I appreciate the questions that are asked, Mr. Chair, each and every day in this House and I thank him for the effort and the sincerity in which he asks questions of this government, of myself, and of others in the province.

I do also want to thank all of my colleagues on this side of the House as well as the opposition colleagues in this place, and in the effort that they make in representing the people that they represent in this building, the people that live in their constituency and in their community.

As well, I want to thank the House leadership teams as I know it's been an easy road to get to today in ensuring that all of the hours and the committee meetings are put together and bringing everyone together, ensuring they're in the right room at the right time and talking about the right thing. So I do want to thank both House leadership teams as well as all the staff in this building and across the province and, well the Legislative Assembly staff that ensure that we can conduct the government's business each and every day. It's greatly appreciated in the lead-up to today's estimates, Mr. Chair, and I would be remiss if I did not thank them.

And last but most certainly not least, thank all of our families that allow us to serve in this Assembly on behalf of the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

**The Chair:** — Are there any other members that would like to enter into the debate? Seeing none, we will proceed to vote the estimates and we will ask the officials to excuse themselves, please.

We will proceed to vote the estimates. Is subvote (EX01), central management and services in the amount of \$5,430,000,

is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX07), Premier's office in the amount of \$479,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX04), cabinet planning in the amount of \$1,107,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX05), cabinet secretariat in the amount of \$451,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX03), communications office in the amount of \$1,319,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX08), House business and research in the amount of \$255,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX06), members of Executive Council. This is a statutory amount of \$133,000, for information purposes only.

Subvote (EX10), Intergovernmental Affairs in the amount of \$1,883,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX11), francophone affairs in the amount of \$690,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. Subvote (EX12), Lieutenant Governor's office in the amount of \$707,000, is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31, 2019, the following sums for Executive Council: \$12,321,000.

Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. There being no further business before the committee, I would invite a member to move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — The Government House Leader has moved that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the committee sit again?

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that this Assembly be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 18:23.]

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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

## CABINET MINISTERS

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**Hon. Scott Moe**

**Premier**

**President of the Executive Council**

**Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs**

**Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor**

Minister of Advanced Education

Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Minister Responsible for Innovation

**Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff**

Minister of Central Services

Minister Responsible for the Provincial

Capital Commission

Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

**Hon. Dustin Duncan**

Minister of Environment

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water

Security Agency

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan

Power Corporation

**Hon. Bronwyn Eyre**

Minister of Energy and Resources

Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan

Water Corporation

**Hon. Joe Hargrave**

Minister of Crown Investments

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan

Government Insurance

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan

Transportation Company

**Hon. Donna Harpauer**

Minister of Finance

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison**

Minister of Trade and Export Development

Minister of Immigration and Career Training

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Minister of Government Relations

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