



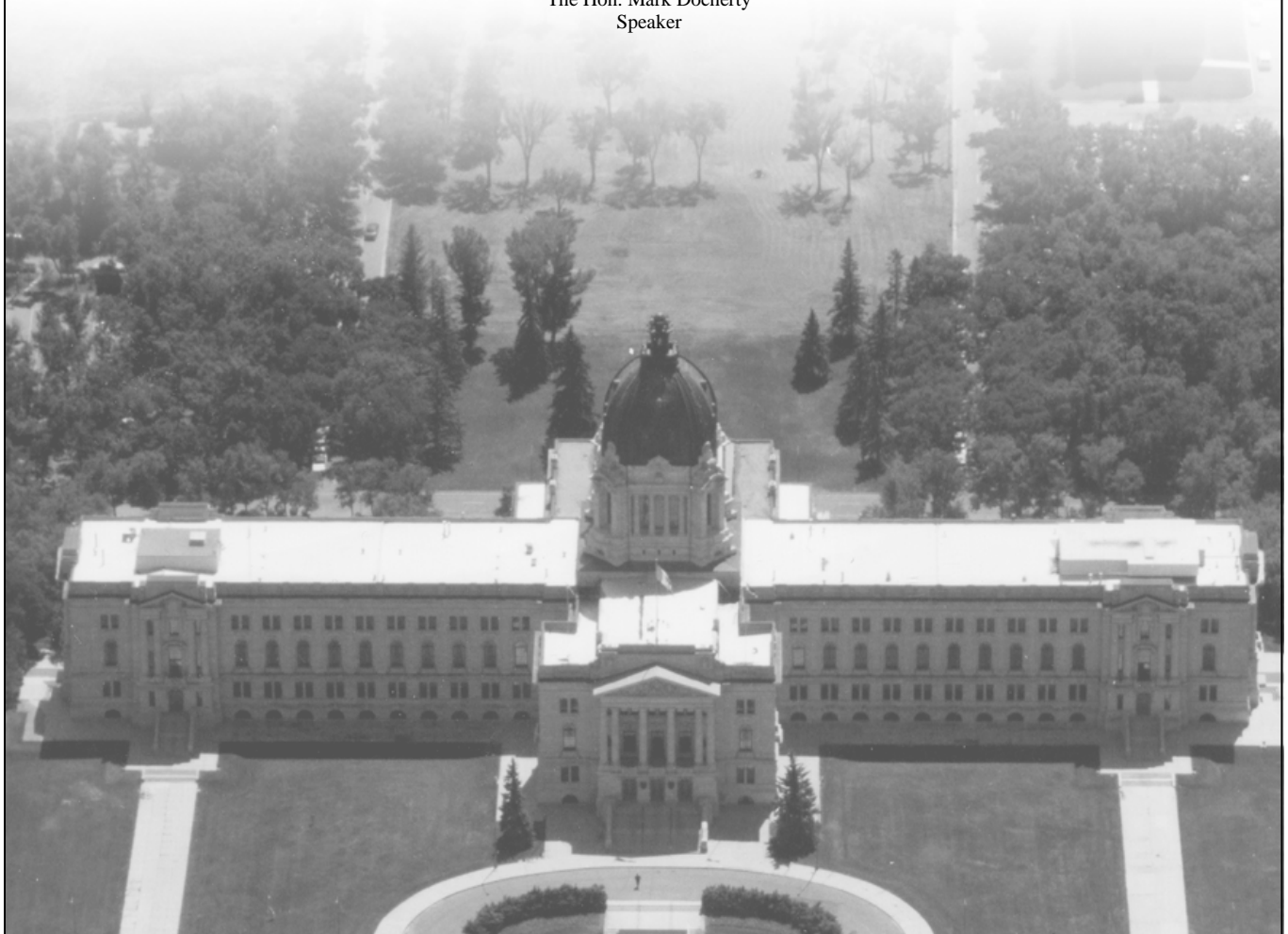
THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 28th Legislature

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

Beaudry-Mellor , Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)	Makowsky , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
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Goudy , Todd — Melfort (SP)	Steinley , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
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Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like 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. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all the colleagues of the Assembly for the extended introduction. To you and through you to all the members, I'd like to introduce some very special guests on the floor of the Assembly here today. Firstly is my friend, Brendan Breen, from the Yorkton area. He is an active member of our community and a karate instructor. He offers a very unique martial arts class currently out of Ituna. With him here today are students Owen Reid and Lynnette Gaudet — you want to wave, you guys? — and Deer Park Villa workers from Ituna, Amanda Senft, the program coordinator, and Reagan Renkas, the support worker.

Mr. Speaker, Martial Arts Abilities Canada is a charity started by Brendan. It's a non-profit and provides karate classes to individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities. Brendan offers weekly karate classes for these individuals with varied abilities at Deer Park Villa in Ituna, which is in a care facility for people with intellectual disabilities in Ituna. The classes are focused on inclusion and follows a teaching system created by Inclusive Karate Federation based out of Belgium. The modified classes are open to individuals age seven and older and is the first of its kind in Canada and has met a lot of positive feedback. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the class has been featured on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] news, and Brendan recently did an interview with *Readers' Digest* that's going to be in the March 2019 edition. He's even looking at offering classes throughout the province, including Regina and Saskatoon. And when asked about these classes, Brendan emphasizes the positive benefits these classes have had to his students. They help with social acceptance, inclusion, as well as increasing the self-confidence of participants.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly and congratulate Martial Arts Abilities Canada for the charity and being a champion of inclusion, and to Brendan for all his pioneering efforts and offering this very meaningful and wonderful class.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the

opposition, I would like to join the minister in welcoming these folks to their legislature. It's a pretty special day. And it's a great vision that these folks have about inclusion and making sure everyone's involved, especially through using martial arts. So I'd welcome Brendan, Owen, Amanda, Lynnette, and Reagan, and ask all members on both sides to welcome them to their legislature. Thank you.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today in the Assembly we have Jared, Liana, and Vienna Kennedy who live in my constituency. We also have Brandon Fuchs, Derek Wu, Trevor Anderson, Christy Lawson, Melissa Fiacco, and Amanda Brady who are founding members, Mr. Speaker, of Build Love.

Mr. Speaker, Vienna Kennedy was born with a congenital muscle syndrome that causes impairment in her mobility, and she relies on a walker for movement. Her parents, Jared and Liana, were faced with the inevitability that the only bathroom in their home was no longer accessible to Vienna. They asked two contractors for quotes as part of their application for funding from Kinsmen Telemiracle, and this became the catalyst, Mr. Speaker, to founding Build Love.

Its co-founders could see the concern that the Kennedys had over the cost of this major renovation to their home and set out to find ways to remove these barriers. What started with a bathroom renovation turned into a major interior and exterior home renovation to improve mobility for Vienna in her home and give her the dignity and independence every person living with a disability deserves.

This house was truly built with love, Mr. Speaker. I was at the reveal yesterday and was quite overwhelmed. More than 60 tradespeople, contractors, and suppliers from Saskatchewan's construction industry and small business community stepped up. They went beyond the call of duty to provide \$350,000 in skilled trades, labour, and building materials to help complete this renovation. These people are the doers, those who shape the character of our province and make their mark in a way to help others.

Over 1,700 volunteer hours were logged as a part of this project, and the result was really beautiful. As Vienna's mom, Liana, said yesterday, when she got to walk through the house for the first time, "You made accessibility beautiful." I ask all members to join me in thanking the Kennedy family and the founders of Build Love and welcome them to this Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join with the minister to welcome the Kennedy family and these incredible leaders to their Assembly. It's an incredible heartwarming story that's been shared. I've appreciated tracking this journey and I just want to say hello to Vienna that's here today. I hope you're enjoying your beautiful new home that serves your needs. And to Jared and to Liana, the incredible parents, I say hello as well.

But very importantly I want to say thank you to these incredible entrepreneurs, leaders within our business community, leaders within our community, for building love, for coming together and putting together this very significant project, putting together a project that had more than 50 subtrades and so many people that offered their labour and their materials and their expertise to this project. For me this exemplifies the Saskatchewan that I know and love.

So thank you to each and every one of you. I'm worried that if I start naming names I'm going to miss a few, but Derek Wu; Brandon Fuchs; Melissa Fiacco, also an exemplary citizen and communicator within our community; Trevor Anderson; Amanda Brady. I know I'm missing folks but to everyone, thank you so very much. Let's keep building Saskatchewan together. Let's do so with love.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I as well would like to request leave for an extended introduction, please.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In the Speaker's gallery this morning we have some very special guests with us. Seated are 27 representatives of the extended family of Lance Corporal Wilfred Jordens. During the First World War, Wilfred Jordens enlisted at Whitewood as a young man, left his home and his family to travel, like so many young men at the time, to the battlefields of Europe. He gave his life to his country at the Battle of Passchendaele. We will hear more about that in a member statement in a few minutes.

Joining us today are many proud members of the Jordens family, as I mentioned. His nephew Thomas Jordens Sr. nominated his uncle for recognition through the geo-memorial commemorative naming program.

Along with Mr. Jordens today, several members of the family: niece Louise and John Makuch; Tom Jordens Jr.; Innis and Jerry Swanson; Hope Jordens; Faith Jordens; Paul Jordens; Richard Jordens; Rob Jordens; Ranson Jordens; Falon Jordens; Jerry and Janie Jordens; Kerry, Bill, and Angela Mehalitz; Betty Shorten Rainville; Eileen Gatin; Celine Grimard; Lorne and Patricia Clark; Kevin Jordens; Barry Fredland; Tracey Stiferling; and

Catherine Anderson.

Thank you all for coming. I had a chance to meet some of you prior to the sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize sincerely if I missed anyone.

Mr. Speaker, our province is obviously very proud of its military history, and through the geo-memorial program we are able to respectfully honour our fallen Saskatchewan heroes. Today in honour of Lance Corporal Wilfred Jordens, his service and sacrifice, we are formally announcing the naming of Jordens Coulee, located on Pipestone Creek south of Whitewood. Lance Corporal Wilfred Jordens will be forever remembered on the land I'm sure he knew well and is still a part of the family. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members join me in welcoming the Jordens family to the Legislative Assembly this morning.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the loyal opposition I too would like to join the minister in welcoming the Jordens family. And this is an important day, and a very good recognition of the folks who have made the contributions, the ultimate sacrifice in fighting for our country and the principles of democracy. And we look forward to hearing more about the commemoration, and we're also glad that you're here in your legislature. Thanks so much. And I'd ask all members to welcome them again to their legislature. Thank you.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the House, I would like to introduce our newest comms specialist in our caucus office, Keenan Boutilier. And his mom, Glennis, come out to visit him all the way from Ottawa. So welcome to your legislature.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure this morning to introduce a group of individuals seated in the east gallery. I'm speaking of 15 students from the Open Door Society's English as an additional language program, and I had a lovely visit with them earlier today. They're accompanied by their teacher, Deana Pageot, who's a faithful attendant this time of year to the legislature bringing students on an annual basis and, you know, just sort of symptomatic of the great educator that she is.

And it's such a special day because these are individuals that join us from China, Syria, Iraq, India, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Sudan, Nepal, and Tanzania. Mr. Speaker, there are three individuals in those seats right now, this is their first winter. Nahid from Bangladesh was telling me that she has a hard time getting her son to come in from playing in the snow. He's got a snowsuit that's getting some good use.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for reminding us that indeed the motto of this province is "from many peoples, strength," and for reminding us of what a special gift we have here in Saskatchewan, where our democracy is so open and

accessible and very much in the hands of the people, and with folks coming to Canada and Saskatchewan from around the world, only ever stronger. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these individuals to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade, Export, and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to join with my friend opposite in welcoming these students from the Open Door Society. I first want to say thank you to the Open Door Society for the great work that is done through that organization in all manner of settlement activities, but English as an additional language being an important part of what they do in a partnership that as a government we very much appreciate with the Open Door Society.

And I want to welcome all of our newcomers. The changes that are occurring in this province are really remarkable, Mr. Speaker, with those who are coming from all over the world. And the list of countries is remarkable that my friend read from, these particular newcomers who have arrived from. We are thankful for their presence here. We look forward to their contributions now and into the future. Those that come as well, we just very much appreciate that and look forward to continuing to work with the Open Door Society, and just very much welcome the newcomers here to this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to join today with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport in welcoming members of the Jordens family to their Legislative Assembly. A number of them are from my constituency, and it's a welcome surprise for me to be able to stand and welcome them to their Assembly.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce and welcome Jerry Jordens to his Legislative Assembly. I'll say it's hard for me to say that. To me he was Mr. Jordens. He was my principal at St. Michael junior high. He was a long-time educator, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today at St. Michael junior high an award is given to one student every year. It's called the Jerry Jordens Work Ethic Award. It was an award that I was never in the running for even if it existed.

But I can say this for sure, Mr. Speaker, and I probably didn't realize it at the time, but with the passage of time, certainly come to know and realize that Mr. Jordens was a great influence on my life. And so I want to ask all members to join with me in welcoming the entire Jordens family, but in particular Mr. Jordens, to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned people and businesses all across our province as it relates to the Sask Party's imposition of the

PST [provincial sales tax] or the expansion of the PST onto construction labour in our province. It's the epitome of a job-killing tax, Mr. Speaker, at a time where we need nothing more than job creation and investment across our province. It's causing damage to our industry — permits down province-wide all across the sectors, Mr. Speaker, and very serious job loss that's hurting Saskatchewan workers.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens from Alameda, Moose Jaw, Regina. I so submit.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from the citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax to the province of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Barthel, Little Fishing Lake, Paradise Hill, Frenchman Butte, Lloydminster, and Harlan. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition calling for a public inquiry into the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land deal. The people who signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: first of all, the Sask Party has refused to come clean on the GTH land deal, a deal where Sask Party insiders made millions flipping land, and taxpayers lost millions. The Sask Party continues to block key witnesses from providing testimony about the land deal, and it is Saskatchewan people who footed the bill for the GTH land deal and deserve nothing less than the truth.

So I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to stop hiding behind partisan excuses and immediately call for a judicial inquiry and a forensic audit into the GTH land deal.

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition today are from the good city of Moose Jaw. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to present a petition as it pertains to the dialysis unit for northwestern communities. Mr. Speaker, there are a growing number of individuals living with kidney failure. There is a disproportionate burden amongst those living in the northwestern communities. The northwestern Saskatchewan residents living so far from the home unit in Saskatoon or the satellite units in North Battleford or Prince Albert face a significant financial burden from the costs of travel and accommodation or from the costs of accommodation if their condition or financial situation necessitates a move to Saskatoon.

Further, that there's a regional hospital in Ile-a-la-Crosse which is linked to Telehealth Saskatchewan. Through the use of Telehealth video conferencing technology, clients will be able to access a nephrologist without having to make a trip to Saskatoon for all their consultations. The technicians that run the equipment could be trained, creating more work in the area. Nurses from the locality could be trained to run the dialysis unit.

And that access to health services is one of the 12 determinants of health outcomes. A satellite dialysis unit in the area would help create optimal health outcomes while minimizing health care costs and the financial burden to patients.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

To cause the provincial government to provide the public funding to set up a satellite unit in northwestern Saskatchewan to provide hemodialysis treatment that is in closer proximity to the patients' homes. This will greatly lessen the burden of out-of-pocket costs for the people from this area who are undergoing kidney dialysis. This will also allow northwestern people with kidney failure to live where they want to live and not be forced to move in order to stay alive.

And the people that have signed this particular page, Mr. Speaker, of this petition, are primarily from La Loche. And I so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place today to present a petition in support of in-house security services at Saskatchewan health care facilities. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that the Government of Saskatchewan security services review in the Saskatchewan Health Authority appears to be driven by a desire to contract out and cut costs rather than improve safety and health care; that front-line workers have the solutions to address increased violence and safety concerns in public health care — more in-house staff, proper equipment and training, and improved incident reporting and follow-up; and that safe, quality health care means having adequately staffed, properly trained and equipped in-house security teams, not cutting jobs and contracting out to the lowest bidder.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to commit to maintaining quality publicly funded, publicly delivered, and publicly administered security services.

This particular page of the petition that I've presented for a few days now in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, is signed by citizens in Montmartre and Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to restore public control over Wascana Park. Those who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: Wascana Park is a treasured urban park and conservation area that had been built, had been responsibly managed through an equal partnership between the city of Regina, the provincial government, and the University of Regina for more than 50 years; the government unilaterally gave itself majority control of the board of the Provincial Capital Commission through the changes brought on by Bill 50; and the city of Regina and the University of Regina both expressed an openness to return to a governance model based on equality.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to restore the governance structure of the Wascana Centre Authority and end the commercialization of Wascana Park.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today come from Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Honouring Those Who Serve

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise today to recognize the service of our veterans and currently serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces. Each member, past and present, has made sacrifices for us to protect the freedom and democracy of our great country.

Saskatchewan itself has a proud history of service to our nation. Individuals from across the province have put their names forward to serve in every branch of the Canadian Armed Forces. As a retired Canadian Forces captain in the Cadet Instructors Cadre, I am fortunate to have spent a great deal of time participating in ceremonies and learning about the sacrifices that so many in uniform have made.

Each of us has a story of friends or family who have served. It's important that we make sure to make time this weekend, but also throughout the year, to remember and thank those who sacrificed so much.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in extending our thanks and respect to past and current serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, importantly those that we've lost. May we never forget them and may we continue to strive for peace. Lest we forget.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Jordens Coulee Named in Honour of Fallen Soldier

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan has announced that Lance Corporal Wilfred Jordens will be honoured through the Saskatchewan geo-memorial commemorative naming program. Jordens Coulee, located near the hamlet of St. Hubert Mission, will be named in honour of the late soldier. The coulee, Mr. Speaker, is located on land still owned by his family.

Wilfred Jordens was born in Lebret, Saskatchewan on January 16, 1896, one of 15 children raised by François Jordens and Mary Rainville. In 1915, at the age of 19, Jordens enlisted and served with the 28th Battalion, Canadian infantry, Saskatchewan Regiment. Mr. Speaker, sadly, on August 21st, 1917, he was killed in combat at Hill 70. Jordens was only 21 years old. His body was never recovered, and likely he rests interred on the battlefield.

Mr. Speaker, Jordens, along with more than 11,000 fallen Canadians, are remembered with honour at the Vimy Ridge Memorial at Arras, Pas-de-Calais, France. His name also appears on the Saskatchewan War Memorial just northwest of the Legislative Building. Now he will also be remembered through Jordens Coulee, a fitting tribute that helps reconnect him with home, Mr. Speaker. This Remembrance Day, let us keep him in our thoughts, along with other Saskatchewan and Canadian soldiers who have fought and died.

And as an aside, Mr. Speaker, Kevin Jordens is married to my niece.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Veterans' Service to Communities

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with great honour that I rise today to recognize the sacrifices made by the many men and women who served and protected our country. On November 11th, Remembrance Day, we should all think about those who fought and died to allow us the freedoms we enjoy today.

My father, who was a World War II veteran, taught us the importance of service. He was very proud of our many family members in the Armed Forces but also the sacrifices made by many of the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people in this country. I cannot imagine the pain and loss felt by the families whose loved ones did not come home. That is truly the ultimate sacrifice. My family was amongst the lucky ones. Our prayers were answered when my father returned home safely. And he made an incredible difference upon his return in our family and in our community.

Ile-a-la-Crosse and many northern communities benefited from

the influx of veterans. They brought home a sense of freedom and democracy. They taught our community how to become more independent, and all of us how to have a greater purpose in life.

I now stand in the Assembly today in a free, democratic society with the ability to speak freely, and this is the freedom that our veterans like my father afforded us all. Mr. Speaker, I call on all the members to recognize the men and women who fought for our rights and freedoms and helped define the proud nation that we are today. They will never be forgotten. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar-Sask Valley.

Biggar's Last World War I Veteran

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe I can say with confidence that everyone in this Assembly has a special connection to the First and Second World Wars. Whether it was a friend or a family member who served along with our allies, we continue to remember their sacrifice 100 years later.

As Remembrance Day approaches, I remember my grandfather, Percival Weekes, and his brave contributions to both the war and the British Empire. He served for nine years in the Royal Navy during the Boxer Uprising in the early part of the century, as well as served in the First World War with the Royal Field Artillery from 1916 to 1919. Mr. Speaker, he was on duty in Belgium and France right in the heart of the war. He was fortunate to return home to his beloved and was the proud recipient of the last silver medal issued by Queen Victoria, as well as a possessor of the War Medal and Victory Medal.

In 1920 my grandmother and grandfather made Canada their home, settling their roots right here in the Prairies. He was the last World War I veteran to pass away who resided in Biggar. He was an incredible role model to me, and I will remember him for his service. Thank you.

[10:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

No Stone Left Alone Remembrance Day Ceremony

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday, November the 3rd, I had the honour to attend the No Stone Left Alone Remembrance Day ceremony at the Lloydminster cemetery. The event was attended by students from École St. Thomas, 186 Air Cadets squadron, local Girl Guides, and Neilburg Legion Branch 135, and I would like to thank them for their participation.

Mr. Speaker, No Stone Left Alone is a memorial foundation dedicated to honouring the sacrifice and service of Canada's military men and women and serves to educate our younger generations. Placing poppies on the headstones of veterans every November signifies our respect and honours the sacrifice these men and women made for the values and freedoms we enjoy today. That is why foundations like No Stone Left Alone are so important.

The celebration was particularly significant as this year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. This year No Stone Left Alone will honour 58,782 Canadian Armed Forces members across the country. To date, over 100 cemeteries across Canada have participated in the No Stone Left Alone memorial.

I was honoured to help place poppies on our veterans' headstones with solemn acknowledgement of, "Thank you for your service." I ask all members to join me in thanking the No Stone Left Alone Memorial Foundation for continuing to educate our younger generations and to truly thank our veterans. Mr. Speaker, we shall remember them.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Protecting the Home Front

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to be able to rise today and join with my colleagues in commemorating our upcoming Remembrance Day. Today I would like to highlight some events from World War II that are all too often overlooked.

Mr. Speaker, occasionally we hear comments that this was not our war. Why did our citizens lay down their lives thousands of miles away? Well this was our war and our nation was under attack. From May to October in 1942, and September of 1943, and October and November 1944, Nazi subs sunk 23 ships in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Strait of Belle Isle, and Cabot Strait. Nineteen of these were merchant vessels, one of which was a ferry carrying passengers which, when it sank, resulted in the loss of many civilian lives and as well, four warships.

Mr. Speaker, 350 Canadian and Allied men, women, and children died while thousands on our East Coast lived in fear of invasion. As well as their onslaught on our ships in the waters, these German U-boats had other missions as well. At one point, they landed a spy on our shores. Fortunately, he was quickly apprehended. I guess he wasn't that good a spy.

Another incident involved a planned prison break from Camp 3 in Bowmanville, Ontario. Fortunately, our RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] discovered the plan, foiled the escape attempt of all but one of the prisoners, and he was apprehended on the shore before the U-boat could pick him up.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to all of our brave women and men who sacrificed so much to protect this great nation, both on our shores and across the seas. We must never forget.

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

The Light of Freedom in the Darkest Hour

Mr. Lawrence: — One hundred years, Mr. Speaker. It's amazing to think what has been accomplished in the last century — the distinctions of human achievement, the progress of our province and its people. It's equally overwhelming to think that much of the world will stop this November 11th to mark the end of something so terrible.

Private George Price was the last Allied soldier killed two minutes before the armistice went into effect in Belgium. He

lived in Moose Jaw, enlisted in Regina, and his battalion colours hang a few feet outside this Chamber. We mark the centennial, the end of World War I, the war that was supposed to end all wars. And yet, Mr. Speaker, I was able to join military members recently in Moose Jaw, and I know others did in Regina at the cenotaph, to mark the Afghanistan conflict. I wonder what those World War I veterans, many of whom I'm sure were there in 1926 when the Regina cenotaph was built, would say about today's conflicts.

It was said very well by Prime Minister Rutte of the Netherlands, recently visiting our parliament and speaking of his country's liberation in World War II when he said, "We are forever grateful to those brave Canadian soldiers who carried the light of our freedom to our country in its darkest hour. This we will never forget."

Whether it be to the veterans of our past like Private Price or our current military members today, thank you for being the light in the darkness.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Number of Medical Specialists

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When people are sick, we want to make sure that they have access to the care that they need, the care to which they are entitled as residents of Saskatchewan. But this government has been increasingly failing in the recruitment and retention of key specialists.

We recently heard from an oncology patient who raised the alarm about an upcoming change with Saskatoon about to lose its two gynecological oncologists and Regina to lose one of their two gynecological oncologists this coming June, leaving us with only one of these important specialists in the province. Uterine cancer, cervical cancer, ovarian cancer — these are serious conditions, conditions for which Saskatchewan women should not be left wondering whether when they need care, it will be available. When they need that expert care for life-threatening illnesses, it needs to be there right away.

What specific steps is the Premier taking to address this alarming shortage?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank the member opposite for what is a very important question and one that is very relevant to my family, Mr. Speaker, as we have had our experience not only with the individuals, the oncologists at the Saskatoon or the Saskatchewan cancer centre, Mr. Speaker. But I think in fairness, cancer is a disease that has affected all families in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So this is a good question.

I'm going to let the Minister of Health speak to the specifics of the recruitment efforts given the challenge that we have in the city of Saskatoon with the services that we provide there, Mr. Speaker. But I would say that the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency in this province is a leader in cancer care, a world leader in cancer

care, and that is because of the people that we have been fortunate enough to recruit into that agency over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker.

And we will continue to invest to ensure that we are able to recruit that same class of individual into not only our Saskatoon cancer agency, Mr. Speaker, but into our health care system across the province with investments into the College of Medicine, the Academic Health Sciences Building, Mr. Speaker, as well as the general infrastructure that we need to be able to attract these individuals into our health care system here in the province, and most notably in this case, of some of our oncologists in the city of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The average wait time to access specialist care in Saskatchewan has increased by 30 per cent in the last two years. So it's not just gynecological oncology. It's cardiology, respirology, rheumatology, dermatology, psychiatry, and many more. Short-term locums and long-distance travel for patients are no fix for this long-term problem.

Mr. Speaker, we graduate great physicians from our College of Medicine. They go on to do residency programs here in the province and across the country. And frequently they want to come back and practise here, practise here and set up a life here. But it's not infrequent that they aren't hired, that despite the need, those positions aren't made available.

Mr. Speaker, a 30 per cent increase in specialist wait times across the board in just two years. What is the government doing? What is this Premier doing to fix this shortage? What will he do to make sure that Saskatchewan graduates are returning to practise and set up a life here, so that we have the professional workforce necessary to provide the care that Saskatchewan patients need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we've made tremendous efforts over the course of the last decade to ensure that we are not only able to attract specialists into our health care system here in the province of Saskatchewan, but also to train those specialists here at the University of Saskatchewan in the city of Saskatoon, I think, an institution that the Leader of the Opposition knows very well.

We are having success, Mr. Speaker, despite challenges from time to time, most notably in the case of a gynecological oncologist here today, Mr. Speaker. And I would offer this: that the Minister of Health is highly engaged in this process, Mr. Speaker, as there is much competition, not just across Canada but across North America for this particular specialist, Mr. Speaker. But we are doing everything possible to ensure that.

On the broader initiative, Mr. Speaker, with investment into training our physicians, I would note that we are now training 100 physicians a year, Mr. Speaker. We have expanded the numbers at the College of Medicine as well as expanding the residency numbers to provide opportunities to fully integrate into our health care system here in the province. And we are seeing results, Mr. Speaker, with over 900 physicians now operating in the province and servicing people in communities across the

province, and a 62 per cent increase in specialists here in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Notwithstanding, we still have some wait times to address, Mr. Speaker, and we still have some care to continue to improve in our health care system in our communities in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government tends to talk about past inputs, but it's really important that we focus on outcomes. And a 30 per cent increase in wait times across the board, in all kinds of medical specialities in only two years, is a very significant change. So I wonder if the Premier could explain what happened? You know, we've had these investments, you've made these changes in the past. Why isn't it working, and what are you going to do to make it better?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to just touch on a previous question before I answer that one. This is a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker. On the gynecologist-oncologists, Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite alluded to, we're going to ensure that patients receive the care that they need. The shortages will be backfilled with locums. There's a number of them under contract until, at the earliest, till March 31st of 2019. That'll be extended if necessary. There's a very, very vigorous recruitment campaign going on.

And for more long-term, Mr. Speaker, in September, the Minister of Health advised the College of Medicine and the Saskatchewan Health Authority to pursue providing fellowships for two Saskatchewan obstetrician-gynecologists for the two-year added training. And I understand that one of those, a doctor has already accepted one of those, Mr. Speaker.

To the overall issue with specialists, Mr. Speaker, there's certain specialities that are just very hard to recruit, not just for Saskatchewan but right across the country. Our recruiters do a very good job on that, Mr. Speaker. As the Premier mentioned, we've had great success in some areas. Some areas we've had more difficulty, but overall we have 62 per cent more specialists than we did previously before we formed government including, Mr. Speaker, the onus we've put on training Saskatchewan doctors. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture's son has just recently agreed to come back to Saskatchewan as a specialist in internal medicine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Mental Health and Addictions Services

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As has to be repeated in this place many times, it's not how much you study, it's whether you pass the test. And while inputs may have been done, we still have 30 per cent longer wait times in only two years. And the minister failed to address why that's happening.

Today we're joined in the gallery by someone who knows far too well how difficult it can be to access care for a loved one in the province. Mr. Speaker, Jenny Churchill's son, Jordan. Jenny's

son died this January from an overdose of fentanyl. Last fall Jordan knew that he needed help, so he tried to check into a Moose Jaw treatment centre. He was turned away. This is happening all over Saskatchewan for far too many families. The addictions care that is needed just isn't available when people are ready to reach out and ask for help. For Jordan and so many others, that window of opportunity can be incredibly short before their addiction is able to take hold once again, and they may not get another chance.

Access to addictions support in Saskatchewan is grossly inadequate and people are dying as a result. My question for the Premier is this. What is his government going to do to address our severe shortage of acute addictions treatment and in-patient rehabilitations programs? What is he going to do to overcome this growing crisis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I'd like to offer my sympathies to Jenny. I would certainly, if she so wishes, I'd be pleased to meet with her after question period if she likes.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious situation, and we do need to do better on addictions and mental health. We've discussed this in this Assembly just recently. It's been well documented, Mr. Speaker. We've increased the number of addictions treatment beds by 31 per cent since we formed government, Mr. Speaker, but it's become a national crisis right across the entire country. All provinces are struggling with this issue, Mr. Speaker. And as I've said again many times in this Assembly, I'm comfortable saying that you're going to see, next year and in subsequent years, you're going to see significant investment in mental health and addictions treatment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I know Jenny will take the minister up on that meeting, as she's previously asked for a meeting and had been denied that.

Jordan's family knows first-hand that too many people in this province looking for help with their addictions cannot access care when they need it. When Jordan was desperately asking for help, he was turned away. The fact is services and supports are lacking and the wait times for treatment are too long. Mr. Speaker, Jordan's family wants action now, not at an undetermined time down the road. When people reach out for help, it should be there for them. It is sadly too late for Jordan, but they want to ensure that no family has to go through what they have had to endure.

To the minister: what is he doing now to ensure that people suffering with addictions get the help they need when they ask for it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, ministry officials advised me that this year they have benchmarks they follow to see people that are reaching out for both in-bed

treatment and outpatient services. Mr. Speaker, in most cases, I believe those benchmarks have been met. But we need to do that, Mr. Speaker. We need to track to see how we're doing.

But the fact simply is, if one person can't receive the treatment they need and it causes an overdose death, that's one person too many. So clearly, Mr. Speaker, we need to continually strive to do better. As I said, Mr. Speaker, on the whole issue of drug use, this is an issue that all provinces are struggling with, Mr. Speaker. I hear it from colleagues across the country all the time.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work to do better. You're going to see some announcements in the next little while to deal with harm reduction. In fact a news release went out this morning on a harm reduction initiative, Mr. Speaker. You'll see some announcements on additional treatment facilities and, Mr. Speaker, we will talk to our colleagues across the country. We will try to follow best practices, and we will continue to strive to do better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, mental health and addictions must be treated like any other chronic illness. We must allow the medical professionals to manage this crisis, but they currently lack the resources to effectively fight this battle.

Mr. Speaker, Jordan's family feels like they are not being listened to. Jordan's mom said this to me: "They are not listening to the public, not listening to families with lived experience, not listening to families who have lost a loved one, and are ignoring pleas by advocacy groups."

Mr. Speaker, this is unacceptable. When will this government stop with the talk and start with the action and get serious about properly funding mental health and addictions services?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully disagree with the member opposite's statement. We do take this very seriously. We recognize a problem. As I mentioned, this is an issue that all provinces are struggling with, Mr. Speaker. We've increased spending on mental health and addictions by 60 per cent since we were given the privilege of forming government. And as I've said many times in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to improve on that. You'll continue to see funding increases, including in the upcoming budget and, I believe, in subsequent years as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Tuesday the minister characterized the potential removal of \$8 million from classrooms as "an existential threat to . . . education funding." Mr. Speaker, how would he describe his government's cut of \$78 million over the last two years?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would think an \$8 million potential cut to education funding is an existential threat, Mr. Speaker. And I am concerned that other people in this province and across the way aren't concerned about this, Mr. Speaker.

As I've said before, Mr. Speaker, we've added \$30 million to the budget, in the spring budget, based on the enrolment projections that were given to us by the school divisions in the spring, Mr. Speaker. And as well, I've also said many times in this House that enrolment projections, enrolments are up 12 per cent over the last 10 years. Mr. Speaker, funding's up over 33 per cent.

We can talk about our commitment to capital. We can talk about our commitment to operating, Mr. Speaker, but it can't be said that this government isn't committed to ensuring proper funding for public education, as is demonstrated in the last budget, Mr. Speaker. More to do, Mr. Speaker, and you'll hear a lot more from this government as we go forward.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the minister tells us every single day that he's been out consulting in classrooms, and he's repeated it again this week. When I consult with people in education, Mr. Speaker, they're telling me that they're worried about growing class sizes, and they're worried about the lack of supports for increasingly complex classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I would sincerely like to know what the minister is hearing when he's out in classrooms meeting with leaders in education. Can he please update this House? When he's meeting with teachers and parents, is the number one concern about a lack of efficiency? Is he hearing that they've got more than enough money? Or is he hearing about a lack of resources by this government and a lack of vision?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm hearing concerns from teachers, Mr. Speaker, and school boards, Mr. Speaker. These are all conversations that we're going to take into account as we move forward to consider next year's budget.

The member knows how this works, Mr. Speaker. We're in the process now of planning our budget for the spring, which we will present to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the conversations that I'm having with teachers and trustees and parents, all of that will come into play when we're considering what our priorities are for further funding public education, Mr. Speaker.

But it can't be said, Mr. Speaker, that I'm not hearing some of the same concerns because we are. But we're also hearing a lot of the successes that are happening in our school divisions, Mr. Speaker. Our teachers, Mr. Speaker, we've gotten 86 more teachers in the classroom since last year, almost 1,000 more teachers in the classrooms since 2007, Mr. Speaker.

So the commitment for this government in terms of funding public education, Mr. Speaker, is demonstrated by our commitment. Our injection of \$30 million more into the budget this last year demonstrates our commitment, Mr. Speaker. And

you'll be hearing a lot more from this government when it comes to our approach to continuing funding and supporting children in our classrooms.

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

Condition of Regina Bypass

Ms. Sproule: — Yesterday the Premier got himself rather wound up about the promised safety of the bypass, but he and the minister both failed to answer direct questions about dismissing legitimate concerns around safety as being entitled. I'll tell you what citizens are entitled to, Mr. Speaker. They are entitled to answers about real safety concerns, not being brushed off. They are entitled to have the conglomerate take design flaws seriously, not a dismissive, not-our-problem response. They are entitled to a swift repair to safety flaws, not waiting for a year to get it fixed. And they are also entitled to know the financial details of the P3 [public-private partnership] project.

So again, to the minister: does she agree with officials that the citizens were acting entitled?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've already said, the length of time it took to resolve the issues were unacceptable. As the members opposite know, our office pushed hard to have this issue resolved, but we will not take any criticism from the opposition on this project. This was a project the member's opposition talked about for years when they were in government, but they couldn't get the job done.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition implied that they thought the west portion of the bypass was unnecessary. He should turn to the member from Regina Rosemont, the former interim leader, and tell him that. The member from Rosemont read over 80 petitions asking to get truck traffic off of Dewdney. He said, Dewdney Avenue, with homes, schools, child cares, seniors, has been inundated with heavy-haul traffic. The long-term solution needs to be building a west bypass.

The members opposite have no coherent message on this because they know it is a good project. It is on time, on budget. It will help the economy and improve safety for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well, Mr. Speaker, again we get rhetoric from this government on this project, rhetoric that doesn't seem to match what was actually going on. RBDB [Regina Bypass Design Builders] shared ministry concerns about the final design, saying that they had told the Regina bypass partners: "They should take into account a number of external factors. It's not simply a case of taking a template off the shelf and slapping it into a drawing."

Grabbing a template off the shelf, Mr. Speaker? This is a \$2 billion project that ballooned massively to support private interests at the GTH that Saskatchewan taxpayers have few details about because of the P3 contract. And now we're learning it was apparently designed by a corporation that had little interest

in having it meet the needs of Saskatchewan people.

So we aren't getting answers. Let me try this one, Mr. Speaker. How many oopsies like the one in Balgonie have taken place with the project to date?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They are playing politics. They want this project to fail so they can score cheap political points. They also know that this project is not over budget. It has always been \$1.88 billion, on time and on budget because it is a P3.

Let's take a look at the NDP [New Democratic Party] record using traditional build models for major highway projects. In 1997 the NDP announced that they were going to twin Highway 1 and Highway 16 for an estimated \$145 million. It took over 10 years to complete, and what was the final cost — \$357 million. That's a 250 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker.

They know this is a good project. They are just upset because they couldn't get it done. In fact here is what the member from Athabasca said regarding the bypass:

It should be stated right from the front that one of the things that's really important to this side of the Assembly is that it is important to the people out there to understand, when it comes to the Regina bypass, the NDP are in full support of having this bypass built . . .

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

Development in Wascana Park

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I rose in this House on Tuesday seeking clarity on the government's plans for Wascana Park, but the minister's answers have done nothing to lift the fog. He said that in spite of the government replacing the Wascana Centre Authority with a new board structure that gave the province total control, the decisions would be made by consensus. If the minister is committed to consensus, will he undo his government's power grab and restore the previous governance arrangement that gave the city and the university a real say in the future of the park?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to the member opposite for the question. It was indeed an interesting day on Tuesday. We talked about Conexus and their plans for Darke Hall. Later on in the day, members opposite welcomed, as members on this side did, members from Conexus into the legislature. And we talked and they talked about how supportive they were on what Conexus is doing.

Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about here is a master plan that has been in place for over 100 years. We're here talking about a master plan that involves some commercial entities that are there now. Any future entities are to adhere on a strict guideline basis. And again, the city of Regina voted in favour of what is currently happening right now. They did so unanimously, Mr. Speaker, and

we will follow that guideline.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, a quick question, hoping for an actual straight answer from this minister. If the board is to operate the same as it did before, like he said in the media on Tuesday, why was the governance structure changed in the first place?

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we've done is modernized the direction of the board. It's a partnership. It's a partnership between the city of Regina, the University of Regina, and the Government of Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan provides the vast amount of resources for the entity, and it certainly will follow the master plan of the vision.

Now members opposite again talk of this on both sides of their mouth. What they do is they talk about here about wanting no commercial development whatsoever. The other night we were at The Willow on Wascana. Members from both sides of the House were invited and members from both sides attended. It's a wonderful commercial opportunity for people to look. It's aesthetically pleasing.

I believe commercial developments can take place, but they must adhere to strict guidelines. We will continue to do that together with our partners: the city of Regina and the University of Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[11:00]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, shockingly, no straight answer. From Wakamow to Meewasin to Wascana, the people of Saskatchewan are rightly proud of our very beautiful urban parks. But this government has shown they can't be trusted to manage and maintain these green spaces for present and future generations. In his recent comments, the minister refused to rule out future commercial developments in Wascana Park, in spite of widespread public opposition to such developments, including from some so-called consensus partner, the city of Regina.

Will the minister make clear that he had heard the people of Regina, this opposition caucus, and members of Regina City Council, and once and for all rule out future commercial developments in Wascana Park?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Central Services.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was completely wrong on Tuesday, and she's completely wrong again today. The city of Regina voted unanimously, unanimously in favour of the current developments that are taking place. Now, Mr. Speaker, I've said in this House before that decisions are made on a consensual basis. And I've talked to members of the board, and they said that every decision that has been made since the legislative change has taken place has been done on a

consensus manner.

I'm happy to talk to the mayor of Regina. I'm happy to talk to the president of the University of Regina. I'm happy to talk to members opposite about specifics. But things will be done in a consistent manner, and they will adhere to the master plan that has been there for over 100 years. It was good enough for the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] in '55. It was good enough for the NDP in '75. It was good enough for the Conservatives in '82, and it's good enough for us today. And thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 147 — *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2018*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 147, *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 147 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? Recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 148 — *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2018*

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 148, *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 148 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? Recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Social and Economic Effects of Minimum Wage

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Glad to take my place in this Assembly and have the privilege of moving a motion in the seventy-five minute debate. At the conclusion of my remarks, you know, having used my full 15 minutes — I just want to point that out for the member from Cannington — I'll be moving the motion that states:

That this Assembly calls upon the Sask Party government to phase in a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for all Saskatchewan workers.

And I'll certainly be moving that at the end of my remarks, just to clear that up with Cannington.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's good to join the debate here today and again bring attention to something that needs light shone upon it, Mr. Speaker. In the past decade or so, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has gone from having near the top of the minimum wages nationally, Mr. Speaker — a decade ago it was the second-highest minimum wage in all of Canada — to today where we are the second-lowest, Mr. Speaker. It was recently increased by a dime by the powers that be and, Mr. Speaker, that puts us behind Nova Scotia, who's got an \$11-an-hour minimum wage. And you know, once their wage mechanism kicks in in the spring, we'll be back to having the absolute lowest minimum wage in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

And for all of the different things that this government likes to get up on themselves about in terms of, you know, Saskatchewan leadership, you'd think that this would be a point of concern, but it's not, Mr. Speaker. And I think it says something about the governing principles at play on the part of members opposite, which it's certainly part of a whole and it's certainly part of a pattern, Mr. Speaker.

But when you think about the fact that the first minimum wage law was brought in in Canada, and I believe in British Columbia, in 1918, and you know, at the time there was a desire to make sure that people were working for a wage that bore some resemblance to the cost of living, Mr. Speaker. There was a notion that was burgeoning at that time in terms of the idea that there's a social contract, there's citizenship that demands certain rights and responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, and that our welfare law should be governed by something more than just charity, Mr. Speaker.

Those kind of principles came to permeate all sorts of different legislation and reforms that were made in different waves over the years. But it all underwrote the basic principle, Mr. Speaker, that as citizens you shouldn't live in poverty, let alone, Mr. Speaker, you shouldn't be working for poverty wages, Mr. Speaker.

So when we come to the current day, Mr. Speaker, it's again the notion that you've got food bank utilization on the rise, where you've got people who are having a harder and harder time making ends meet, when you've got a daily drum roll of people that are in trouble with social services or with different of the Crown agencies. Mr. Speaker, that certainly is the way that we talk, the way that we certainly interact with folks in our office on 5th Avenue and Retallack. And the minister would know that because we certainly have daily interaction with his office, sometimes multiple interactions with his office.

You would think that a government that took the trouble to appoint an anti-poverty committee, Mr. Speaker, and then proceed to shelve the recommendations of that committee, you'd think they'd be interested in something like a minimum wage, Mr. Speaker, and make some kind of connection on the notion that, you know, when you've ignored it and neglected the situation to the extent where you're either dead last, Mr. Speaker, or second-last in the country, that that's a problem and it requires attention.

But that is not to be observed in the response of these members when it comes to the minimum wage. What you get is a lot of baffle-gab that tends to be employed across the sector in terms of negative effects that, you know, when the minimum wage is raised never seem to come into being, Mr. Speaker. The forecast Armageddon never seems to arrive. But what does happen, Mr. Speaker, is that when you've got a minimum wage that bears a better resemblance to the cost of living, that people are able to better put food on the table.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I know that . . . I'd heard from one of the members over there about what's happening with the food bank utilization. And I'm sure that that member . . . So it's down for this year, Mr. Speaker, for this year. But 2016, Mr. Speaker, I guess you know . . . And maybe the minister could, explain this better to me but the fact that in terms of utilization from 2008 to 2016, Mr. Speaker — 2008 to 2016 — over that span of eight years, utilization increased by 76.9 per cent, Mr. Speaker — 76.9 per cent.

And you know, I know one of the chosen tactics over there, Mr. Speaker, is if you don't like an argument just sort of try to yell your way through it, try to bull your way ahead. And again, Mr. Speaker, that does a disservice to the people of this province who deserve so much better from their government, Mr. Speaker.

The notion that if you're working a full-day's job, Mr. Speaker, the idea that you shouldn't be working for poverty wages, working for a pay packet that has you below the poverty line, Mr. Speaker, that's not some kind of newfangled notion, Mr. Speaker. It's a very old notion. And there are different religious principles, Mr. Speaker, and I think of the Christian faith that I was brought up in and I think of the idea that Jesus said to his followers, "As you treat the least of these, so you treat me."

And, Mr. Speaker, when we look to the minimum wage, which is again by law the least that you can pay a person for a job, the idea that we'd want to enshrine in legislation a wage that was below poverty level, Mr. Speaker, again there seems to be something dramatically out of whack in terms of what that says about the values of society, in terms of what that says about the values of this government.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of . . . You see this sort of notion of, you know, the idea of welfare as a charity thing as opposed to being part of a citizen in this country, Mr. Speaker. You see this increasingly, the notion of the deserving and the undeserving poor in the actions of this government, Mr. Speaker. You see it in the increasing mess that is on hand in social services, Mr. Speaker. And I think about both the people that have to interact with that situation and also the men and woman that are tasked with that work on the front lines, Mr. Speaker, and what a mess it all is, Mr. Speaker.

You'd think that there'd be better interest and better recognition that in terms of the tools that you want to bring to bear on the job of alleviating poverty, of fighting poverty, Mr. Speaker, that a minimum wage that wasn't the second-last in the country — had been the last; will be the last very soon again, Mr. Speaker — you'd think that government would be more interested in that than they are. But they're not.

Well, you know, and I'm sure you'll hear about different things from the members opposite in terms of the costs that this will put on the backs of small business. And I guess one of the things that I would urge members opposite to, you know, if that is indeed one of their fundamental concerns, I'd urge them to look in the mirror, Mr. Speaker. I'd urge them to look at the way that they've doubled their provincial sales tax take, Mr. Speaker. I'd urge them to look at the fact that when you've got the expansion of PST to restaurant meals . . . Some of the members over that side, Mr. Speaker, have been around a long enough to have been, dropping off petitions in pizza boxes, Mr. Speaker, in terms of an expansion to PST that was part of the public debate back then. And of course, Mr. Speaker, that was not taken up on.

But what did we find in this government's budget for the people of Saskatchewan? Expanding the PST to restaurant meals and to construction labour and to children's clothing, Mr. Speaker. And in terms of, you know, what does that mean in terms of the overall PST tax take? Doubled it, doubled it, Mr. Speaker.

So again they'll talk about, you know, they want to be a helpful partner. They want to be the big-shot business folks, Mr. Speaker. They want to ignore the kind of grinding poverty that this means for all too many of our working men and women. And, Mr. Speaker, if those are indeed their concerns, then you'd think that would have led to different decisions on the other side of the ledger. But of course, it has not. It has not.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Statistics Canada data released just this week, overall investment in non-residential construction is falling in Saskatchewan. Construction investment for the third quarter of 2018 had the biggest year-over-year decline outside of Prince Edward Island. We look at the impact on the housing industry, Mr. Speaker, of the expansion of the PST. Year-over-year investment in new housing construction is down \$38.2 million, Mr. Speaker, down by near a third, the biggest drop amongst all provinces. We look at the value of residential building permits having dropped by 29.5 per cent between August 2017 and August 2018, Mr. Speaker, while in the same time frame, non-residential permits dropped by a staggering 35.7 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And you can go on with these kind of statistics.

But in terms of the proclaimed interest in the well-being of

business and, you know, again squarely pitting business against the workers, Mr. Speaker, which is often the tactic of this government — instead of bringing people together, seeking to divide, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that common interest that we all have in people making a decent wage so they can pay for the things of life, make sure that the rent wolf is away from the door, and maybe have some dollars left over, some of the good things in life as well, Mr. Speaker — that shouldn't be too much to ask, but apparently it is for this government.

[11:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the lack of action that we see on the whole front of minimum wage, again, and this isn't sort of mysterious. Sadly this is all too much part of the right wing playbook, Mr. Speaker. And again, you know, they'll have different things to say, but if the legally allowed minimum wage that you can pay a person for an hour of work is too much for this government to consider, Mr. Speaker, again it speaks to the values and it speaks to the overarching idea that we see on too many fronts with this government, that drives people apart, that again they'll take and take and take again on one hand, Mr. Speaker.

I think of SaskPower, for example, and the way that the power bills have increased, you know, half a dozen times over the past two years, Mr. Speaker. But they won't talk about that, you know. They'll talk about, they'll be busy posing for photos with their pal, Doug Ford, you know. Again no great fan of the minimum wage. He was the guy that was prophesying doom, I believe, in the province of Ontario when the minimum wage went up to \$14. And they've frozen it at \$14, Mr. Speaker, which is a darned shame. But he was saying that that was going to drive jobs out of the province of Ontario by the thousands; it was going to be disastrous. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's actually been in the opposite direction. Jobs are up. The economy is growing, and, you know, despite the best efforts of people like Premier Doug Ford to, you know, take that province to some pretty interesting places.

Across the border from us to the west, Alberta, you know, the minimum wage, they've been able to, at the same time as ours was going up by a dime, their minimum wage went up by a buck forty, Mr. Speaker, making a real difference in the pay packets of those men and women in the workforce. And, Mr. Speaker, has it resulted in economic collapse, or all the different sort of apocalyptic scenarios that get forecast by the members opposite? No it has not. No it has not, Mr. Speaker. So, what was the . . . Henny Penny and Chicken Little and "the sky is falling." I'm sure there's an analogy in there someplace, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of who is affected by this, these are in the majority women workers. These are folks that in terms of, again, that cost of living just hasn't kept up.

So again, Mr. Speaker, we think that this is a file that deserves attention, that deserves serious consideration on the part of this government, and we know that it enjoys considerable interest and support out across the broad section of Saskatchewan workers and society.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would move:

That this Assembly calls upon the Sask Party government to

phase in a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for all Saskatchewan workers.

Mr. Speaker, I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre:

That this Assembly calls upon the Sask Party government to phase in a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for all Saskatchewan workers.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Moose Jaw North.

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm rather curious about the motion that has been presented. I don't think the opposition have an understanding of fair and balanced. I don't think they have an understanding of business or investment or what would be considered fairness in the industry. He talked a little bit about a challenge between the employer and employees, and that's not case at all because you try and work with these people. You've got obviously a business to run.

Mr. Speaker, they governed this province for the better part of the last half of the century, but in their last 16 years as government they had no scheduled regular review for the minimum wage. There was no basis for which the changes to the minimum wage had been made, and it was kind of somewhat of a *comme ci, comme ça* regulations. He talked about ignored and neglected. Well I think that's what they did, is ignored and neglected because they didn't have any kind of a schedule or any kind of review.

Our Saskatchewan Party government made significant changes by implementing an annual review to the minimum wage. Our government implemented the indexation formula based on the increases to the consumer price index and the average hourly wage here in Saskatchewan. Fair and balanced. It's a strategic approach to make sure the low-income workers aren't missed or forgotten like they were under the NDP.

There needs to be a balance, a balance between good economics and good compensation for the working people. Wages need to be fair, fair to the workers and fair to the employer. If one gets out of balance, well obviously it affects the other. Should one increase it will affect the other.

Employees deserve compensation for the work they do. Employers pay the employees through the sales of their products or the service that they provide. If the compensation is increased, the end price goes to the consumer which has to be increased to compensate, or the business will become non-profitable and eventually may have to close its doors.

There's another side to the equation of increasing the minimum wage. It has to do with the amount of money that the employee actually brings in, and then they are taxed on that increase to their employment on their T4s and will have to pay more in taxes, which is a return for the government for sure, but it inflates the amount that they actually think that they received and it throws everything out of balance.

An increase to the employer gives greater income if the increase becomes a taxable income as well. Fair and balanced. The formula provides predictability and sustainability to keep that balance. Using the formula based on increases to the consumer price index and the average hourly wage of Saskatchewan, the minimum wage has increased 10 times since 2007, an increase of 39 per cent in that time. Fair and balanced, predictable and sustainable. Business has the opportunity to plan ahead. Business likes predictability and sustainability, no surprises. Business doesn't like surprises.

Business goes where they're welcome and will invest in friendly territory, where their investment has potential for growth. Increasing any costs has a detrimental effect on business. They won't go where costs are higher or there are unfriendly regulations or where the climate is unpredictable.

A good example would be the carbon tax. Canada is losing investment because of the proposed carbon tax imposed by the federal government, and the NDP support the carbon tax. This will cost jobs. It will be a loss of investment, and this creates an unfriendly business climate. What the opposition fails to understand — it is about growing the economy and having a strong economic plan.

We need regulations to protect workers, but government shouldn't get in the way. Encouraging a strong economy and letting business do what business does is growing a strong economy. Government needs to encourage investment, investment that will hire people — the people who will pay taxes and raise family and grow communities. Let the market grow, Mr. Speaker.

Business wants good people, and they're willing to pay for good people and don't want to lose good people. McDonald's in Moose Jaw doesn't pay minimum wage. They train good people and they want to keep them. And like McDonald's, most businesses don't rely on minimum wage to retain their people. Let the market decide.

The highest minimum wage in Canada was at Fort Mac, Mr. Speaker. You know what? It wasn't legislated. The market created demand for workers and the sector paid accordingly. They needed workers and they paid for it.

Our government has assisted workers by indexing the minimum wage annually, an indexation formula based on increases to the consumer price index and the average hourly wage in Saskatchewan. Fair and balanced. We supported low-income workers in a variety of ways. Our government has raised the basic personal income tax exemption to make Saskatchewan the highest tax-free threshold in Canada. In fact a family of four in Saskatchewan pays no income tax on their first \$51,600 of income, the highest tax-free threshold in Canada. Lower-income people don't pay provincial income tax. In fact we've moved 112,000 people off the provincial tax roll.

Saskatchewan families are paying less personal tax now than they did 11 years ago under the NDP government. Saskatchewan minimum wage earners who work full time have the fifth-lowest disposable income in the country.

Our government has lower property tax, which of course helps

low-income people keep more money in their pocket.

Our government has grown the economy by encouraging investment, attracting business, business who invest. They hire more people. They pay taxes to build schools, who hire more people. They build health facilities, who hire more people. Retailers are attracted and they invest, and they hire more people, people who are workers and taxpayers, building our communities and our economy and providing a better standard of living for everyone.

A \$15 minimum wage would discourage investment. It would discourage hiring and expanding. It would have a devastating effect on our economy, causing people to be out of work. Businesses would be less competitive and possibly have to close their doors and perhaps move elsewhere in order to make a living.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP math is flawed. Their idea of a carbon tax, of increasing corporate tax, a \$15 minimum wage, would send our province back 20 years when investment would be going elsewhere, where businesses would be closing, and people, especially our youth, would be leaving the province in droves like they did back when the NDP were in power. It just won't add up, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP can't be allowed to make those kind of devastating decisions that would lead the growth of this province back and bring the province into ruins.

A \$15 minimum wage may eventually be a reality using the formula, the indexation formula based on increases to the consumer price index and the average hourly wage in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we'll eventually get there, but this province hasn't grown there yet, and a \$15 minimum wage would be devastating. Thank you.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is a very, very important speech, and I listened with interest to the member from Moose Jaw North when he was talking about math skills. At this rate of this indexation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it'll be 2052, 2052 before we get even near \$15 minimum wage. You know, when I was listening to that speech it almost reminded me of what a sovereign citizen would be talking about — get out of the way; let the market do it themselves. We're just going to do what we want.

[11:30]

I wonder what he feels about occupation health and safety. What does he feel about that? You know, we have a horrible record here in Saskatchewan about that, and so is he putting everything about labour legislation in one basket here, that we cannot have any role in the market? Let the market decide whether a place is safe. Let the market decide whether it's fair.

I think it's shameful that the member from Moose Jaw North would talk about the kind of things that he does. And you know when he talks . . . and I'm sure we're going to hear this number many, many times, Mr. Speaker, the 112,000 people taken off the tax rolls supposedly, supposedly. But we've asked on this side for the documents to prove that. And it's like the former premier,

Mr. Wall, who could never explain where the money went, these guys can't explain where the 112,000 people are, Mr. Speaker.

Just prove it. Table the documents. I ask the member from Moose Jaw North, table the documents. It may be the case. Now he chirps from his desk. He chirps from his desk. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's only reasonable that we ask for appropriate scrutiny and where are those numbers and what they are.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the time is right. The time is now because we know the cost of living has soared in Saskatchewan on so many fronts. Over the past 10 years we've seen the cost of living go up because of housing — and of course today we talked about SaskPower rates going up — the cost of food going up, the cost of transportation, particularly now when they've cancelled the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] for low-income people to try to get around this province. There's no way to get around this province like we used to have, a reasonable method of transportation.

And of course these folks over here, it's so highly ironic that they would be the ones talking about, you know, the tax increases, tax increases, yet they were the ones who doubled the take that they're getting off of PST just two years ago. That member did not mention anything about that. And who's paying that PST? Who's paying that billion dollars? Who's paying that?

Well it's the people working, and many of them in low-income jobs, trying to figure out where they're going to get that extra money to pay for their kids' clothing. Now he's silent on that. He's not chirping about that, saying that's fair and reasonable. None of them are defending that. We know the costs on construction labour, what kind of impact that's had. We know the impact of PST on restaurant meals, what that's had on service people.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a big, big issue. They've added so much to the cost of living. It's only reasonable that we take a look at this, about how do we phase in, how do we phase in an appropriate minimum wage of \$15 an hour? How do you phase it in? And realizing all the factors that you have to, but we cannot wait until 2052 to make that happen.

Mr. Speaker, you know, this is an issue that's really important to my people in Saskatoon Centre. They're folks who work in the service industry and they're really . . . I have to tell you some of these numbers here. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Caswell Hill we have about 1,300 people who make less than \$25,000 a year. Downtown there's about another 1,300. But then when you get into Riversdale and Pleasant Hill, in Pleasant Hill there's 3,000 people who make less than \$25,000 a year.

People are strapped for cash and they need to make a basic, decent income. We're not talking . . . If we were talking about a living wage, we'd be talking about 16, 17, \$18 an hour, but we're not even talking about that. But we're talking about the fact people should not have to work in poverty. I mean how is that even fair that your minimum wage is a poverty wage? That's just not right and not appropriate. And then you have Riversdale, again another 1,500 people.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we look across the province to many people. Many people unfortunately are caught in that poverty trap

where they want to work. They want to work, but how can they? How can they work and make ends meet when we have a situation like this? And we're coming into the Christmas season, and when we have members saying, well just let the market decide, that's just untenable. That's not reasonable.

You know, we look at this government over just the past two years ago when they were talking about how broke they were and they needed to expand their base of where they were going to get their money from. So what did they do? They doubled their PST take. How much were they going to make on PST? Well they doubled it. And who got hit with the bill? Well the working people of Saskatchewan. And they've not talked about, hey we've got to revisit that. We've got to revisit that because people are caught. They're caught.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was interesting today, and I appreciated my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre introducing the folks from Regina Open Door. We see this issue coming more and more that this is also a gender issue. More women work in the service industry. And my colleague later will talk more about this, how important it is for women getting a fair wage in the workplace.

But also immigrants, new Canadians, and how are they caught? Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has not got a good record here. And I'll tell you the numbers, Mr. Speaker, that we are in fact, in terms of immigrant wage gap, an immigrant in Saskatchewan expect to make 27 per cent less than a non-immigrant. That's just not right. How are we going to help those folks when they come to Saskatchewan to make ends meet, Mr. Speaker? And this is a real, real problem.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is something that I think that we really need to take a good look at, an honest look at, and not hide behind indexing that might have been appropriate a few years ago. But we know with the cost of living going up . . . And one of the other things I forgot to mention but is really important is the elimination of the housing rental supplement that was something that people could count on. It would help. But, Mr. Speaker, that is also a hardship for people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to share with you, 1919 was the first time we introduced a minimum wage Act here in Saskatchewan. Of course you can imagine that time some of the business community — but not all because we've had businesses who say it's a good thing — said the sky was going to fall, jobs were going to disappear, and people were going to really regret this. But you know, they did it and it was the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, in doing my research for this I came across a story from Toronto which is very relevant here. And the headline is, and it's from TVO, "The 1960s backlash over a minimum wage."

Fifty-five years ago, Ontario's Conservative government introduced minimum-wage legislation — and businesses weren't happy then . . .

When the provincial government introduced hourly minimum-wage legislation in 1963, opponents of the move predicted doomsday scenarios. Diners going under. Staffing reductions. Costs passed on to consumers. Implementation of minimum tabs.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker worst of all, the demise of the 10-cent cup of coffee — the end of the 10-cent cup of coffee.

You may remember the 10-cent cup of coffee. I do, the 25-cent cup of coffee. Well, Mr. Speaker, interestingly, coffee, a cup of coffee has gone up much more than that. What's the average price of a cup of coffee? Is it two bucks, 2.50?

What they did then is minimum wage went up to a buck an hour, \$1 an hour, 10 times the cost of a cup of coffee. You know what happened? The diners didn't close. People still paid for a cup of coffee. In fact, they tried to increase it. Then they had to bring it back down. But, Mr. Speaker, you know, today we pay about 2.50 a cup of coffee, two bucks, maybe three bucks. But we're talking about \$15 an hour, so we think this is pretty reasonable.

You can do the math. If we were talking about 10 times 2.50, that would be \$25 an hour. Well that wouldn't work, would it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? But we think \$15 is reasonable. It's a benchmark that we should all aim for. These guys are saying the sky is falling. You look at Ontario with \$14. It's seeming to be all right. Alberta's run really well with a \$15 an hour. There was some hesitation, some doomsday stuff being talked about, but it's okay. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting this motion. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Mr. Francis: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm again very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the motion put forward by the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, a motion that, surprisingly enough, myself and none of the rest of us on this side of the House support. We strongly oppose it. It just shows how out of touch the NDP are with the business community, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's no doubt that the determination of a provincial minimum wage is a very important issue. We realize that many are dependent on it. However it does affect more than just the people earning that wage. It has a ripple effect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, throughout the business community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government's approach to review minimum wage levels annually once again shows our commitment to making sound, informed decisions on behalf of the residents of Saskatchewan. The NDP approach is simply to throw money at issues, taxpayer money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reckless and unsustainable policy — the same old NDP. Using a formula based on the annual consumer price index and average hourly wage figures provides a predictable and sustainable methodology that establishes our minimum wage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our minimum wage has increased 10 times in the last 11 years, a 39 per cent increase since 2007. The NDP proposes a similar increase in as short a time as one year — a reckless proposal, Mr. Speaker — again, with no consideration on who will pay for the increase, just like every other policy they tout. The money will simply appear out of thin air, much like their leader's two-and-a-half-billion-dollar budget spending proposal. Where is that money coming from?

Instead of wasting time asking, where did the money go, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, they should maybe ask themselves once, where does the money come from? It comes from every taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. And once again the NDP are severely out of touch with the business community and the taxpayers in general.

Now I don't know how much business experience the people on that side have, Mr. Speaker, but I have some myself. And as an employer for almost the last 25 years, I'm very aware of the balance that needs to be achieved between employers and employees, balancing fair pay while maintaining profitability in a business. You learn very quickly, Mr. Speaker, that your employees are your most valuable asset, but they're often your biggest cost to running your business. Wages, salaries, and benefits need to be managed carefully. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this management starts with the minimum wage. You don't need an economics degree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to know that if your costs and liabilities exceed your assets, you're not in business very long.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've hired employees and employed them for many years, and I have always been a proponent of paying people a fair wage for the job that is being done. Not all jobs demand a premium. Some do and some don't. The fact remains that business owners need to realize a profit to stay in business, a profit that most often gets reinvested into the business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Small-business owners don't have unlimited resources on how to pay employees. They need to pass that on to their customers in order to have more for their budgets to pay employees. One statistic is, 54 per cent of minimum wage earners are employed by small businesses of 20 or fewer employees in the province.

I know many of these small-business owners, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My town is full of them. I spoke with one of them yesterday in fact, and they've been operating their family business for 45 years. They have relied on part-time employees — students, kids hired after school, work on Saturdays — and they said if the minimum was increased to \$15 an hour, most likely they would either have to cut back or eliminate those positions. So they don't have the resources. They can't pass those costs on to their customers. They're already having a tough enough time competing with online shopping, big box stores. So simply passing those costs on to their customers really isn't an option.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a minimum wage raise to \$15 an hour is simply not a way to help lower income people. We know the NDP loves to cherry-pick statistics that shed unfavourable light on this government's policy. We get it. It's their job. It's their duty, but for instance, saying the minimum wage is the lowest in the nation, on its face value it may seem somewhat true, but however there is supporting details that often get overlooked.

[11:45]

Mr. Speaker, other jurisdictions have lower minimum tax thresholds. Taking that into account actually puts us in the middle of the pack when it comes to national rankings. Adding that there is higher costs for housing, utilities, and overall cost of living outside of Saskatchewan suggests that we're not at the bottom of the barrel, Mr. Speaker. And it's simply untrue to put us there, to say we're there.

A large and rapid minimum wage increase in some instances would or could force businesses to actually cut positions in order to keep their doors open, or maybe even close them in some cases. We've all seen the self-checkout machines in the large retail stores. We just received those in our newly renovated Co-op store in Kindersley. And do you know why those are being installed? It is because the rising costs of wages and benefits is exceeding the price of technology, and those jobs are going away, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We need these wages kept under control and we need the minimum wage kept relatively low so to provide an upside for more skilled and demanding positions. If you move the minimum wage up, everything else goes with it.

I have some experience myself with minimum wage when I first started my career in Regina in 1987. I just completed a two-year diploma course from a college and I was offered \$8 an hour to start in Regina. I believe the minimum wage was around 7.50 or 7.75 at the time, so it was very close to minimum wage. Two-year diploma, a job directly in my field of study and I took it, and quite happily actually. And so the reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was simply this: I knew it was my first job. I knew it wouldn't be my last. And I was glad to take it and know that if I did a good job, prove myself, I wouldn't be at that wage for very long. I'd be able to move up. It was a stepping stone, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's what entry-level employment is meant to be.

The main point I want to make in opposing this motion is that you cannot legislate prosperity, as the members opposite suggest. As legislators we need to encourage a healthy business climate and let industry and business and individuals dictate the health of the economy. Agreed, we need to protect the rights and safety of workers, but raising the minimum wage by almost 40 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is doomed to fail.

It's been tried and proven. They like to say that things are great in Ontario and Alberta because of the minimum wage being increased but, Mr. Speaker, those governments aren't staying around very long. Ontario changed for a reason and Alberta's likely going to as well.

Contrary to the NDP position, this government does not try to run and dictate the health of this economy. We try not to be in the way. A \$15 minimum wage increase would likely only hinder job growth or potentially kill more than it would create.

The Bank of Canada also does not agree, Mr. Speaker. They predict the loss of 60,000 jobs by 2019 if the minimum wage is raised to \$15. Killing jobs may be the opposition's policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it certainly isn't ours on this side.

In conclusion I would . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . My first job? I don't think you want to know about my first job . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Isn't that what we make right now?

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to refer to an excerpt from the opposition leader's publication, and it's titled, *A Healthy Society: How a Focus on Health Can Revive Canadian Democracy*. And just the quote is:

Turning the . . . [table]

Aside from the risk of sounding ridiculous, I was cautioned by some against this approach. When applied to wealth, "redistribution" was a dirty word, even among left-of-centre New Democrats. No one talks about that anymore, they said. And they were probably right.

That about sums it up. The same old NDP policy doesn't work. I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the member. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on her feet?

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to introduce in your gallery, members of CAPP, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, who are here today. Of course CAPP president, Tim McMillan, is no stranger to this House, a former minister of Energy. And with him today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Brad Herald, vice-president of Western Canada operations; Siân Pascoe, adviser, Saskatchewan and northern Canada onshore; Brian Schmidt, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Tamarack Valley Energy; Chris McGinnis, vice-president, operations, Kaisen Energy Corporation; and Joel Giebelhaus, public affairs adviser with CNRL [Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, CAPP continues to be a high-profile advocate for the Canadian oil and gas industry at a time when the industry faces significant headwinds, as we all know, including resistance in quarters close to home. CAPP is an outspoken advocate for pipelines. It's expressed grave concerns over Bill C-69, which we're going to be hearing about a little bit more shortly. So thank you for coming today and welcome, welcome back to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to join with the minister here today to introduce the guests that are seated in your gallery, the representation, the delegation from CAPP here today. It's a real pleasure to introduce and welcome a friend to this Assembly, and a friend as well, Tim McMillan, back to the Saskatchewan Assembly. Thank you for your leadership, CAPP, and to the oil and gas industry and certainly to everyone that's here. We've built relationships with some of you that are up there. Thank you for that. Thank you for your representation, your work in representing this very important industry to Saskatchewan and to Canada. And we value your work. We value that relationship. Let's stay engaged on, you know, the very important files before us. Thank you so very much.

The Deputy Speaker: — We will now resume the 75-minute debate. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Social and Economic Effects of Minimum Wage (continued)

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into this first-of-the-session 75-minute debate on a phased-in increase of the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. We've had some interesting comments so far put on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that there have been a number of angles that have been presented here, but maybe one that's been a little under-represented is how much the issue of minimum wage is disproportionately an issue that impacts women and children in Saskatchewan and certainly across Canada.

In doing a little bit of research for this debate today, I came across an article that described the minimum wage as one of Canada's oldest social policies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, phased in around the beginning of the 20th century. I'm sure some of the arguments that we were hearing today were brought up at that time. Resistance that it would kill jobs, that we should let the market decide what wages should be paid, were certainly brought forth, Mr. Speaker. But we have seen a minimum wage in Canada since that time.

One of the reasons that the minimum wage was brought in in the early 1900s was to protect some of the most vulnerable employees, specifically women and children, Mr. Speaker. Thankfully we also fought and won the right against child labour in this country and elsewhere, but the minimum wage issue is still an issue that disproportionately impacts women, and by extension often children who live with women who are low wage earners.

I think when people talk about certainly some of the arguments against increasing the minimum wage, there's a characterization that those who earn minimum wage are, you know, students, part-time workers, people — we've heard some arguments today from members opposite — starting out in jobs, and that there is that justification for having a lower minimum wage.

There certainly are young people who earn minimum wage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but disproportionately the largest portion of those who earn minimum wage are over the age of 20. Actually the second-highest category for those earning minimum wage are in the 35 to 64 range, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that goes against the characterization that these are just jobs that impact young people, and perhaps on a part-time or temporary basis.

Also disproportionate in those statistics of who the wage earners are who earn minimum wage are women. Women make up 60 per cent of those who earn minimum wage, and that has a huge impact for not only those women and their ability to secure a comfortable existence. It also has a huge impact for children, the children of those low-wage earners. In Saskatchewan, unfortunately, we see the highest rates of food bank use by children in the country, something that has increased, unfortunately, in this province greatly over the past decade. The use of food banks in Saskatchewan has increased 76.9 per cent

between 2008 and 2016 in this province.

And that has huge impacts, not only on the day-to-day comfort of those families, but it also has impacts with regard to nutrition. It has impacts on health. Children who live in low-income households are more likely to have respiratory illnesses, more likely to have allergies, more likely to experience difficulties with learning and with school engagement. As we all know — you ask any teacher — there is, you know, the best lesson plan can't get past a child who hasn't had enough to eat. This is one of those impacts, Mr. Speaker.

And as has been said, and I think quite eloquently, there is no justification for someone working a full-time job and having to stop by the food bank on the way home in order to put food on the table. But that is what we see, unfortunately, played out in many communities around this province. And one of the ways to provide an immediate boost to that income would be to increase the minimum wage.

As has been noted, we recently had a minimum wage increase of a dime in this province, which represents I believe just around \$200 a year. By contrast in Alberta, their increase represents a take-home increase or an increase of \$200 a month. That \$200 a month I suppose, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for many people that doesn't represent a lot. If you are someone who has to budget to the dime, which many people do, many low-wage income earners do, \$200 makes a difference between whether or not your child gets to go to Brownies or Scouts. It means a difference between whether you eat Kraft Dinner or you get to pick up hamburger. And it really is to that level, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Wages — again we're talking disproportionately women here — wages have an impact on safety. How so, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Time and time again when I was at the shelter, you would hear women who stayed past when they knew it was safe because they didn't have the resources to go out on their own, with rents increasing. Often they had the lower wage job. They stayed past the time that they knew it was safe in abusive relationships because of finances. At that time we also had 1,000 women and children on the wait-list, so it was, you know, they were waiting for a long time. That is a real impact. That is how this issue is indeed a gendered issue.

And it's not only an issue for today, Mr. Speaker. I noted nutrition, levels of nutrition for children are impacted when they come from homes that experience poverty, and that has implications across the lifespan. But also for women, women are . . . continue to be overrepresented as those who live in poverty in their senior years, and I would suspect that all of us have constituents who would fall in that category. What women earn today impacts what their income will be when they retire, and in that way this again is a gendered issue.

[12:00]

How it impacts other pieces. When women have to work two or three jobs in order to put food on the table, it impacts how much . . . or families, Mr. Speaker, how much time they have to help their with school work. We hear more and more children coming to school without the skills that they need to be successful in the classroom. That is impacted by how many jobs or how many hours their parents are having to work just to put food on the table

and pay the rent.

Mr. Speaker, one World Bank definition, a World Bank report . . . and I think members opposite will remember the World Bank from such definitions as the privatization definition. But what they noted was that there is no known universal impact on employment rates related to minimum wage. It would be incumbent upon this government to get past the fearmongering and actually provide data in terms of how increasing the minimum wage would have a net negative impact on unemployment.

What we do hear is that the ability of people to have disposable income in their communities for reasons such as the doubling of the PST is really impacting small businesses. I have certainly heard that from businesses in Regina Lakeview, Mr. Speaker. So I would submit this is not only a fairness issue; it's a gendered issue. And it's past time for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And while I have the opportunity, I'd like to welcome my friend and former seatmate Tim back to the legislature. It's good to see you. Glad you're here to watch this fantastic speech I'm about to give. I'm sure it's going to be riveting. I know the guys over there have been waiting.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to be able to stand today and participate in this debate. And I was listening to the speeches from members opposite, talking about fairness and disposable income and, you know, it's fair points. It's a valid discussion to have. I'm not saying that it's not a discussion that we should be having. But when we look at this issue, we need to be discussing more than just simply wages. It's all I heard the NDP talking about, was just the dollar per hour.

But one of the very last things the member from Regina Lakeview said was talking about disposable income, which I am happy to talk about, Mr. Speaker, because in this province our personal exemption limit is over \$16,000. So you can make over \$16,000 before paying any provincial income tax. So you can't have a discussion about wages without having a discussion about the provincial income tax structure. And in that regard, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is actually quite attractive. While our minimum wage is the second lowest in the country, disposable income puts us in the middle of the pack. And I think it behooves us all to have a discussion talking about both of these things and not make it one sided, as the NDP are doing.

And there's no doubting that this personal exemption limit matters. If you look at BC [British Columbia], their minimum wage is 14.5 per cent higher than Saskatchewan's, but their take-home pay is only 2 per cent higher than Saskatchewan. So over the years since 2007 when we had the honour of forming government, we have taken great efforts to make sure that those earning the least in this province are looked after.

The NDP want to show themselves as the only ones who stand up for workers, Mr. Speaker, but that's simply not the case because we are as well. And that's why that personal exemption

limit has been raised since 2007 because in 2007 you could make just over \$8,000 before paying provincial income tax. Under the NDP, you could keep only 45 per cent in your pocket before taxes kicked in. Now, Mr. Speaker, you can keep 75 per cent before those taxes kick in. And we have steadily been increasing the minimum wage. Mr. Speaker, that personal exemption limit has increased by 45 per cent since 2007. As I said, it's 75 per cent that you can keep in your own pocket. In Ontario it's only 36 per cent before provincial income tax kicks in. And we'll get to the Ontario example in a minute.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think one of my colleagues had alluded to this, that this is more than just minimum wage we're talking about. So if we bumped it up to \$15 an hour — we're just going to round it up — it's \$4 an hour extra. Every other income bracket, wage bracket in a business is going to be affected. You don't think that the person who's currently making \$13 an hour — which is \$2 an hour above minimum wage because they have additional duties and because they've been there longer — isn't then going to expect \$2 more over minimum wage? So then that's \$17 an hour. Everybody is going to be expecting a \$4-an-hour boost if you hike it up by \$4 an hour, Mr. Speaker. So this has a ripple effect.

I know that one of my girls makes just under \$13 an hour at a restaurant because she has additional duties. And if you're going to bump up the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, I would fully expect her to ask for the same increase to reflect that she has additional duties at her workplace. That would be fair. The NDP are the party of fairness, we are continually told, so I would imagine that they'd be onside with that, everybody getting a bump up.

And so it's not just the minimum wage earners, the lowest wage earners in a business that would see this increase. It would be everybody across the board. I'm not sure that anybody's done the math on what that would cost business, Mr. Speaker, but I know it's not going to be a small amount.

And speaking of business, I know that there are many on this side of the House who have had businesses. We started our own. We bought, we invested, we hired people. The other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, I'm thinking not so much. I went through their bios and I don't know that there is a whole lot of business experience over there. But I know my colleagues. We understand that this does make a difference. I had a business in a small town and valued my employees, Mr. Speaker.

I always think I'm not going to have enough material to get through one of these, and then I end up having way too much. So I'm going to jump to the end, and if I get more time I'm going to come back to that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk about Ontario because it's been mentioned. It was mentioned yesterday in question period by the Leader of the Opposition. It was mentioned here again today. And I want to read a CFIB, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, article that was in *The Financial Post* from just a few weeks ago. It's a bit lengthy, so I'm just going to get to it. It says:

Ontario forced up the minimum wage from \$11.60 to \$14 an hour on Jan. 1, 2018 (a 21 per cent hike in only three

months). An additional increase to \$15 is scheduled for Jan. 1, 2019. [We know that's not going to happen now.] To understand the implications of this economic experiment, CFIB has been doing what the Ontario government refused to do: study the economic consequences. Almost 1,000 Ontario . . . business owners have shared detailed feedback with us on the challenges they've faced as a direct result of the minimum wage hike.

The results are stark. With such large increases to their labour costs, small business owners have had to make some tough choices. Many who have taken considerable steps over the years to hire youth and provide them with on-the-job training — often for the [very] first time — have been forced to rethink or reverse those efforts.

There's a little bit more to the article, but I do want to interject. So yesterday the Leader of the Opposition said, and I quote, evidence in Ontario. When referring to Ontario, he said, and I quote, "positive impact on employment." He also told us to look to Ontario and to "review the evidence." The member for Saskatoon Centre, just today said that we should look to Ontario because everything's going just gangbusters over there. It's all okay.

So I'm going to go back to quote this article, Mr. Speaker. It says and I quote:

Among some of the difficult decisions Ontario business owners have already made, [and this goes back to the 1,000 business owners, their members, that they interviewed] 59 per cent say they reduced or eliminated plans to hire young workers, 46 per cent cut employee hours, and 22 per cent automated jobs.

Almost half of the businesses surveyed have fewer employees under 25 years of age today than they did last year as a result of the minimum wage hike.

So perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can go back and review the evidence, Mr. Speaker, the evidence in Ontario, and then get back to us about this positive impact on the economy that he was touting yesterday in question period.

I've said this before in the House, Mr. Speaker, the NDP's crack research team at work once again, bringing information to the floor of this House which we find out is absolutely not correct. And if the members want to contest this, maybe they can go talk to those 1,000 CFIB members, those business owners in Ontario, who have been adversely affected by the changes in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. And then they can go to all of those employees that have lost their jobs because of the changes in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. That's the evidence. That's the impact on the economy in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

And I do love that the NDP again today stood up and complained about PST changes that were made in this province because it's going to devastate business. Well a blanket \$15 minimum wage and all of the domino effect of all the other wages that are going to increase because of that, they have no problem foisting that on businesses in this province. So on one hand they stand up on government's choices, but on the other hand they want to foist a \$4 increase to every single wage bracket in businesses in

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't make any sense. So, interesting.

And then not just the minimum wage, Mr. Speaker. The grand defenders of business in this province, they want to increase the minimum wage. They are supportive of a carbon tax which is going to raise the cost of everything in this province, and they want to hike corporate taxes. So, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of this province understand who's going to protect workers and business in this province. It is not the NDP. It is this side.

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

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite had a decade and a half to create a formula that balances cost of living, resulting in an appropriate starting wage. Instead they spent their time losing taxpayer money in failed industries and driving people out of the province. This government is on that indexed minimum wage so people don't fall behind. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Regina Lakeview. With 16 years to change minimum wage, why didn't your government create a formula?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, well I thank you for the question. Prior to being elected, I spent most of my time working with women and children who were living in poverty. And you know, for this government to be talking about their championing of those people who are on the narrowest of budgets, of the margins within their budget, is a little bit rich.

This is a government that had rents increased by 36 per cent over the course of the last decade, but wages have stagnated, meaning that now the net total of that is that we have more mortgage defaults in this province than any other in the country. Mr. Speaker, I think that this is an issue that deserves our attention today, and that's where we'll put our focus. Thank you.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting certainly when, you know, a decade ago we had the second-highest minimum wage in the country. Now of course, Mr. Speaker, we have the second-lowest. It had been the lowest and will soon be the lowest again, Mr. Speaker. And I guess I just want to ask the member from Moose Jaw North, is that right? Is that good for workers in Saskatchewan?

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

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, you know, the bottom line is, let's talk about the take-home pay, the disposable income. Our government wants low-income earners to keep more of their money. That's why our government removed 112,000 Saskatchewan residents from the provincial income tax roll entirely. A family of four earning \$50,000 income will pay \$2,300 less than under the previous NDP government. That's a 76 per cent reduction, unlike the members opposite who raised

taxes 21 times in 16 years, including raising the PST four times and raising the gas prices twice.

Mr. Speaker, we will take no advice from them when it comes to making life more affordable for Saskatchewan families. Thank you.

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

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition claimed Saskatchewan needs a formula to calculate minimum wage, and he is right, Mr. Speaker. That is why our government created one when we formed government, to make sure no one falls behind.

[12:15]

To the member from Saskatoon Centre: can you tell me why the NDP never put a formula in place during their 16 years in government, and why this government had to do it for the Saskatchewan people?

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre, and no other members. Member, proceed.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd be very pleased to answer that. Back in 2007 as the minister of Labour, I was very happy, as you would remember, to take the report on vulnerable workers, where we did a lot of things to protect vulnerable workers, including a health plan that these folks here cancelled shortly after taking power. At that time we did take a formula, and we did pass an order in council about a formula.

Now they may have changed it. I'm not privy to the cabinet procedures right now, but that was in the fall of 2007. I can remember the member from Regina Silverspring actually saying it was a good idea. So we were working on it back then, but the problem is today they're the folks that heisted a billion dollars tax on PST that the working people here in Saskatchewan are being forced to pay. Talk about take-home pay; they've cut into it big time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my entire career has been spent representing and working with small-business owners. And over and over again, my clients told me that one of the top factors in the success of their businesses was their employees. And they wanted to make sure that their employees were paid well, were paid fairly. Even the great capitalist Henry Ford talked about how employees need to be paid fairly because they needed people to be able to buy his cars.

So my question for the member from Moose Jaw North: does the member from Moose Jaw North believe it's acceptable for people working full time to be living in poverty?

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

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on making life more affordable for Saskatchewan families. That's why we have increased the personal exemption limit twice in the last decade. That means that a family of four making a hundred, \$51,000 will pay no personal income tax. Saskatchewan families are paying less personal income tax now than they did a decade ago. Mr. Speaker, that is also why, on this side of the House, we are fighting the federally imposed carbon tax which would cost families an extra \$1,250 a year, unlike members opposite who support the carbon tax and refuse to stand up for Saskatchewan people.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar-Sask Valley.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the members opposite, the Bank of Canada has done its research. A higher minimum wage would hurt businesses, and it would result in 60,000 jobs be lost across Canada. My question is for the member from Regina Lakeview: with the little-to-no research done on the matter, why did your leader choose to believe in ideology over research?

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question. I did cite a report earlier — perhaps the member wasn't listening — from the World Bank sourced from 2013 talking about the minimum wage and the impact of the minimum wage worldwide, and I quote, "No known universal impact on unemployment rates with the minimum wage," Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What we do know both anecdotally and by rates of not only mortgages in arrears in this province but the rates of restaurant meals in the province is that both of those have been grossly impacted by this government's decision to double the burden of the PST on the people of Saskatchewan. That's what I'm hearing from people in my constituency. Thank you.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's funny how times change. You know I can remember a season when they're all very interested in what the World Bank had to say about every little thing, and now it's just, you know, nothing but disdain — nothing but disdain from the members over there.

But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of . . . The member from Moose Jaw North had talked about how we should be standing up for Saskatchewan. And I would submit to that member that, you know, if you're going to stand up for Saskatchewan, it helps to show up first. So I guess to the member from Moose Jaw North: if he could tell us how it was that his government increased the

PST take by double, by a billion dollars on the people of Saskatchewan. How did this happen when that great tax fighter was patrolling the benches over there? How did he manage to let that transpire, Mr. Speaker?

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

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, there's so much wrong with that question that it's ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite aren't looking at the whole picture. Under our government, minimum wage earners are able to keep 75 per cent of the wages before they pay taxes. When the members opposite were in government, they were only keeping 45 per cent before taxes kicked in.

In many cases, disposable income is higher in Saskatchewan even with a lower minimum wage. Over the last decade our province has had the strongest disposable income growth in the country. We are focused on making the life more affordable for Saskatchewan families in a responsible and sustainable way, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Goudy: — The leader of the . . . I'm sorry. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Leader of the Opposition claimed that there are no negative effects to increasing minimum wage.

The Deputy Speaker: — Unfortunately time for the 75-minute debate has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

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

Motion No. 1 — Impact of Bill C-69

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly today to enter in some comments with respect to the motion on the table. And at the end of my comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll be moving a motion to a piece of federal legislation, Bill C-69, a bill that would have a hugely negative impact not only on Saskatchewan's resource sector but Canada's resource sector as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is such a terrible piece of legislation it's hard to know even where to begin on this Bill C-69, the Canadian Impact Assessment Agency, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This, as you may have heard, is the federal government's unilateral new approach to a major project, impact assessments. It's deeply flawed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and creates significant uncertainty for the industry. There have been several major industry associations who have spoken out against Bill C-69, and they have warned that there will not be any new large projects that will proceed if this piece of legislation is actually implemented.

The proposed legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, actually it unfairly targets the natural resource industry with new assessment criteria. And at the same time it's also exempting certain major industrial developments, such as auto manufacturing plants, in most cases. So just that goes to show

you how this piece of legislation is flawed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in August there was an Energy and Mines ministers' conference that took place. And at the end of that conference, the ministers of Energy for Ontario and Saskatchewan, our Minister of Energy, released a joint statement which made some comments about Bill C-69, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'll quote from the press release. The statement says:

Provinces and industry continue to be concerned about Bill C-69. The proposed bill is fundamentally contradictory to several of Canada's long-term strategic goals and it effectively hinders natural resource related economic development within the country. The changes in the new *Impact Assessment Act* would result in a more complex, costly and time-consuming process, while creating uncertainty that could ultimately erode Canada's economic competitiveness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, there's a number of major industry organizations who have spoken out against this, and you don't have to look very far to check the commentary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we'll just look at a few headlines here, and this will give you a bit of a sense of what the reaction has been to this piece of federal legislation. This one from October 15th by CAPP, headline says, "The Government of Canada needs to pause and review its plans for Bill C-69 in order to get it right for Canadians." CAPP is here in the gallery today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's what they're saying.

Here's one from the *Calgary Herald*, September 14th, 2018. "Bill C-69 is Trudeau's bookend to his father's disastrous NEP." That's a good one. Here's one from the *National Post*, October 25th, 2018. "This Liberal bill will hurt Canada and Canadian workers." That's pretty direct. How about this one? *Calgary Herald*, October 6, 2018: "Bill C-69 must die on the Senate floor." That doesn't leave much to the imagination there. Here's one from October 16th. "Bill C-69 presents a serious risk to Canadian industry and prosperity." That's from a fellow named Brad Wall. July 24th: "Trudeau helps foreign businesses again, hurts Canadian ones."

November 6th — this is an interesting one, Mr. Deputy Speaker — "A National Coalition of Chiefs have united in support of oil and natural gas development; demanding the federal government stop Bill C-48 and Bill C-69." That's the National Coalition of Chiefs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They've spoken out against it as well. The Fraser Forum, September 7th, 2018: "More obstacles ahead for Canada's energy sector if Bill C-69 becomes law." That's not very good. Here's another one. October 3rd from the *Financial Post*: "Ottawa's new environmental assessment law is set to trample all over provincial rights."

So that is just a small cross-section, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of some of the feedback on this proposed federal legislation and the impact that it would have on the resource sector not just in Saskatchewan, but nationwide.

So as we talk about Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's talk about the significance of this industry to our province. If you look at the statistics right now, 34,775 direct and indirect person-years

of employment in the upstream oil and gas industry is forecast for 2018. That's actually up about 3 per cent from last year's figures, so 34,775 direct and indirect person-years of employment. That's pretty substantial, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And in several of our constituencies, mine included, Swift Current . . . The member for Lloydminster represents a constituency where oil and gas is important. The member for Kindersley does as well. The members for Estevan and Weyburn, they also have very, very important industries in their neck of the woods that would be severely impacted by legislation such as this.

I've had a chance to talk to some of the folks in my community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about this piece of legislation and to get their feedback. In conversations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the mayor of Swift Current and the folks that work at city hall, they have viewed this bill as detrimental to their area, and I think that's probably an understatement.

Anyone from Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan — Cypress Hills area that the member for Cypress Hills will know this — that there are some major companies in that region that provide employment and make contributions to so many communities in the area. Crescent Point, Whitecap are probably the two largest oil companies in the area. They're major employers. There are service companies as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, such as Diamond Energy Services. They do great work in our community and across southwest Saskatchewan providing services to the oil and gas sector.

Here's one. Viking Projects actually moved to Saskatchewan, to Swift Current, from Lacombe, Alberta because of some of the things that we're doing here in Saskatchewan as a provincial government, what's happening in our economy, and they've continued to expand. So that's a good news story in the oil and gas sector, something that probably wouldn't happen if this federal legislation goes through, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know what? I could go on at length here about some of the contributions that the oil and gas sector makes to southwest Saskatchewan, and perhaps we'll touch on a few of these.

In late August the member for Cypress Hills, he organized a three-day tour of southwest Saskatchewan for the Minister of Energy and Resources and myself. We joined the member for Cypress Hills and we spent three days going around southwest Saskatchewan taking a look at some of the businesses there and the great work they do, businesses that would be negatively impacted by this federal legislation.

So we started off on the 27th of August with a tour in and around the Gull Lake area with Whitecap Resources. Whitecap currently produces about 16,000 barrels a day. Full-time employees in southwest Saskatchewan, 85, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 85 employees that are putting food on their tables and supporting their families through jobs at Whitecap Resources.

We then went off to the Shaunavon area, Consul, Eastend the following day, and we had a meeting with a company called WellTraxx, Mr. Speaker. Here's a great little spinoff story. We often think about the major investments, the big drilling rigs and the big companies that employ a lot of people in the oil and gas sector. But here's a company that was actually founded in

Medicine Hat by a couple of land agents. And because of the many opportunities they saw in the oil and gas sector in southwest Saskatchewan, they decided to set up operations in Eastend. They have two employees, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Doesn't sound like a lot, but those are two jobs that are created because of some downstream impacts as result of a growing oil and gas industry. And the fact that that industry was able to grow, it allows a company like WellTraxx to get off the ground and create a couple of jobs in southwest Saskatchewan.

[12:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also got a chance to go visit Crescent Point, of course. And we all know about Crescent Point, not just the jobs that they create. They've got about, give or take, 200 employees that are working as operators, engineers, admin support staff, and then they have another 200 working in their capital program. But in addition to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Crescent Point makes some pretty major investments into the area, whether it's hockey rinks or community playgrounds or property taxes to local RMs [rural municipality] and municipalities and towns and villages in the area. That is another benefit and spinoff to a substantial and a growing oil and gas sector in southwest Saskatchewan.

Those are just some of the local impacts. Now as we get back to Bill C-69, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had a chance to speak with a fellow who I know in Swift Current who talked about . . . and his feedback, and gave me some advice as to what he thought about Bill C-69, is it would impact his company directly. The fellow's name is Donny Duncan. He's the president of Millennium Land based in Swift Current. And as he wrote to me, and I'm going to quote from this email, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Duncan says:

Bill C-69 will singlehandedly erode and destroy our energy sector. It will make it impossible, both physically and economically, for energy companies to get their product to market (build pipelines). If companies cannot get their product to market, they will stop investing in Canada. They will work in jurisdictions where they can operate more efficiently and get a better return for their shareholders. Should energy companies stop or slow down operations in Canada, this will be detrimental to businesses like mine.

Currently Millennium Land employs over 50 people in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he concludes by saying:

If Bill C-69 is passed and companies do not invest in Canada, jobs will be lost, local economies will suffer, corporate sponsorship and donations will disappear, and it will be the end to rural sports facilities and non-profit organizations, etc.

So there you have it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's some of the impacts of Bill C-69 if that happens to go through.

As a bit of a side note, on Saturday night the member for Cypress Hills and myself, we attended a fundraising gala in Swift Current. It was called the United Way Foundation of Hope Gala that raises funds for a number of great organizations in Swift Current and area. And guess who one of the founding board members of that fundraiser is? And guess who had a table there that they

purchased to help sponsor that event? It was Millennium Land, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So if something like Bill C-69 goes through and then causes negative impacts for a company like Millennium Land to the point where they can't have 50 employees and they can't run a business, guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They can't contribute to things like the United Way's Foundation of Hope Gala. So that's what happens as a result of a piece of legislation like this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mentioned CAPP earlier in one of the headlines there and they have offered some comments as they've taken a close look at this piece of federal legislation. And here's from CAPP's *Bill C-69 Impact Assessment* report and commentary. They say:

The Canadian oil and . . . gas sector presents a significant opportunity that provides broad benefits to Canadians. [Under Bill C-69, and this is bolded] Under Bill C-69 these benefits are at risk.

. . . In its current form, the Bill will diminish the global competitiveness of Canada's oil and natural gas industry and [will] be a significant barrier to future investment, putting Canadian jobs at risk. It will make an already complex system more complicated, with added uncertainty for the project review and EA processes. Project reviews that are subject to multiple appeals and litigation have become the norm.

In addition to just saying that Bill C-69 is terrible, they've also actually gone on and they've prepared a full analysis and provided some solutions and some options here. So we should congratulate organizations like CAPP who have done more than just oppose. They've done some digging into this to see what else they could provide in terms of constructive criticism to make things better for the industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other organization that I want to quote and comment about is the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, who prepared a submission to the parliamentary Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. This submission is dated this past March of 2018. And the Canadian Energy Pipeline Association, CEPA, represents Canada's major transmission pipeline companies that transport about 97 per cent of Canada's daily natural gas and onshore crude oil production. So they, I would think, have a pretty good barometer of what's going on in the oil and gas industry.

Anyway, CEPA says:

In its current form [and I'm quoting from the submission], Bill C-69 cannot achieve greater certainty, clarity, and predictability required for investment in new linear infrastructure projects that can extend hundreds if not thousands of kilometers across provinces, communities and Indigenous communities.

Here's the big line, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is from CEPA, "It is difficult to imagine that a new major pipeline could be built in Canada under the impact assessment act." That's Bill C-69. Difficult to imagine that any new major pipeline could be built. That's pretty dramatic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. CEPA does not see

anything within the Impact Assessment Act that will attract energy investments to Canada. They go on throughout the submission here. This is not good, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

CEPA is [profoundly] disappointed . . . the proposed process appears to double-down on the very factors that created the toxic regulatory environment for major projects that this regulatory review process was intended to fix.

What else does it say here:

The impact assessment act will not achieve greater certainty, clarity, and predictability. Instead, it introduces a new regulatory agency and unique new processes and information requirements that have never been tested.

Never been tested, Mr. Deputy Speaker. CEPA consistently emphasized that the NEB, the National Energy Board, is the best placed regulator to oversee the full life cycle of a pipeline from the planning and approval process to construction, operations, maintenance, and the betterment. Given these concerns, it is hard to imagine that any pipeline project will be prepared to test this new process or have a reasonable expectation of a positive outcome at the end.

With built-in climate change tests covering upstream and downstream GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions, it is preposterous to expect that a pipeline proponent would spend upwards of a billion dollars only to be denied approval because the project must account for emissions from production of the project to consumption in other parts of the world.

And this is how it ends, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "If the goal is to curtail oil and gas production, and to have no more pipelines built, this legislation . . . [has] hit the mark."

Well there you go. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is just a small sample of why we feel that it is very important to stand against this piece of federal legislation. And so with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move the following:

That this Assembly calls upon the federal government to halt and repeal Bill C-69, legislation which will create even more regulatory uncertainty and politicization in the Canadian energy sector and hurt Canadian workers.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Swift Current has moved the following motion:

That this Assembly calls upon the federal government to halt and repeal Bill C-69, legislation that will create even more regulatory uncertainty and politicization in the Canadian energy sector and hurt Canadian workers.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to add a few points on this this afternoon. I don't think the members opposite really realize what this bill will do to our province. It doesn't just affect the moving of oil. It affects everybody that's

involved in the oil field. And my family, I grew up working in the oil field, as well as a couple of Crown corporations. My family is still very, very involved in the oil field down in Estevan, in the Estevan area, as well as up around Lloydminster. And they're not all oil field workers. There's electricians. There's people that work in the service industry.

And what they need to realize, if they don't support us on this bill fighting the federal government — we already know they've waived the white flag on the carbon tax and want to roll over and just, you know, impose that tax on everybody — if we don't stand up and fight this bill, it's going to shut down. And it's not only going to cost the province millions upon millions of dollars of resource revenues. We're going to have people, unemployment that hasn't been seen since the mid-'70s, when the opposition's attitude was, keep the oil in the ground.

Well there's enough production out there that it overflows the existing pipelines in the ground. So right now they're shipping all that extra oil in trucks and on rails. And then they complain that we don't do enough to work with the federal government to get our grain to port. We are working with the federal government to get our grain to port. However, for the railway companies, it's more profitable to ship that oil right away. Get that oil out of the ground and ship it, ship it, ship it.

And you know, if we do not fight this, this is just one more, one more nail in the coffin of the oil industry that this province desperately needs to do well so we can support those folks that need the hand up. They want us to do more for schools and education and hospitals and those that need our help, that are disabled. If we don't get this legislation stopped, if we don't take the time to carefully examine this and do that, we're going to be able to help those people less. There will be a mass exodus from this province like we haven't seen since they were in power.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate on this.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved to adjourn debate on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m. We will amend that. We will stand adjourned until Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:42.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister of Advanced Education
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure

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

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Water Corporation

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

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