



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

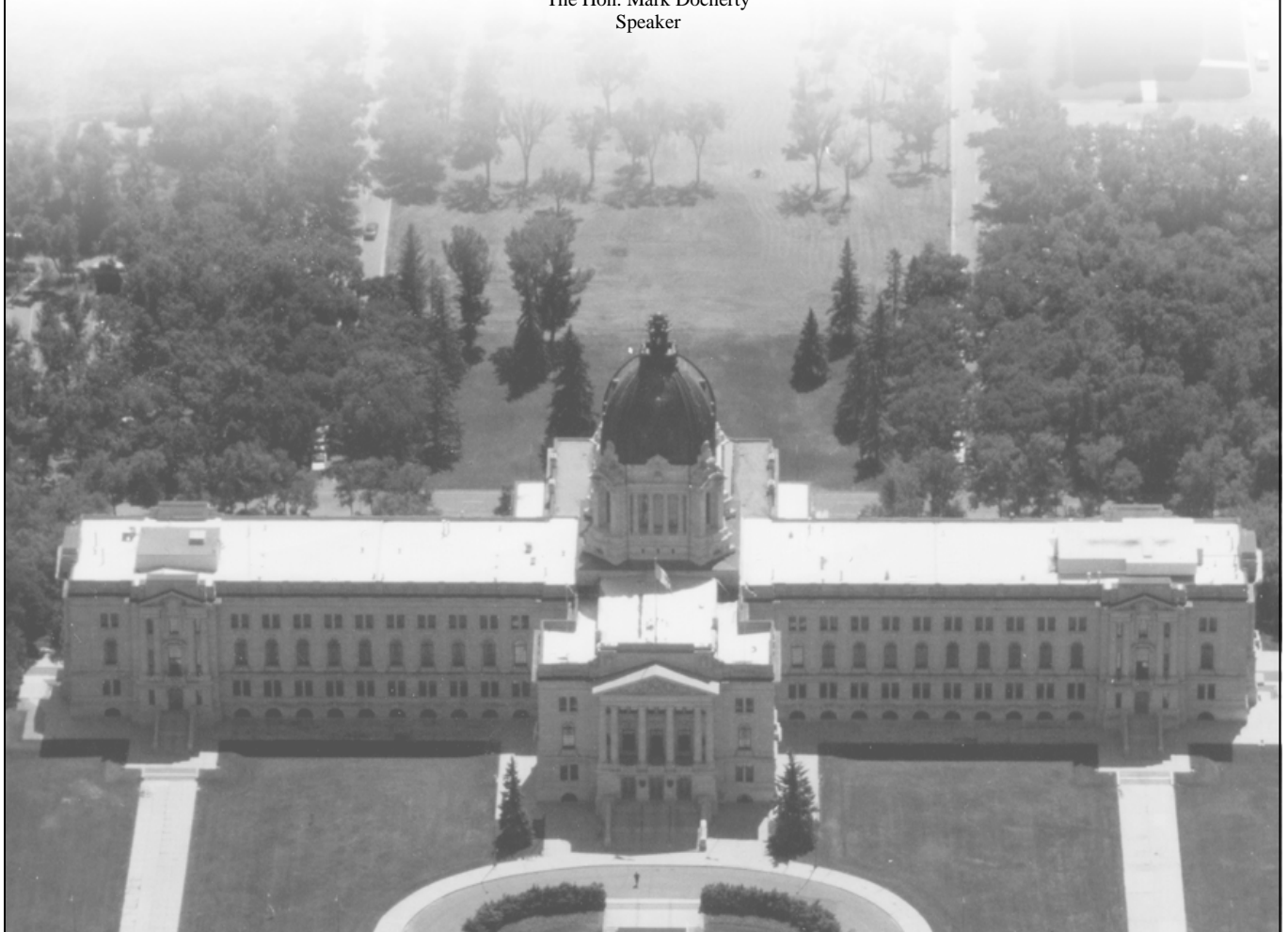
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

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

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**Tochor**, Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)  
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**Weekes**, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)  
**Wilson**, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)  
**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)  
**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)  
**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce some special young guests to the members of the Legislative Assembly. Joining us today in the west gallery for A Day in the Legislative Assembly are more than 40 students, their teachers, and chaperones from the Sun West School Division, and officials from the Provincial Capital Commission.

Mr. Speaker, A Day in the Legislative Assembly is an educational program that was created in 2012 by the Provincial Capital Commission in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the legislature. It's a memorable opportunity for these students to learn about our democratic process and a history and tour of the Legislative Building, observing their MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in session and participating in an unique panel discussion.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for agreeing to lead the discussion in the Chamber with these students, as well as the member for Regina Northeast and the member for Kindersley joining them later in a panel discussion.

It's certainly my hope that these students will enjoy the behind-the-scenes look that they will get at democracy in action today and even inspire a few of them to explore a career in the public service. I invite all members to join me in welcoming these outstanding young students to their Legislative Assembly today. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming these young people to their legislature, and I'm looking forward to being grilled this afternoon with some very good good questions about our democracy. So I'd like to ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to join with the Minister of Central Services and the member opposite in welcoming the students to their Legislative Assembly; specifically, Mr. Speaker, two school groups from the constituency that I'm privileged to represent, the Rosetown-Elrose constituency. We have 13 students from Beechy School who are accompanied by teacher Brianne Denning and chaperones Janine Baxter, Kirk Baxter, Mel Hanke, and Jodie and Chad Peters.

And also from Kyle Composite School, 13 students accompanied

by teacher Tatum Schneider, also accompanied by Kasie Walker, Daryl Imrie, and bus driver, Jay Sorenson. Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to an opportunity to meet with the students later this morning and having a chat. I'm thrilled that they're in the Legislative Assembly today, and I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's an honour to introduce to their Assembly, two good friends here today. They're seated on the floor of the Assembly: Nick Bear and Lynn Evans. Both Nick and Lynn live in Regina. Nick was born in the Shellbrook Union Hospital, lived on Mistawasis First Nation until he was seven years old. He's a survivor of the Sixties Scoop. He was taken from his family at that point, along with his siblings. He has very painful memories from the experience through foster care. He developed muscular dystrophy at the age of 12 and has been in a wheelchair since. That further upset the stability in his life of having him once again removed from a home.

Nick is a wise and gentle man, somebody that I'm proud to count as a friend who gives me good advice, Mr. Speaker, and I'm thankful for that. He's a fighter as well, Mr. Speaker. Through all of the adversity, he graduated grade 12 out of Prince Albert. He obtained a business degree in business administration out of the First Nations University. And he's somebody that guides us on a very good path around the Sixties Scoop, around reconciliation, around addressing injustice, and around disabilities as well, Mr. Speaker.

His wife Nicole, who's not here today, is a very talented actor who's well known within the community and a very strong voice and a leader within the disabilities community as well. I guess I'd ask all members to welcome Nick to his Assembly here today.

And I'd also like to more briefly welcome Lynn Evans, somebody who is a continuing care aid, has worked in home care for over 20 years, supports so many throughout our community, and provides tremendous service and enriches many lives. And I'm also thankful for, you know, the advice that Lynn offers. So I ask all members to welcome Lynn Evans to her Assembly and to thank her for her service.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I want to join with the member opposite in welcoming Lynn Evans and Nick Bear to their Legislative Assembly here today. Specifically Nick, who I just had the opportunity to have a quick chat with, was in fact born in the Shellbrook Union Hospital, Mr. Speaker,

which isn't too far from my house actually today. Mr. Speaker, it's a hospital that has since been replaced with the Parkland Integrated health care facility, so the good care that you received years ago continues on in that community and for the region.

Nick is from the community of Mistawasis, Mr. Speaker, which resides in the Rosthern-Shellbrook constituency association. It's a community that I have had the opportunity to visit with a number of times and have some childhood friends that I played hockey with over the years and continue to stay in touch with to this very day, Mr. Speaker.

I want to just make a comment with respect to some of the challenges that Nick has faced in his life, first of all being involved with the Sixties Scoop, Mr. Speaker; second, with some of the health challenges that he has faced. And I want to thank him for his perseverance and the example that he provides to others in the community of Mistawasis in the area, throughout the North, and the people of this province — and just as importantly, the people across the nation of Canada — perseverance and the willingness to succeed that you keep putting your feet in front of the other, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank you for that example that you provide to that next generation, Nick.

And I ask all members, Mr. Speaker, to join me in welcoming both of these individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the ministers and the member opposite in welcoming the students, faculty, and chaperones from the Sun West School Division. A special welcome, Mr. Speaker, to the kids, their teacher, Mr. Naismith, and their bus driver, Mr. Punter, who's a friend of mine. Nice to see him.

As a proud K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] Spartan alumni — class of '85, I'm afraid to say — I'm really looking forward to meeting these students later on today to participate along with the member from Regina Northeast in the panel discussion. And I would ask all members to please join me in welcome these students, teachers, and chaperones to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, joining us in the House today in the west gallery is the Olson family from Kinistino, which is in our constituency. First we have Jonathan Olson, and he's the vice-president of the Saskatchewan Home Based Educators, and his wife, Catherine Olson. And along with their children Josiah, Melody, Harmony, and Zion Olson, they're here in the House to see how governments work. So I'd ask all members of the House to please welcome them.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that Grandpa stands up to introduce, first is my son-in-law and my daughter in the Speaker's gallery, Mark and Tracy. And with them is Grandpa's joy, Carter and Lincoln Oddan. Give Grandpa a wave, boys. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to bring to the attention of members and ask a warm welcome for an individual seated in the east gallery. I'm talking about Tory McGregor. He's just tying up his shoes right now, getting all ready to jump. But anyway Tory's a resident in the city of Regina, was an active participant in and supporter of the camp, Justice for Our Stolen Children, and is certainly an active participant and observer of the affairs of the city of Regina — particularly around as they relate to reconciliation, fighting poverty — and is a good community activist. And we're all better for the work of Tory McGregor here in the city of Regina, so it's good to see him here today at his Legislative Assembly. And I'd again ask all members to welcome Tory McGregor to his Legislative Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of mental health and addiction services in the North. Northern Saskatchewan has some of the highest suicide rates in the country. The Children's Advocate has put out a report stating the lack of services in the North. The suicide rate is six times higher for First Nation boys than non-First Nation boys between the ages of 10 and 19, and 26 times higher for First Nation girls than non-First Nation girls.

And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to treat northern Saskatchewan residents with respect and dignity and immediately invest in more mental health and wellness programs and facilities in the North.

It is signed and supported by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

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

I do like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Regina and Grand Coulee. I do so present. Thanks.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am rising

today to present a petition calling for a public inquiry into the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land deal. The people who have signed this petition today would like to bring to our attention the following: 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.

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.

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

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals — even those living outside Saskatchewan — to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties. And we know that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics. But over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations and of that, \$2.87 million came from companies outside Saskatchewan.

[10:15]

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people. And we know that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, now British Columbia, have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

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

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

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise 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 in health care; and that safe, quality health care means having an adequately staffed, properly trained and equipped in-house security team, not cutting jobs and contracting out to the lowest private 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 page of the petition is signed by individuals from Cowessess and Wynyard. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition with regards of the cold, heartless cuts of the rental housing supplement that the Sask Party government implemented. Today is National Housing Day, and I think today is an important day to talk about the cut of the rental housing supplement because National Housing Day was implemented to address homelessness and affordable housing. And we know that there's going to be many people who are going to be suffering with regards to not having this supplement available for them.

The individuals who signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, want to bring these following points to your attention: that the Sask Party cut to the rental housing supplement shows more of the same from the Sask Party whose cuts continuously hurt the most vulnerable in Saskatchewan; that the rental housing supplement helped people living with disabilities and low-income families pay their rent; that this cut comes after previous Sask Party cuts to the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program that have already affected hundreds and left people living with disabilities with fewer supports; and that the Sask Party continues to throw hundreds of millions of dollars at their pet projects like the GTH; and it is wrong and unfair that at the same time they continue to cut the most vulnerable and make life harder for so many Saskatchewan families.

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 government to immediately restore the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement.

Mr. Speaker, individuals who signed this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Fall Prevention Month in Canada

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November has been proclaimed as Fall Prevention Month, which is a campaign that encourages Canadian organizations and individuals to join together and coordinate fall prevention efforts for better outcomes.

At the beginning of November, I had the opportunity to bring greetings at the Stand Tall This Fall kickoff event at Market Mall in Saskatoon. This event included tips and demonstrations to manage fall risks, as well as a “Remember When” fashion show.

Mr. Speaker, falls are one of the quality indicators that our government monitors, and the 2018-19 Ministry of Health strategic plan set a target that there would be no increase in the rate of falls across our province.

Significant success was realized by the former regional health authorities in decreasing falls among long-term care residents. Saskatchewan’s rate in regards to falls is considerably lower than the national average. Our government has outlined specific guidelines for special-care homes, which includes fall prevention policy. This policy ensures that all special-care homes have standards and protocol in place as well as procedures for post-fall follow-up.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority has partnered with eight different organizations with an interest in injury prevention, groups like Osteoporosis Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that all members please join me in recognizing the Fall Prevention Month campaign. Thank you.

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

### Equatorial South Sudanese Community Association Creates Intercultural Connections

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to take this opportunity to recognize the Equatorial South Sudanese Community Association in Saskatoon. This organization provides social support, education, awareness, cultural activities, and outreach. It assists in settling newcomers so they become productive and participatory members of the community.

In 2017 the association reached out and made a visit to the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation for the purpose of partnership and friendship, learning and sharing each other’s rich and diverse cultures, and in response to the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] Calls to Action. Following that visit, the community association held its annual conference and celebration in August 2017 to help promote cultural heritage and create intercultural connections. The two-day event brought together participants of South Sudanese descent from across Canada and the US [United States], as well as people from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and other indigenous peoples from Saskatoon and the surrounding area.

As a result of these successful events, on October 20th the community association held an event called Meet Your

Indigenous Neighbours. There was traditional live music, entertainment and traditional South Sudanese cuisine. These events are part of an ongoing project to learn about indigenous history, cultural practices and ceremonies, and to affirm the partnership between the South Sudanese community and their indigenous neighbours.

I would ask all members to join me in recognizing the important contributions that the Equatorial South Sudanese Community Association is making in Saskatoon, including in taking on its part in reconciliation. Thank you.

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

### Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Outreach Programs

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to rise today to acknowledge the work of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Canadian region. Mr. Speaker, myself, along with my colleague the MLA for Saskatchewan Rivers, are members of the steering committee of CWP [Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians] Canada. CWP was created in 2005 to assist Canadian women and girls to discover their potential, their political potential, and to experience the fulfillment of a career in public service.

Mr. Speaker, CWP Canada region aims to provide opportunities for strategic discussions and development for future and current parliamentarians, increase female representation in our parliaments, and to foster relationships with other countries to create closer parliamentary ties with Canada. CWP also spreads awareness through outreach programs designed to educate, connect, empower, and engage Canadian women and youth, in partnership with schools and advocacy groups.

Mr. Speaker, as the current Chair of the Canadian region, I have nothing but pride for the amazing work this program and its sponsors have done and continue to do to encourage women to become engaged in the legislative process in their regions. I ask all members to join me in thanking the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians program as it continues to advocate for young women to become strong, well-informed, future leaders. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Elder Wins Volunteer Award

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, on September 30th the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism hosted the ninth annual Provincial Senior Volunteer Awards. Not only does it provide seniors with recognition for their ongoing contributions to the community, but it also showcases the many diverse ways their efforts make life better in Saskatchewan.

And among those receiving awards that night was a long-time friend of mine and to many on this side and, I’d submit, probably through the House, Mr. Speaker — Lorna Standingready. She was honoured in the category of Contribution to a First Nations or Métis Community, and there’s no doubt that Lorna Standingready is a worthy recipient of such an award.

Lorna is a powerhouse in the First Nations community. She's an elder, educator, and mentor who is not only proud of her cultural heritage but recognizes the important role that traditional values play in creating healthy individuals and healthy communities. She believes in the strength of family and is a tireless worker on behalf of First Nations women and children. And as a residential school survivor and leading elder of the All Native Circle Conference of the United Church of Canada, she is a thoughtful and strong voice at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission a few years ago and continues in that kind of work to this day, Mr. Speaker.

I can think of no one more deserving of the recognition that comes with this award, and I ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Lorna Standingready on her achievements. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. *kinanâskomitinawâw. hîy hîy.*

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

### Highway Connector Program

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, it is our duty and responsibility to keep our constituents safe. Being from a rural community, I know, and many of my colleagues understand, the importance of a well-paved road and how much benefit it can be for your town and your surrounding areas.

It was my pleasure to bring a special announcement to my community in Canora: that this government will be funding the paving project under the town-urban highway connector program. This provincial contribution will be \$800,000, which is about enough to cover the complete cost of the project for rehabilitation in my community.

I was happy to sign this agreement for the town-urban connector program a few years ago when I was the mayor of Canora, and I am more pleased to see the continued relationship our government holds with municipal governments. Not only will this road bring safety to our community, but it will also bring more jobs to Canora, solidifying the strong relationship between our town and the province.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that all members please join me in thanking our government for their commitment to rural areas and wishing the project crew all the best in the paving.

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

### Club Supports Battlefords Youth

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure to attend the fundraising gala for our Battlefords Boys & Girls Club last Thursday. This was the 18th annual gala and it is the major fundraiser for this very worthwhile organization. It was great to see such a large turnout for this gala, and I think that speaks to the value that our whole community places on the great work that is done by our Boys & Girls Club. Executive director Nicole Combres and her extremely dedicated staff of 34, plus many volunteers, provide much needed support for so many youth in our community.

For example, Mr. Speaker, last year alone they served 18,123

meals and nutritious snacks. Attendance at their afterschool program has been growing steadily. In September 2015 they had 259 afterschool visits. In 2016 that number grew to 711, and in 2017 they had 714 visits. This September, Mr. Speaker, the program had 887 visits. As well, Mr. Speaker, they offer several other afterschool and summer programs to children who otherwise may not have access to these opportunities.

And now for the good news, Mr. Speaker. This year's gala, they raised \$69,234. Ms. Combres and her staff and the entire board of directors were ecstatic at the success of this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all of my colleagues to please join with me in thanking Nicole, her staff, the board, and all volunteers for organizing such a successful evening. And of course, a very special thank you to all the businesses for attending and donating. Great community spirit was evident that night. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Opposition Comparisons of Alberta and Saskatchewan

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Leader of the Opposition compared Saskatchewan and Alberta's choices after the decline in resource revenue. He criticized our province while praising the choices of Alberta. He cited Alberta's GDP [gross domestic product].

Well here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. Over the last three years, Alberta's GDP is a net loss of three and a half per cent, while Saskatchewan in the same time frame is a net gain of almost 1 per cent. Alberta's numbers may have gone higher last year, but only after they fell much harder in previous years. And the vast majority of their job creation is public sector jobs financed by huge provincial deficits.

But, Mr. Speaker, let's hear what others have to say about the NDP [New Democratic Party]-led Alberta government. A recent fiscal report states, and I quote, "Alberta's fiscal policies are unsustainable." The credit rating agency DBRS [Dominion Bond Rating Service Ltd.] stated that Alberta's debt issues are due to "... the NDP-led government and its inability to demonstrate meaningful action to address its fiscal imbalances." And where is Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? A triple A credit rating.

Not to be outdone by his leader's bad facts, the member for Rosemont now says we're pursuing a low-wage economy. Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the fourth-highest average weekly earnings in the country. And when commodity prices were higher, we were at the top of the country, alongside Alberta. Contributing to that were those energy industry jobs that the NDP is fighting against across this country, Mr. Speaker. The NDP need to do better research, stop cherry-picking stats, and get behind Saskatchewan and its workers.

[10:30]

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Vendor-Sponsored Travel Arrangements

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, over the last week we've watched the Premier struggle to explain what is and isn't allowed when it comes to vendor-sponsored travel. On Thursday he said vendor-sponsored travel was just fine when it might involve training. Then on Monday the Premier said it was never allowed, ever. And yesterday the Premier added a new caveat — that he hadn't found any example of travel that was "in violation of government policy."

So what's the new bar, Mr. Speaker? When does the Premier think it's okay for public employees to take free trips from businesses doing business with Crowns, government ministries, or agencies?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, I've asked my deputy minister to do a review of vendor-sponsored travel in executive government, Mr. Speaker. I've asked him to work with the ministry heads, Mr. Speaker, the deputy ministers of our ministries as well as the heads of agencies across government to see if there's been any other instances in addition to the eHealth instance, Mr. Speaker, of where vendor-sponsored travel has been present, Mr. Speaker.

And as I said, if he finds any vendor-sponsored travel that is in violation of the government policy of the conflict-of-interest policy, Mr. Speaker, we will endeavour to release that list to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. Until then, I'm not going to prejudge the results of that review, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to allow my deputy minister to work with our department heads, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to allow him to do his work, and then we will endeavour to release that list if there is one.

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

### Sexual Assault Strategy

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan we have the dubious distinction of having the second-highest rates of self-reported sexual assault in the country. And unfortunately the rates of reported incidents of sexual assault are increasing in our two largest cities.

In Regina, the number of police-reported sexual assaults increased by 26 per cent from 2013 to 2017. In Saskatoon, the increase was 30 per cent. But the funding for the sexual assault information centre has remained stagnant. This isn't unique to Saskatoon or Regina, but is the reality for all sexual assault support centres throughout the entire province.

With the Me Too movement, more and more people are coming forward and seeking justice. But the supports for survivors just aren't there. When will the Sask Party government make this issue a priority and increase the funding for sexual assault centres in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. The most recent victimization survey showed that only a minority of sexual assaults are reported to police, Mr. Speaker. And that means, while these reported numbers are high, the actual extent of sexual assault and sexual violence is much higher.

I think we need to pay attention to this, Mr. Speaker, especially since young girls and women under the age of 25 are amongst the biggest victims. My daughter's in that age group. There are many members on this side and on that side of the House that are in that age group. We acknowledge that the wait time for services for sexual assault victims is too long, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that we will definitely be looking into as we move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for that answer. It's not just a lack of funding and supports for survivors that's holding our province back. It's also the total lack of a plan to address sexual assault. Saskatchewan is the only province without a comprehensive plan for sexual assault, so it should be no surprise that our rates are the second-highest in the country. There's so much more we need to do to help prevent sexual assault before it even happens, and that starts with a plan. When will the government introduce a comprehensive plan to address sexual assault in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and again thank the member opposite for the question. This is one of those rare areas where I think there's agreement across the aisle on the need to invest in this particular issue.

As the member opposite knows, we're building a coordinated sexual assault strategy with the Status of Women office. They're working as part of a group that is led by the Sexual Assault Services of Saskatchewan. It will include a consideration of how we look at victims' experiences when they do actually report to the police, Mr. Speaker. And there have been a number of things that we have done as a government to try to get at some of these issues, Mr. Speaker, and certainly I would agree that there is a lot more to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Legal Aid

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, this pattern of underfunding also extends to our legal aid system. The minister has chosen to ignore warnings from lawyers from both within and outside Legal Aid, and even from a Provincial Court judge who pointed to a systemic shortage of legal aid lawyers that is driving our ballooning remand numbers.

The wait times to see a lawyer are distressing and the minister knows it. According to their own records, people in Moose Jaw are waiting an average of nearly two months to get an



appointment in relation to child apprehension. In Meadow Lake, the year-to-date average for the same is more than 80 days. That's 80 days, Mr. Speaker, after having a child apprehended, to get to see a lawyer.

Across the board in family law, criminal cases — including those involving youth — the waits are frankly unacceptable. What exactly is this government's plan to get these wait times under control?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, specifically in response to the question, I appreciate the concern that the member has raised with regard to wait times to see a lawyer, whether it's a criminal matter or a family law matter. These are often people that are in crisis, people that are going through difficult times in their lives, and it's imperative that we arrange to make sure that we do that.

One of the issues that Legal Aid is going through right now is a reorganization as to how the eligibility is done. It's done on a telephone basis so it can be done quicker, more promptly, and the person gets in to know whether they can or cannot see a lawyer at the earliest possible convenience. And that's something they're working through. It's not without some bumps along the way, but they're working well and I think they're well under way on it.

Mr. Speaker, we use a growing number of lawyers with the private bar. Our best efficiencies are when we're using the staff-based model. The staff-based model has served our province very well over the last number of years and we want to see that continue. We have one of the most effective methods in the province and want to continue to use that.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the reorganization the minister has mentioned has done nothing but cause stress and frustration in the legal aid system and decreased morale in Legal Aid offices across the entire province. Despite growing demands for services and huge spikes in remand, this government has flatlined legal aid funding. And while the minister was quick to take credit in the media for a million-dollar funding boost last year, we know those were federal dollars, and this government has done nothing to ease the pressure on this organization and on our justice system as a whole.

Forty-seven days for a family law appointment in the rural Regina area. Seventy-three days for a family law appointment in Meadow Lake. How many more times does the minister need to hear these numbers? The system is in crisis and action is needed to get it back on track. Will the Premier commit to boost funding for legal aid in his upcoming budget to ensure people have timely access to the justice they deserve?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we're going to work with Legal Aid to make sure that they're able to respond to the needs of their clients. Mr. Speaker, we are partially funded by the federal government but largely funded by the province of

Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the situation at Legal Aid: the 2017-18 funding for Legal Aid was \$24.2 million. This is an increase of 51 per cent since 2006-2007. We fund on a per capita basis better than almost every other province in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Legal Aid is working through some issues to make sure that they're able to deliver things promptly and effectively and minimize their use of the private bar so they're able to safely, effectively, and efficiently deliver services to members of the public. That's what's taking place. Our expectation is that's something that's going to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a brief quote about usage of the private bar, because use of the private bar is something the members opposite sometimes ask for, sometimes don't ask for, Mr. Speaker. I'll come back to it if the member has more questions.

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

### Access to Addiction Services

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, joining us in the gallery today is Pam Sanderson, and today is not easy for her. She is here to fight for her son and others who are battling with mental health and addictions issues. Sharing these experiences is not easy, but people are desperate to save their loved ones. These days, families like Pam's have very little choice.

Pam's son has been struggling with addiction to opioids and crystal meth, coupled with a mental illness diagnosis and a cognitive disability. He is briefly physically detoxed, but he is not emotionally and mentally equipped to deal with the intense cravings that crystal meth users face every day and the many other severe withdrawal effects that crystal meth users can feel long past detoxing.

Mr. Speaker, law enforcement, people who work in this area, and those in the community have long warned this government about the impacts of crystal meth in Saskatchewan, and the Sask Party has failed to provide the resources to combat this crisis in both the short and the long term. What does this minister have to say to parents like Pam who are so desperate for help?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I welcome Pam to her Legislative Assembly. If she would like to meet after question period, I'd be pleased to do that. To the member opposite, obviously we recognize there's a huge crystal meth problem, not only in Saskatchewan, and across the country, Mr. Speaker. I've had recent telephone discussions with the minister from Manitoba who tells me that it's extremely concerning there and has increased dramatically.

And it's not just the Prairies either, Mr. Speaker. Just last week I believe it was, there was a signing agreement — I signed on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan; the Hon. Ralph Goodale signed on behalf of the federal government — to access an emergency opioids treatment fund which, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has agreed in Saskatchewan, and I would assume they'll probably do it elsewhere, to include crystal meth

in that.

Mr. Speaker, in subsequent questions I'll get into this more. But we've obviously increased a capacity for addictions treatment, Mr. Speaker, and you're going to see more of that in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, while the Sask Party government has been sitting on the sidelines, families in this province have been suffering with mental health and addictions crises. Appropriate treatment and resources are just not there when people need them. Mr. Speaker, private treatment costs thousands of dollars, and even those private treatment options for crystal meth are limited.

Pamela works for a non-profit organization and, like most families, is not in a financial place to provide her son treatment that he needs. And just to be clear, no one should have to travel out of province and pay out of pocket for this type of care that they desperately need.

People living this reality can't wait any longer. Their addictions don't work around a budget cycle. What is it going to take for this minister and this government to realize people are dying today? He's had ample time to consider this issue for years now, Mr. Speaker. Why won't this government provide the needed supports immediately?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite prefacing her question said, I believe she said the government's been sitting on the sidelines. I would respectfully disagree, Mr. Speaker. For example, since we formed government, Mr. Speaker, the number of addictions beds have increased by 31 per cent. We recognize we need more. You'll be seeing announcements coming up in the future on that, Mr. Speaker.

Across the piece, it's not just addictions beds and dealing with additions, Mr. Speaker. We've increased other supports. We were told the other day about 65 per cent of addictions supports don't involve addictions beds, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned the signing with the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I think the member opposite had the opportunity for the question. I wish she'd give me the respect of being able to answer.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just addictions beds, Mr. Speaker. It's the full range of services, Mr. Speaker, for addictions and mental health. We've made it a huge priority. You're going to see it continue to be a priority, Mr. Speaker, and in subsequent questions I'll elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Global Transportation Hub

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the questions about the sketchy land deal at the GTH just keep coming. Tony Sevelka is an international expert in the field of real estate appraisals,

specializing in expropriation. In a report published this month, Sevelka lays down a scathing review of the highly questionable decisions leading to the notorious purchase. Quote:

It is obvious . . . that the GTH Authority was acutely aware that these two properties had been flipped in a speculative transaction, and that the results of the appraisal did not warrant paying a price anywhere near \$103,000 per acre . . .

Obvious, Mr. Speaker, that Bill Boyd and Laurie Pushor knew that they shouldn't be paying that price and deliberately kept that information from the GTH board. Mr. Speaker, Bill Boyd's right-hand man, Laurie Pushor, is still on the taxpayers' payroll and so is Bryan Richards, the GTH yes-man who blithely signed off on the deal without asking any questions. To the minister: why hasn't anyone been held accountable for this gross waste of taxpayers' dollars?

[10:45]

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has focused on exactly the issue that arose, the problems that surrounded the GTH. She has focused on the one transaction that she should be focusing on and should have been focusing on all along — that is the transaction that was reviewed and reviewed extensively by the Provincial Auditor. It was also reviewed extensively by the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], by the prosecution in Manitoba, by the RCMP services in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, she has found another review that's done the same thing and said, yes, they paid too much for it. What did the Provincial Auditor say? Yes, they paid too much for it; they should have expropriated. Well, Mr. Speaker, did it take them that long? Did it take them that long to come to the conclusion or did they read it somewhere else and do it?

Mr. Speaker, yes, that's the issue with the GTH. That's the issue that came about, Mr. Speaker. There's no surprises. There's nothing new. That's the very issue that's been going on for a year and a half in this House, Mr. Speaker. There is nothing new with that article.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about an international expert in expropriation who wrote an article this month.

This next question is actually going to be a direct quote from Tony Sevelka's report, a direct quote because his question is the same one we've been asking this government for years and they've refused to answer. Maybe if they don't want to answer to us or to the people of Saskatchewan, they'll answer to an expert from Ontario. After all, they've become rather fond of that place lately. So let's give it a try.

Mr. Speaker, this question is for the minister. And I quote from Tony Sevelka. Why did the GTH:

. . . interfere or compete with the Ministry of Highways over the proposed acquisition of the 204 acres, and subject itself to the whims of the market place and pay an exorbitant price

for the land, the value of which was, in fact, mostly created by the 'scheme' itself?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, whenever there's a large project that takes place where land acquisition is involved, quite frequently . . . [inaudible] . . . come in and buy up surrounding or adjacent parcels of land with the hope and expectation that it becomes needed by whatever the project is — sometimes private mining companies, sometimes roadways, sometimes a variety of different places where it comes up. It certainly happened here, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite's got some quotes. If she wants some more quotes, read the auditor's report. It says almost exactly the same thing. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite can spend a lot of time reading quotes. She can spend a lot of time looking backwards. But, Mr. Speaker, we're going to look through the windshield, not the rear-view mirror, and we're going to look at some of the things that take place at the GTH. We're going to look at the hundreds of jobs that are created, the hundreds of millions of dollars in investment, Mr. Speaker, how it has improved market access. It's time to start focusing on the potential of this project and where it's going to go. And, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite want to know about the potential, if they want to go there, I'll take them on another tour.

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

### Provincial Election Dates

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've raised serious concerns about the fact that the Sask Party won't commit to calling by-elections after the members of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview quit to run for Andrew Scheer and the Conservatives, leaving those voters without representation for more than a year. And it's a real shame, because it wasn't all that long ago that some Sask Party members were taking to their feet in this place to highlight how important it is to have representation in this Assembly.

Well back in 2004, the member from Cannington said at committee, and I quote, "And I think that's just . . . [unacceptable] that a seat should be vacant for one whole session or even potentially two whole sessions . . ." So what's changed, Mr. Speaker? Why does this government now think it's okay to let its citizens go so long without any representation at all?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is speaking in hypotheticals. No one in this Assembly knows when there's going to be a federal election called, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite is speaking as if members on this side, Mr. Speaker, or members in this House are not representing their constituents that they were duly elected to represent, Mr. Speaker. And I can assure the member opposite, and more importantly or just as importantly, Mr. Speaker, I can assure all

of the constituents that are represented by members on this side of the House that they are well represented by members on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

But if that is the logic that we are to go by . . . of which I disagree, Mr. Speaker. I disagree with that logic. If that is the logic that we go by, Mr. Speaker, the same logic would hold true, Mr. Speaker, for an individual that was just re-elected, re-acclaimed, Mr. Speaker, as the Vice-Chair of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association who is also running to be a candidate for the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Is she not able to represent the Saskatchewan School Boards Association as their Vice-Chair while she's running to be a member of the NDP, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, is the Premier really saying fixed election dates are just hypotheticals? Is that what he's really saying? At the same committee meeting, Mr. Speaker, Wayne Elhard said, and I quote, "The fact is that people have a right to expect representation in the provincial legislature. They have a right to expect it in a timely manner," Mr. Speaker. And the member for Lumsden-Morse said in the Assembly:

. . . generally speaking the people of Saskatchewan would agree that it is simply wrong to let people remain unrepresented in this Legislative Assembly which exerts so much control over their lives for . . . more than six months.

Mr. Speaker, for more than six months. Why won't the Sask Party government do the right thing, the thing they used to advocate for, and commit to calling by-elections once those members resign?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know full well that the members here are here every day. They're doing what they're supposed to do. And, Mr. Speaker, on the weekends, in the evenings when the House isn't sitting, what are those members doing? They're back in their constituencies, doing the same thing that the member opposite that's choosing to chirp from his seat is doing. He sits and he chirps in his seat while the members opposite here are returning emails. They're going out seeing their constituents. They come forward with their issues the same as everyone else, Mr. Speaker. Those people are serving their constituents and they're serving them incredibly well.

Mr. Speaker, people often have changes in career. When they do change their career, they resign from one job; they go to another. But, Mr. Speaker, in this case, these people are employed by the citizens of Saskatchewan and they're serving their purpose, and they're going to continue to do that.

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

### Access to Health Care in Northern Saskatchewan

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, the member from Cumberland asked and wrote the minister about the lack of access to care for pregnant women who previously relied on the Flin Flon hospital for deliveries. We know Manitoba is having difficulty recruiting

physicians to provide this care, but it is this government's responsibility to ensure those gaps are filled for our residents.

The minister's written response raises some serious questions for women in the area. He recommends developing birthing plans early instead of travelling to Prince Albert during active labour. It's a five-hour drive, Mr. Speaker, and he should know the timing of a baby's arrival is difficult to predict. And in many cases, active labour takes far less than five hours.

It's a concerning situation for people in these communities, and rightly so. What efforts has this government undertaken to provide interim obstetrical care in Saskatchewan's Northeast?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated last week, we've been in consultation with the minister in Manitoba. The Health Authority's been in consultation with the Northern Health Authority to develop plans. People in the vicinity of, the immediate vicinity, can go to The Pas for obstetric services, Mr. Speaker. And any emergent situations that may arise, they will deal with at the Flin Flon hospital if they should arise, like any other health facility does, Mr. Speaker.

But they did find a challenge with getting locum coverage. When they did an independent review of the services there, Mr. Speaker, they felt it was not safe to continue on with the service as it was. That's why they developed a plan for delivery of service in The Pas as well as making sure that people are well informed to make the decisions they need to do to make sure they have safe deliveries of their children.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — There are few options for pregnant women in this area, and the minister knows that. If a ground ambulance was needed, it would cost more than \$2,000 to get to Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. And while the minister indicated Victoria Hospital had the capability to support these deliveries, we know there are ongoing capacity pressures in that hospital and they have struggled to keep pace with the ever-increasing number of deliveries.

Northern women should be afforded the same level of care as other women in the province. And this situation needs to be remedied right away. The expectation for women to travel to Prince Albert for care is not sustainable. What is this government's plan to fix this unacceptable gap in care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, I would expect the critic would be aware that individuals from the North are able to get coverage through Inuit northern medical health branch, Mr. Speaker, as well as we do have low-income supports for those that might be of less means, Mr. Speaker.

Also as I stated, we have developed a plan. We've been speaking with the representatives from Manitoba to make sure those

services are in place. We've been assured by the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital that they are getting services in place should the needs arise for services there, as well as I'm understanding that some of the individuals from up there might have family in other jurisdictions where they might have different supports and are planning to possibly relocate in some of those areas, maybe even down in my hometown of Yorkton, to make sure they have maternal services, Mr. Speaker.

So we continue to be in contact with Manitoba, and we will make sure that the services are available for those people in the North.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 155 — *The Legislation Act/Loi sur la législation*

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 155, *The Legislation Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the minister that Bill No. 155 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? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### Bill No. 156 — *The Legislation Act Consequential Amendments Act, 2018*

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 156, *The Legislation Act Consequential Amendments Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 156 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? I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr.

Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 612 — *The Legislative Assembly (By-Election Dates) Amendment Act, 2018/Loi modificative de 2018 sur l'Assemblée législative (dates d'élection partielle)***

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 612, *The Legislative Assembly (By-Election Dates) Amendment Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 612 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? I recognize the member.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question no. 10.

**The Speaker:** — Table the answer to no. 10. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question no. 11.

**The Speaker:** — Order question no. 11.

#### PRIVATE BILLS

#### SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 901 — *The Luther College, Regina Act, 2018***

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 901, *The Luther College, Regina Act, 2018* be now read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 901, *The Luther College, Regina Act, 2018* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[11:00]

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

**The Speaker:** — Pursuant to rule 104, this bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

**Bill No. 902 — *The St. Andrew's College Amendment Act, 2018***

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to speak to Bill 902, *The St. Andrew's College Amendment Act, 2018*. St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon has been educating ministers for the United Church of Canada for many years.

The people involved with the leadership of St. Andrew's College reached out to me to present a private bill to make some changes to their private Act. And so I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of the bill to make the changes that they are looking for. So, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 902, *The St. Andrew's College Amendment Act, 2018* now be read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved that Bill No. 902, *The St. Andrew's College Amendment Act, 2018* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — Pursuant to rule 104, this bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

**Bill No. 903 — *The Canadian Revival Training Centre Act, 2018***

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to speak to Bill No. 903, *The Canadian Revival Training Centre Act, 2018*. The Canadian Revival Training Centre, or CRTC for short, is an educational institution

in Prince Albert that currently offers diploma and certificate programs in biblical counselling and pastoral care. I was asked by the CRTC to present their petition for a private bill, and I've been working with their leadership team to go through the process for private bills.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 903, *The Canadian Revival Training Centre Act, 2018* now be read a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member that *The Canadian Revival Training Centre Act, 2018* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — Pursuant to rule 104, this bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

#### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Suicide Prevention Strategy

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I enter the debate today on a motion calling on this government to develop and implement a strategy for the prevention of suicide in Saskatchewan. And at the end of my 15 minutes here, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving that motion calling on the government to implement a strategy.

I wanted to talk a little bit about World Suicide Prevention Day which took place back in September. And the theme for this year was actually Working Together to Prevent Suicide. It is all on us, Mr. Speaker, to prevent suicide — as individuals, as community, and as government.

As individuals, Mr. Speaker, we can all work to reduce stigma of mental health issues and addictions issues. That's on all of us. We can work to support our loved ones, the individuals who might be suffering with mental health and addictions issues that often lead to suicide or can lead to suicide, Mr. Speaker.

But as legislators it's on us and it's on the government to put in place a suicide prevention strategy that can save lives. Mr. Speaker, as legislators we've been elected to lead, and this is a place where some serious leadership is required, Mr. Speaker.

We have other levels of government, actually the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations put forward a suicide prevention strategy in the spring and is calling on the government to implement it. So there are levels of government who are leading in this regard, and there is a reason why it's so imperative that we do this here, Mr. Speaker, not at some point down the road,

but immediately.

For anybody who has been impacted by suicide, it is about the individual. But the death of an individual leaves a huge, not just a ripple but a huge wave over family and friends impacted.

I come from one of those families, Mr. Speaker, who lost a really special boy, Mr. Speaker. My nephew, who suffered from bipolar disorder, died by suicide five years ago. And I can tell you personally the impact it has. I think about my brother and his wife, and my nephew, my parents, all the aunts and uncles. There's a gaping hole at our family table, Mr. Speaker, when we get together for hot cross buns on Easter, on Good Friday, Mr. Speaker, on Christmas celebrations, on the many Chartier family celebrations. I come from a big family with lots of kids and grandkids. And you know, life goes on and there is joy. As time goes on, you do start to find joy again, but life changes forever. So not only does the young person, the person who died by suicide, lose their opportunity to live a full and meaningful life, but it can rip families apart, Mr. Speaker.

And the numbers in Saskatchewan are quite staggering actually. We have 1,900 people in Saskatchewan who have lost their lives to suicide between 2005 and 2017, according to the Saskatchewan coroner's office. And since those numbers have started to be recorded and coded by ethnicity, there have been, of that number, 508 First Nations deaths by suicide in that time, which I think accounts for between 30 and 40 per cent of those deaths in the province.

It impacts men greatly. There were 1,421 men who died by suicide in that time and 474 women. I just want to quantify these numbers here a little bit to illustrate the severity of the problem. The highest numbers of suicide for both men and women were in the age group of 20 to 29, Mr. Speaker, young people just starting out their lives. The second-highest age group of women who died by suicide were those between 10 and 19.

Those numbers since 2005 have grown in number. We can go back to 2005 and look at 124 deaths. And in the last three years, 2015, '16, and '17, those numbers kept by the coroner's office, 180 people lost their lives to suicide, 186 in 2016, and 164 in 2017, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot of families and friends and communities impacted by suicide. And in fact, some of those people in those numbers were incredibly young.

I have an almost 11-year-old, Mr. Speaker, and there have been children in my colleagues' communities who've seen a life without hope at that young age, Mr. Speaker. When our children are tweens and should be thinking about music and friends and fun activities, these are kids who are seeing the despair and the lack of hope instead, Mr. Speaker. As a mom, I find it shocking. But as a legislator, as legislators here, we should all find that appalling, and we should be fighting to do something about that. We should be resourcing mental health and addictions properly, and we should be making sure that we have a strategy in place that's culturally appropriate and community sensitive that taps into people's needs, to prevent these deaths, Mr. Speaker.

And this disproportionately impacts our northern communities, our First Nations and Métis communities. These stats I know you've heard and many of us have heard, but they are worth repeating, Mr. Speaker. The rate of death by suicide among First

Nations people in Saskatchewan is 4.3 times higher than the rate among non-First Nations people in the province. The rate for First Nations women aged 10 to 19 is 29.7 times higher than that of non-First Nations women in that age range. And for First Nations women in their 20s, the rate is 10.1 times higher. The rate for First Nations men age 10 to 19 is 6.4 times higher than that of non-First Nations men in that age range. And for First Nations men in their 20s, the rate is 7.3 times higher.

Mr. Speaker, 25 per cent of all suicides by First Nations people are by teenagers, compared to 6 per cent among those of other ethnicities. And 62 per cent of suicides by First Nations people are by persons less than 30 years of age, compared to 19 per cent among all other ethnicities. So we think about that again. This is happening to young people, young people in our communities who should be starting out their life and building families and going on to be productive members of their community, contributing members. And instead their lives are tragically cut short often because of poverty, addictions, mental health untreated, lack of opportunity and hope — those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

The lack of a provincial or federal First Nations-specific suicide strategy prompted the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations chiefs and assembly to call for a First Nations suicide strategy, directing vice-chiefs to address suicidal behaviour among First Nations people with high priority.

So the first of its kind, Saskatchewan First Nations suicide prevention strategy was collaboratively developed through community engagements; the FSIN's [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] mental health technical working group, including youth representatives; two of the FSIN's health and social development secretariat technicians; and two technical advisers. It's really quite a thorough report, Mr. Speaker, and a thorough strategy.

Again just hearkening back to the fact that this is, by and large, young people, very young people who are impacted, some of the things that young people in the North told our Children's Advocate, Corey O'Soup, youth from 12 communities north of Prince Albert told Mr. O'Soup that drug and alcohol abuse are widespread in their communities, that they don't always feel safe, that there aren't enough activities for kids of all ages, that bullying and cyberbullying are significant problems, and that there isn't enough emotional support for youth. Young people are crying out for help, Mr. Speaker, and a suicide prevention strategy is a very good place to start.

I think it's important to talk about being able to resource that strategy too. So we can look to two places in Canada that seem to have a fairly successful experience thus far. Quebec has been able to lower its death by suicide rate in youth from 15 to 19 dramatically. Rates dropped to 5.8 per 100,000 in 2010 from 21.3 per 100,000 in 1999. So they launched their comprehensive suicide prevention strategy in 1999 and cut its overall suicide rate by half by 2010, and overall rates declined each year by about 2.2 per cent after their strategy was implemented.

But it's important to note actually, as successful as that strategy is, in the FSIN's strategy they point out that there might be challenges with it. And one question that they point out is that "One important question is whether the suicide rate in the

majority Indigenous parts of . . . [Quebec] fell as much as it did in the majority non-Indigenous parts of the province."

They point out that "The question cannot be answered using Coroner's records, because in Québec . . . death certificates are not coded by ethnicity." So they point out that "The question may be answered by the fact that the Health Boards in the majority-Indigenous parts of the province decided not to implement the 'mainstream' suicide prevention strategy in their jurisdictions." And then it goes on in this report that, "The strategy did not . . . reduce rates among Québec's indigenous populations, which had opted out of the provincial strategy."

So I think that that speaks to the imperative of having a multi-faceted, culturally appropriate suicide prevention strategy, when we see the numbers of individuals dying, by and large, or a large percentage, are indigenous.

The Inuit experience, Mr. Speaker, they struggled a little getting off the ground a suicide prevention strategy. They released one in 2010 but it was:

. . . crippled by the Government of Nunavut's failure to allocate sufficient funding to support the workplan that it had agreed to. It took until 2016, and public anger after the jury at a Coroner's Inquest issued recommendations highly critical of the Nunavut government . . . [and wanted the situation] corrected. [So at that point] the Premier declared a state of suicide 'crisis' in the territory, named the world's first Minister Responsible for Suicide Prevention, and created and funded a secretariat . . .

That's the important part too. It's important to work with folks to develop an appropriate, culturally sensitive, multi-faceted prevention strategy that meets the needs in different communities, but funding of that strategy is very important too to actually be able to implement it.

In June 2017 [in Nunavut] the four partner organizations released a detailed five-year implementation plan . . . backed by \$35 million provided by the territorial government — \$16 million of which is earmarked for community programs that support suicide prevention.

So it hasn't been around long enough to see the results from it, Mr. Speaker, but I think the point that I want people and this government to hear from that is that the developing the strategy in concert with people most impacted by death by suicide, which here in Saskatchewan a good bulk of that is young indigenous people, Mr. Speaker. So having that culturally sensitive voice needs to be there, but putting the resources there is absolutely imperative too.

[11:15]

There's a damning quote in the conclusion of the FSIN suicide prevention strategy, and in conclusion they say:

The statistics on the rates of death by suicide by First Nations people in the province are truly shocking. Equally shocking is the fact that government has known about these sharply elevated suicide rates for at least four decades yet has taken essentially no targeted suicide prevention

measures. This failure to take appropriate measures in the face of a devastating public health crisis in First Nations communities in the province is a powerful example of systemic racism.

Without the kind of vigorous, multifaceted, and culturally appropriate suicide prevention measure spelled out in this strategy, there is no reason to believe that First Nations suicide rates will decline by themselves. In recent years they have been increasing.

And again we talk about suicide rates, and I've talked a lot about numbers here, Mr. Speaker, but I am here to say those numbers represent people. They represent often children, young children, teenagers, people in their 20s. Those people have lost their lives and their families have lost an important part of their existence, Mr. Speaker, and I speak from experience. I know all too well what it's like to have a member of your family taken from you, Mr. Speaker, often because of lack of access to supports and services.

So it is absolutely imperative that the government move on this. I think that we only need to look to the FSIN and the strategy that they've put forward. There might be some additional tweaks but I think by and large the FSIN has done a really remarkable job in putting together the strategy. The work is done but it needs the resources and the will to implement. This is about political will, Mr. Speaker. And I know my time is running short here, so I would like to move the motion:

That this Assembly calls on the government to develop and implement a strategy for the prevention of suicides in Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved:

That this Assembly calls on the government to develop and implement a strategy for the prevention of suicide in Saskatchewan.

The Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Biggar-Sask Valley.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate being able to stand today and speak on this issue. I think this is an issue that, you know, the prevention of suicide is an issue that all members can agree with and agree with the members opposite. I hope the member from Saskatoon Riversdale don't mind, but when she was first elected I recall sitting and speaking to her about this very issue for some time, and we all know she's very passionate about this issue, and appreciate her bringing this motion forward.

You know, when I think about suicide . . . I've been very fortunate that I haven't had someone commit suicide that's in my family or close to me. Of course I know many, you know, suicides that have taken place and it's very disturbing to hear when that happens. And I think when we talk about suicides, I think we have to include, naturally, mental health issues and drug addictions. It's all part . . . Not every suicide would be necessarily related to drug addictions but I think many are, and that is something that we need to continue to work at as well.

When you hear about the stories of people committing suicide, if you know the situation or you look into it in depth, it always come up that, if I'd only known. So I think it's very important that we as a society need to take responsibility for, you know, helping people that are in need. It's not all that easy, quite frankly, but we as family members or friends or the community, we should all take some responsibility in helping people that we feel that are at risk.

The one thing that certainly has changed in the last number of years is the stigma around suicide, mental health, and drug addictions, as more and more people are becoming aware of that issue. And I think that's very important that that's taking place, which helps in, you know, the awareness of the issue hopefully will go a long ways to preventing suicides.

You know, I think today with . . . You know, part of the cause of suicides, I think, also is bullying and now cyberbullying. It's hurtful, amazing that that type of thing can cause a suicide, and so it's something else we need to really consider and be part of any strategy in the future. You know, I just look at family members who have suffered with mental health, quite frankly. Fortunate enough they've never committed suicide, but you know, the stress of life and family and business.

So we've done a number of things on the mental health initiatives. I'll just go through a few. Don't have a lot of time, but one thing that our government has done is committed \$25,000 to mobile crisis to operate the Farm Stress Line, a toll-free service that operates 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and the number is 1-800-667-4442. And quite frankly that's not a number . . . It's out there, but it's not a number that a lot of people are aware of and we need to continue to make that very available to the general public.

We only need to look at Agribition and the number of . . . You know, it was a mental health workshop that took place at Agribition. I think those are very good things to help people in agriculture and in the farming community to deal with the stresses and strains of mental health and everyday living.

There was another announcement just recently made by — I just have the article here. "4-H Canada gets major boost to provide mental health services to rural youth" — \$150,000 initiative to help rural youth facing mental health challenges that was announced at Agribition in Regina. So the private sector put that money up. I think we should give credit to the sponsors — the UFA [United Farmers of Alberta] and Corteva Agriscience and Cargill. There's 25,000 young people involved in 4-H, so it's another sign that society has taken steps in order to deal with suicide and mental health issues.

Just to go on to that very topic, you know, the Canadian farmers, as the quote is, "Open up about mental health," and they're not the only ones. And so that's very important that those initiatives are taking place. You know, Saskatchewan government, one of many things in the farm safety program, have committed money to projects that will be funding up to \$25,000 per project to a maximum of \$50,000 per application per year. And so there's a number of things and that's with the Canadian agriculture partnership.

So, Mr. Speaker, so our province certainly has been doing a lot



of work in this area. Can we do more? Well obviously we can do more. And so I just want to outline, my colleagues will expand on a number of these areas, but our government is committed to improving mental health, addiction services across the province, including services that focus on suicide prevention. Suicide obviously is a serious, complex issue, many potential causes. In 2014 our government endorsed the 10-year mental health and addictions action plan. Improving mental health and addiction services as well as enhancing suicide risk assessment were outlined, and that report has been critical to suicide prevention efforts.

And then since then, Mr. Speaker, we have undertaken a number of suicide prevention initiatives as part of our mental health and addictions action plan. We have expanded the number of mental health first aid trainers from 33 to 49 and trained over 2,700 individuals and organizations in mental health first aid. \$500,000 is currently provided annually for police and crisis teams in Saskatoon and Regina. We're also providing approximately an additional \$600,000 in this year's budget to expand the program to North Battleford, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and Yorkton. Fifty thousand dollars is provided annually for Kids Help Phone in the classroom to increase youth awareness of mental health issues and resources made available to them.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority has implemented a suicide prevention protocol in 96 per cent of its mental health and addictions services, and that work is ongoing. We will continue to work with our partners across the province to help reduce the stigma around the suicide and mental health and to assist those who are in need of supports.

We know that, you know, even one suicide is a tragedy, but the rate of suicide in our province has declined. The five-year average from 2006-10 to 2011-15 has declined by 2.5 per cent. Still much more needs to be done.

The member talked a lot about the northern Saskatchewan situation with suicides. You know, the area previously covered by the former northern health region along with the Athabasca Health Authority have all fully implemented suicide prevention protocols in their mental health and addictions services, and they're partnering with the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

Over the last two years, \$800,000 had been provided to help develop the Roots of Hope suicide prevention initiatives in Meadow Lake and La Ronge. These initiatives are community led and are developed using local knowledge and information. And the Ministry of Health as well as northern communities, government agencies, and ministries participate in Embracing Life Committee, which helps bring communities together to coordinate health and promote suicide prevention.

So time is running out very quickly, Mr. Speaker, and I would just like to say . . . It's interesting. On this very issue I got a phone call last night from a mother who was trying to access psychiatric help for her child. And so I don't have time to get into it — others will — but we've certainly increased the number of psychologists and psychiatric professions for children. And there's been a shortfall in Saskatoon, I understand, so we're working towards that.

So, Mr. Speaker, even though I appreciate the member motion, our government . . . I will not be supporting the motion because our government takes the issue of suicide very seriously. And while we recognize and respect the motion put forward by the members opposite, it fails to recognize that our government is taking action to address the issue of suicide by increasing supports for mental health and addictions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on the 75-minute debate. My colleague has moved the motion. I guess before I start I think it's important and I'm going to talk about some of the experiences, some of the families, and the challenges that many of us have faced.

But before I start I want to make it very clear to those front-line workers, the leadership that's out there working back home in different communities to try to bring the attention and the awareness to, you know, all, both levels of government about the crisis that's going on in our province when it comes to suicide, mental health, addictions, that some of us in our communities and our constituencies face on a daily basis.

You see it and you're reminded of it, how painful it is. And I think about some of the families that I have gone to support, and look at them and, you know, just see that they . . . You cannot understand the loss of a loved one who, you know, you hope there was supports. You hope there was some way you could do. You've done all you can to support them. And whether that's addictions, you know, mental health, when your loved one is hurting, when your communities members, your friends, your close friends, your family, your extended family, when they are reaching out for hope and they don't find the resources there, and again as I said earlier, the front-line workers are doing what they can. They do their best and I thank them for that. When people reach out, they're there. But there is so much more that we have to do as a province, as a country, to work together. It's not about politics but the unfortunate reality is we can all, on both sides of the House, see the circumstances that bring people to losing hope.

[11:30]

And I think about young kids, you know, back home. And we look at the rate, you know, amongst First Nations and non-First Nations and the numbers — 26 times for girls, 6 times for boys. I know back home in the constituency, and I know the member from Athabasca as well, we attend a lot of funerals to support community members and families, and it's not easy. It just rips. I have 17 grandkids and I see some of them struggling. And we try to reach out and we try to get help. You do what you can.

But the government can say that they understand and they're working away and they're doing some things. And I'll give them credit. Yes, the federal government is doing a lot too and we have to do more. But the province has an obligation. This is a crisis. I have said I'm not going to play politics, and it's not about politics. The government and the Sask Party government, the people of this province gave you a majority and they said, take care of the province, but that means taking care of the people's health as well, making sure when there's a crisis that you respond as a government.

You know, I have no reason to believe that any member in this House is against anyone when it comes to addictions, mental health, and suicide. But we have to do a better job. Losing one young person, losing one life because a person has no hope . . . They just feel hopeless. To see families struggle, and to watch them ask that question, and they want to know why. Why did my loved one want to end their life? Why did they want to leave their family? It's so hard. And I have watched it time and time again.

So we have to do it better, and it needs a partnership. Talk about a strategy. We talk about coming together, meaningful. You know, I see FSIN, the great work they're doing on, you know, a document that they put together, a report and a strategy that I think gives us opportunity and hope to work together with federal government, municipal government, provincial government, if there's a will. And sometimes I hear governments saying, there's more work to be done. Yes, let me reassure you. From the families that I have talked to, you have, as a government, more work to do. We as a province have more work to do. We as a country have more work to do when it comes to this crisis of suicide, addictions, and mental health. We have to get it right. We have to. We have to work together. We have to come up with a strategy that will work. And I hope the government . . . And it's unfortunate the government is saying it will not support this motion because they've done so much already, if that's what I've heard members say.

But at the end of the day, I think about Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the wellness centre. They're working hard, and I give them credit — Chief Tammy Cook-Searson and La Ronge Band chief and council and their Jeannie Bird health clinic and the organization there. They have their own. I watch what they're doing and what they're trying to achieve, working with the federal government, working with the province. I'm hoping the Premier and the government will commit to funding and working in a meaningful way with the wellness centre that they're trying to . . . The plan is there. Everything's together. I'm hoping when the chief and the band come here and they ask the government . . . And I know there's been meetings, and I know they'll have . . . So they'll want support. I hope this government will give the support that's needed to support those young people at La Ronge Band. And it's not just going to be for La Ronge Band members. I've actually talked to the chief and I've said, so is this for just First Nations on reserve? It's for all northern citizens could access it. If they have a bed opening, they would do that. So that's very positive and I hear that, that they're willing to work.

So if we are saying that we're willing to work on some of these things, again it goes back to priorities and government of the day. Again it's the Sask Party government right now. You have the ability to move on some of these crises. You have the ability to say, well you know, we know there's more work to be done.

And I just want to reassure members on the opposite and members of both sides. Families who are struggling and families who are going through a crisis of addictions, mental health, suicide do not want to hear representatives say to them, when it's their loved one who's passed away, when it's their loved one who's suffering, oh, we know there's more work to be done. They honestly do not want to hear that. What they want to hear is, we're going to do this, we're going to do this, we're going to work together. So I hope the government will take the initiative and work with people and work with organizations, work with all

levels of government, work with FSIN, work with the Métis Nation, work with whoever will come to the table with them in a meaningful way to say, look, as a province we have a crisis. Whether you're in rural and I know whether you're in the North, whether you're in urban, it doesn't matter. Those families that lose loved ones to addictions, to mental health, to suicide, they don't care about the politics. They really don't. They just want us to work together to fix it as a society like we should be, respecting one another but making sure that we're taking care of the most vulnerable.

And I can tell you, northern Saskatchewan has suffered. It has. Our children. We have some of the highest rates of poverty, some of those challenges. We wonder why individuals, why young people . . . Because of hope. Look at their lifestyle. It's not their choice. Look at our province, our country. We have so much wealth, so much opportunity. No child should live in poverty. No child should go to bed hungry wondering where their next meal's going to come from, in a province that has done so well. And I am proud to call this province my home. I am proud to say I want to make sure at the end of the day my grandkids have a good quality of life. But governments come in and they decide on what their priorities will be. And the Government of Saskatchewan has made their priorities, and we're hearing people saying and asking . . . And on behalf of the constituents, on behalf of people that I represent, I'm asking this government: make it your focus. Try. Do what you can. Find some dollars. I know that you can find dollars. And yes, I know, back and forth we go, back and forth, back and forth. Oh, you spent on this. This is your priority; that's in ours. It's the right thing to do for our province, Mr. Speaker.

We have to get this right, Mr. Speaker. We can't afford to lose one more life to addictions, mental health, and to suicide. So I hope, I hope my colleagues on both sides of the House will come together. And the government, you've been asked to take care of the people. Please, I ask you — your budget's coming up — please take care of those families that need your support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the members opposite for bringing forth this very relevant and sensitive topic and issue because, not only across Saskatchewan and North America but globally, the world is grappling with this issue and trying to address the problem of how to prevent, how to have preventive initiatives, and what is being done today.

The opposition gave us a motion that reads:

This Assembly calls on the government to develop and implement a strategy for the prevention of suicide in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government response will be this: our government takes the issue of suicide very seriously. And while we recognize and respect the motion put forward by the members opposite, it fails to recognize that our government is taking action to address the issue of suicide by increasing supports for mental health and addiction services.

While this motion raises this very important issue, Mr. Speaker,

as it fails to recognize the government's efforts to improve access to mental health and addiction supports and suicide prevention, we cannot support the motion put forward by the members opposite. Our hearts do go out to anyone who has lost a loved one, a member of their community.

And we're all affected by suicide. Mr. Speaker, my own family . . . I go out to the members opposite. I was listening to their story of how they lost a relative. I too have lost a relative, a very close relative. And so I know in a time of crisis, that pebble is thrown; the ripple goes out; it affects so many people. And for those of us that have to go on, we have to be the strong ones. We have to go on living. I have to tell my grandchildren why did this happen. It affects us all.

So suicide is a very serious, complex issue with many potential causes, as we all know — addictions and poverty and mental health. And it leaves their own loved ones with mental health issues of our own — survival guilt, what more could we have done, could have, would have, why, why did it happen.

But, Mr. Speaker, our government does recognize this very important issue that is affecting everyone. We have increased spending on mental health and addiction services by 60 per cent. I know it's a number. It is real and this is what we're doing to address this issue that is affecting all of us in the Assembly.

There is no family that has not been touched by this, whether it's a relative, an extended relative, a friend, a neighbour. But I encourage you, please reach out. There are numbers. There are phone numbers. There are farm crisis line numbers for those that know they need help. And no one has a monopoly on pain. We all share in pain.

We know mental health and addiction issues are a concern across the province, especially in the North as we've heard. And right now we spend 5 per cent of Saskatchewan's health care budget on mental health services. We've got funding for four adult and two child psychiatrists based in Saskatoon and Prince Albert to provide services for northern Saskatchewan. We do talk about different pockets of the province.

But, Mr. Speaker, if a person is in crisis, whether in mental or unbearable physical pain, suicide may seem like the only answer at the time. And we know that's not the solution, to leave the living friends to bear the burden. But our government supports a host of other initiatives and programs that are part of a suicide prevention strategy in other jurisdictions, such as mental health literacy programs, online resources, training for first responders, employee assistance programs, and counselling and crisis intervention programs in schools.

And anyone who is dealing in law enforcement, EMS [emergency medical services], firemen, police officers, we know experience post-traumatic stress disorder, and it is real. So we want anyone experiencing PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] to know that supports are there for them as well. They've got free counselling to all employees. And if you feel the need to go talk to someone, the program provides immediate and confidential help for any work, life, or health concern.

So individuals who experience trauma as a result of crime may also access funding for counselling through victim services. We

have the Workers' Compensation Board, the Farm Stress Line, Mr. Speaker. Because I'm a former 4-H leader and a rancher and farmer, I talk to a lot of people in rural Saskatchewan. And calls to the Farm Stress Line are answered by a non-profit, community-based agency. And this can help with the farm difficulties by providing support for farmers and ranchers.

We know rural farmers deserve credit for working hard to meet the challenges such as weather, pests, the high-input costs. And when you're feeling chest pain and insomnia, you can't eat, you can't relax, you're becoming depressed, you withdraw, maybe substance abuse, it's okay to reach out. It's okay to say, I need some help.

[11:45]

We know the health professionals say, well exercise; have a balanced diet; avoid alcohol, drugs; don't isolate yourself; talk to someone. But if everything you're doing is not helping, we do have a Farm Stress Line and we want you to know you're not alone. There's 24 hours per day, seven days a week, we have toll-free 1-800-667-4442 Farm Stress Line. We know it's very important.

Mr. Speaker, bullying is never okay. Speak to a trained volunteer if you're in crisis need. If you can speak to someone on the phone, through LiveChat, or a loved one, you're not alone. You are not forgotten. So please reach out. We've all had personal connections to someone. As I said, my own relative took her life and it's very painful and raw for me. We always have un-answers.

But again as a former 4-H leader and rancher, I was very interested in seeing the growing conversation regarding mental health with a number of groups to team up with 4-H Canada, to launch a two-year mental and physical health program for young people in rural areas. And the first year will centre around resources for struggling youth and teaching people to recognize the signs of distress, followed by a year of focus on physical well-being and nutrition. "It's paramount that young people know how to navigate the challenges they face so they can succeed. It's the difference between surviving and thriving," 4-H Canada CEO [chief executive officer] Shannon Benner said.

So please call 811. There is hope for anyone that's struggling. For far too long we would always say, suck it up. You can do better. Pull up your boot straps. But we know that doesn't work. So progress does take time and I'm glad to see the stigma around mental illness is being put out to pasture, so to speak, in the agriculture world.

We do have more mental health initiatives in agriculture. We have a mobile crisis to operate the Farm Stress Line for 25,000. We have 112,000 to the Agricultural Health and Safety Network for improving mental health. We know the stress of raising livestock and grain and families. So please reach out.

The FSIN suicide prevention strategy, I want to thank Vice-chief David Pratt for his report and for all this work on the important issue. It's an important document that will help current and future suicide prevention practices in the province.

So I want to thank everyone for this discussion. That is very

timely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's an honour today to participate in the 75-minute debate here with regards to the motion moved by my colleague:

That this Assembly calls on the government to develop and implement a strategy for the prevention of suicide in Saskatchewan.

And I think that's a great motion put forward because it's non-political and it talks about the importance of having prevention of suicide within our province.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked to some front-line workers and they indicated that they are so busy trying to put out fires that they can't even focus on preventative work or assessments. And that's so disappointing because they know that there could be a lot of work done in order to make sure that clients have the services and the supports that they need before it gets to a point of suicide. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that is a really important aspect of this motion that we need to highlight, and I'm happy to stand here too.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity for over a decade to be a mental health social worker. And so at the time when I went into mental health, social workers were trained by psychologists on how to provide clinical services. And I had the great opportunity to be trained by Mr. Al Adams, who was a psychologist for well over 30 years in Prince Albert. And he was retiring at the time that I was starting up as a new social worker, so he provided me a lot of mentorship.

And at that time the therapists took turns doing intake calls, Mr. Speaker, and walk-in when people came to the clinic. And it was actually quite . . . not very frequent when a client would come that was actively suicidal. And so there was a couple of times that I had the opportunity to sit with Al and watch him do those suicide risk assessments.

And I sit back and think about how that was something that was quite rare at that time, and now how it's so frequent, and the years of working in the service. And we were always allowed to have the flexibility so that if we had a client who was suicidal, that we would be able to see them more often and monitor them with regards to safety and their safety plan. Where now front-line workers are saying they don't necessarily have that opportunity because of their high caseloads, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that there's just so many cases, the increase of cases, and the increase of need.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, every week I hear of individuals who have lost their life to suicide or attempted suicide. And I find that very surprising because . . . I don't have the actual evidence, but I just hear it from family members or people who reach out to me to let me know what is happening.

And this week alone, I personally heard of three families who are mourning the loss of a loved one due to their loss with suicide, and two families who are trying to understand why their loved

one felt so desperate that they attempted to end their lives. And their loved ones are in the hospital right now getting services, but it's unfortunate it got to that point. So five families only in this week alone.

And we know with the mental health field that right now is a really serious time crunch for individuals who are struggling. We've got seasonal depression that's happening. Then we also have people who are really stressed with academics in school. And then we have Christmas coming and financial stress and relationship stress — all these attributing factors that put people really at risk. And so we're going to hear more of that.

And I was sitting here while I was writing down some remarks for this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that since leaving mental health in spring of 2016 — it's only been two and a half years — I've lost a few clients to suicide. And it really hits you hard and makes you wonder if they were getting the supports that they needed. And so it affects everybody, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We were talking about . . . I think most people in this Assembly have been impacted by a loved one that maybe have lost their lives to suicide, and my family is no exception to that rule, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My cousin, her son had schizophrenia and lost his life to suicide. And I was really proud of them, though, because they were upfront and honest about it. They made sure that, at the funeral, it was discussed. They made sure that the donations went back to a mental health association. And sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not necessarily the case when we're dealing with mental health. Oftentimes people want to hide that fact in their families or in their lives. When someone breaks their leg, everybody's rushing to go sign their cast. But as soon as you tell someone, "I struggle with depression," and "I think about losing my life," people don't know how to react to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it really makes people uncomfortable. But I'm happy to see that with more public awareness that more people are feeling comfortable to have these discussions.

We've seen more people who are in the limelight, leaders in our community who are speaking out. I heard Chief Tammy Cook-Searson talk about her struggles with depression and grief and how she's had to access services. And I was so happy to hear her share that story because the more we share these stories, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the more people will access services.

But the issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we have people who need these services, and we don't have enough people who are able to provide it, and we don't know if we're not doing things the way we should be. And that's exactly what a suicide strategy would be there for, is to evaluate the services that we have, look at what we maybe could be doing a little bit differently, or contacting these individuals who have had suicidal ideation or families who have lost a loved one and see where the issues were, where the barriers were.

And we could sit here all day talking about this, but unless we go out there and talk to the people who really have lived experience and the front-line workers who deal with this all the time and say where could we help, where could we do something different, nothing's going to change. And we can't afford to have nothing change.

We know suicides are 100 per cent preventable. We know there's oftentimes a lot of social determinants that impact suicidal behaviours. We have all this evidence and research that we can gather. We have the statistics and we also have some people. Like we have FSIN, who did an excellent job with developing the suicide prevention strategy that they did. So we have a framework to work on. We have the federal suicide strategy to work on. We have a lot of resources at our fingertips that we could start utilizing to develop this. We just need to get working on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so when I looked at FSIN's suicide prevention strategy, I feel that I need to talk about how we know that the reports of the suicide rates in our province are hard to determine. Because what we see on the front lines and what we hear are the stats don't seem to really necessarily match. And even May of this year they indicate the Minister of Health tabled a document with regards to the number of suicides in Saskatchewan, but they conflicted with the numbers that were counted by the Office of the Chief Coroner. We know we haven't been doing a good enough job, but what we do know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that those numbers are high, and if we're not actually counting them the way we should be, they're even higher than what we have on paper. And that means that we're in a crisis here.

We're definitely in a crisis. We have health care professionals, community leaders, families, patients, law enforcement officers who are all saying this, and we need to have action now. We need to stop suicide, and the only way we can do that is if we have a comprehensive suicide prevention strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in which the government needs to invest.

And yes, there'll be a financial investment, but the financial benefits will sure outweigh the investment and we will see that. And why would we not want to make that financial investment so that we could have healthier, happier communities and we don't see these losses any more.

And so with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to have stand here and given my thoughts. So thank you.

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

**Mr. Goudy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I speak to the motion, I just want to say that this is very close to my heart, as well as I see it is to everyone who's here today. And you know, listening to the other side as well as people on this side discuss suicide, it goes to show that it's not just one side or the other that's concerned, but it's all of us who have an enemy that seems to be an elusive enemy that has taken many of our loved ones from us far too early. And, Mr. Speaker, though it's common in times of difficulty and crisis and loss that there can be blaming and pointing of fingers and thinking that more should have been done, when we hear of this senseless loss and despair in the lives of people around us — the ones we love — we should be emboldened to fight together.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I know the feeling of wanting to blame and think more should be done. I, a few years ago, lost my best friend. He and I got along like brothers. And we were both building houses at the time. And I never would have guessed that he was in a bad spot mentally. And the evening that he took his life, I was working on skid-steering. It was going to freeze that

night, so I was wanting to get it finished up. So I came in at 11 o'clock at night, 11:30 that night, and I checked my phone and I had a number of texts and phone calls. And I just figured, you know, I'll just call him in the morning. And so 5 o'clock the next morning I got a phone call that I wouldn't want anyone to have to take. And you know, so we all know what it's like. And to blame and to question ourselves and others, we all know this is an issue that needs to be addressed.

[12:00]

You know, I'm so excited to be a part of a government that realizes this problem and has put together a plan to deal with mental health and addictions. And you know, I'm glad to see the people on the other side of the House are motivated; we're all motivated to do something. Because this is an elusive enemy, Mr. Speaker, that has been very difficult to deal with in the past. And you know, I want to say on behalf of the health ministers here and others, it's not just a health issue, seeing everyone unite together to fight this problem.

You know, I was shocked at the numbers. You know, my budget in my house was pretty small. And standing here in the government today, \$290 million this year to be spent on mental health and addictions or 335, I guess, on the combined mental health and addictions. That's staggering. To see the partnerships that they've put together in working together with Education and the money, the \$11 million of putting those resources in the schools and working together with our First Nations and the FSIN, and some of the initiatives that I've seen or heard about in La Ronge and Meadow Lake, you know, to bring hope.

And you know, hopelessness is a tough thing to fight on your own, Mr. Speaker. And our government is just part of society's . . . Suicide is a systemic, societal problem that government, on their own, can't handle and can't solve. But we need to do all that we can to put those measures in place. And I just want to mention the thing that excites me most is this 811 number. I know, it sounds so simple. You know, it's not a big cost, but what a simple thing to have 811. We all know what 911 is, but 811, if you or someone you love or someone you know is suffering and you can see that there's a problem here — such a simple process.

You know, when a person is cloudy in their mind and it's obvious that when you get to the place where you're considering taking your life, something's broken on the inside. Something's gone wrong, and you need someone outside of yourself to help you. And to be able to just phone that number or to phone it on behalf of others and then to plug in to all the government programs, it's a wonderful thing. But, Mr. Speaker, what excites me in combination with that 811 number is the amount of money that our government's putting into mental health first aid training. And I don't know who came up with this initiative, but it's a great thing.

You know, I remember when I was in grade 7 or 8 — I can't remember which grade it was — but I remember taking first aid. And they gave all the examples of, you know, you get stabbed with a screwdriver; don't pull it out. You know, somehow these things . . . And you know how to wrap your sock or somebody's shirt and take them into the hospital. You knew what to do — phone 911.

We, as people in this society, are the boots on the ground. We're the front-line people. And that's what the hope for Saskatchewan is. It's not just resting on government. Government needs to do our part, and I'm glad to be a part of a government that is doing those things. But empowering people to help out their neighbour . . . You know, in my life, I lost my friend, but there are other cases in my life, Mr. Speaker, that I'm glad to be able to say that I was able to intervene in their lives.

I remember I was in Red Deer, Alberta. And we would go in Tuesday nights and Thursday nights and we would every week go to the remand centre. And one day we'd play soccer with the guys or basketball or whatever we'd do, and then Thursday night we'd sit around and just talk about real-life issues. And so one day they asked us, would you guys come in and speak to the adults on Sundays at the remand? We said sure, yes.

And one of the Sundays I spoke to the guys. And so I got a phone call afterwards from the remand centre saying, one of the guys asked if you could visit him. Would you mind coming in? So I went in that week. They made an appointment and I sat down with the guy. And he said, you know what? I had no hope. I'd lost hope. And I had been storing up pills and I was going to take those pills and I had enough to end my life. But he said, you came in on Sunday and you spoke. He said, I thought I'd just like to talk to you.

So we talked and it was funny how the conversation went. But by the end of our conversation, he was excited about life and he was going to go before the judge and not just confess to the thing that he had done that he was waiting for trial on. But he said, you know what, Todd? I'm going to say everything I've done. Let's get it out of there. And the guy had hope. He had hope once again for a future.

You know, another time a fellow phoned me. He said, I just wanted to say goodbye. And I said, what do you mean? He said no, I'm going to take my life and I just wanted to phone and say goodbye. I said no, you're not going to say goodbye. And so anyways, after a long discussion he hung up, and I told him I was going to come and try and find him. We got stuck in the field. Couldn't go through with it. And so anyways, we were able to discuss and plug him in with some of our government programs. This fellow ended up dying of natural causes later on in life.

One after the next, Mr. Speaker. A friend of mine from high school came on a job site and walked across the field and said, I've drove all the way from Winnipeg. And he says, I was going to take my life today but I want to talk to you first. To be able to plug these people in, Mr. Speaker, to have the resources to be able to . . . We are — not just the government — we are the people of this province that are the boots on the ground. We are the ones who support.

If you look at the Canadian government, what they've said are, what are the things that can help prevent suicide? It's on their website here. It says, "positive mental health and well-being."

We as parents . . . You know, I looked at the cystic fibrosis families. They spend like three and a half hours a day with their kids just to keep them healthy and alive. You know, can we as parents not just work with our kids and our neighbours and our friends to keep them in good mental health and well-being?

A sense of hope, purpose, belonging, and meaning; social support; healthy self-esteem; asking for help if you have thoughts of suicide; a sense of belonging from family, friends, and your society — these are the things. This is us. This isn't just government.

And you know, I thought I could handle . . . You know, as a young man, I went down to California, the prairie boy, you know, not a lot of water. We went to the ocean. They said, well be careful about the tide. It'll pull you out. And I was like, well whatever, I could swim out. Everybody else was on the beach, you know. I was going to wander in. So I went in, and I'll never forget, got up to about my neck. All of sudden the sand starts pulling out from under my feet, and a feeling of panic came across me. This is deeper than I can handle. And I had to fight for my life.

You know I've been with people who've gone through this fight. And we understand mental health, drug addictions — these are things that are too great for us on our own. We need to stand together as a society. And I'm just proud to be a part of a government that stands with the people. And so I'm glad both sides of the . . . I can't support the proposal, but I just do want to reach out a hand across this way and say, let's work together for the people of our province. And I'm glad to be a part of this government. Thanks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Ministries across our government have been taking serious steps towards providing better mental health services for people across Saskatchewan; for example, the Ministry of Agriculture has the farm safety program. This program provides funding for organizations to promote awareness of farm safety, including education and training on mental health issues affecting farm safety.

The Farm Stress Line is also available to help connect individuals with the appropriate services. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Do you support the work that our government has done to ensure supports for our farmers and ranchers?

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course we support that work for making sure that we have mental health supports for farmers, and we're happy to see that that's going forward. But we can't neglect the fact that in our province indigenous boys are six times higher for the rate of suicide between the ages of 10 and 19, and indigenous girls are 26 higher than the national rate for suicide between the ages of 10 and 19. We can't neglect that fact. And what's this government's plan on addressing that issue?

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, according to the Canadian Coalition for Agricultural Safety and Rural Health, the suicide rate for farmers is more than double that of the general

population. In recent years we've become more and more aware of how difficult it can be to access mental health services in rural communities.

Does the member for Saskatchewan Rivers agree that a suicide prevention strategy could be a good way to help address this troubling gap in services outside of major cities?

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

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the member opposite for asking me the question, but as a province we'll continue to work with partners across the province to help reduce the stigma around suicide and mental health for all of the people of Saskatchewan. We want to help assist those in need. And suicide is a very complex and serious issue, so we want to embrace all of Saskatchewan citizens and work together to help reduce the stigma and the pain and the grief that . . . [inaudible] . . . has. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is committed to improving mental health and addictions services across the province. That is why our government dedicated approximately 290 million to mental health care services and initiatives annually. That is a 60 per cent increase in funds allocated since 2007, but yet the members opposite opposed the budget and requested an amendment that would deny the funding to these crucial supports.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Cumberland. Why did your party oppose these critically needed supports for the citizens of the province?

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me be very clear. Government has an opportunity to present a budget on priorities that they say, and I talked about that earlier, about their priority. And sometimes the opposition and the people that we represent are not happy and say that the government's not doing enough in certain areas. And very clearly, people have made it clear that this government is not doing enough when it comes to mental health, addictions, and you need to start doing more. So my answer to that would be, put more money. You have an opportunity, the budget coming up. You have everyone telling you it's a crisis. Please respond.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member from Sask Rivers talked about 5 per cent of our health budget being spent on mental health care. Is she aware that we are at the bottom of the pack when it comes to mental health spending of the provinces, and does she really believe the resources in Saskatchewan are there when people need them?

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

Saskatchewan Rivers.

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have an additional 83 million in other ministries, but that's why we are aware of what's happening. We've increased spending on mental health and addiction services by 54 per cent since 2007. This includes increasing the number of physicians, nurses, mental health therapists, psychiatrists. Everyone is practising in the province to address this issue, and I believe we are making headway. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government recently announced the creation of the police and crisis team, PACT, in the communities of Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and North Battleford. This new program will improve how front-line policing services respond to people in mental health crisis situations. It pairs mental health workers with police officers to ensure that there is the right type of care for the people who need it.

A simple question to the member from Cumberland: do you agree that the government has taken a step in the right direction to ensuring services for people with complex mental health challenges?

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. I think every time and any time that you come up with new programs and programs that will help Saskatchewan residents, that's a good thing. We've already established that. But you have a lot more work to do because families are struggling and they're asking you, as the government, to please respond in the budget and give them the supports the front-line workers need. Once and for all, let's work together and get this area that's so crucial and a crisis, let's meet those challenges and help the families that are still suffering.

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

[12:15]

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The member from Biggar-Sask Valley said today that we all need to come together to support folks who are contemplating suicide, and he cited friends, family, and community.

My question for him is, don't you think that the government has a role in providing support as well? And do you believe that mental health care is health care and should be publicly provided as part of our universal health care system?

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you very much for the question. Absolutely. I just omitted saying naturally the governments

would be part of that strategy. There's no doubt about it.

What we've done as a government, you know, our government is committed to improving mental health care services across our province. And we currently spend 5 per cent of the Saskatchewan's health budget, or \$290 million in mental health care services, an increase of 60 per cent since 2007. This number also doesn't include the mental health services provided through other ministries. We know that more needs to be done, and that is why our goal is to reach 7 per cent of the Health budget as the province's finances improve.

And if I may, you know, the member from Melfort really outlined, you know, the commitment that we as family, friends, neighbours, community, and I'm sorry I missed out the government side's role in this. And we all need to come together to help prevent suicides.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As stated in this House, our government extends our hearts and condolences to those who have been affected by suicide. And I must say that both sides of the House today, you know, talked emotionally and passionately about mental health because mental health, as has been explained and talked about, affects each and every family, each and every individual.

And so I think that today has been I think a very emotional, a very important day to be able to have this discussion. Because we know that suicide is a serious, complex issue and has many potential causes. There isn't one reason and there isn't one solution.

Since 2007 we have increased spending on mental health and addiction services by 54 per cent. And as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's fairly significant. With this increased number of physicians, nurses, mental health therapists, psychologists practising within the province, Mr. Speaker, my question is to the member from Prince Albert Northcote. Do you agree that the increase in mental health supports is a positive step to help preventing suicides in Saskatchewan?

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, thoughts and prayers and condolences are nice, and I'm sure they're meant to be sincere. But words only go so far. The stats could not be clearer. First Nations girls are dying and they are just not statistics.

So my question would be back, we know that other provinces and countries have implemented a suicide prevention plan and the rates of suicides decreased substantially and drastically. So why wouldn't this government not consider a plan like that as well?

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

### Motion No. 1 — Impact of Bill C-69

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Hindley.]

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

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour for me to rise today to speak to the motion by my esteemed colleague from Swift Current. And the motion reads:

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.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to speak to this motion in a second but I do want to say how difficult it is to rise to a motion like this after the debate we've just completed. We're into a totally different subject matter, and it's always very difficult to change tack like that.

But I do want to speak, if I may, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a number of things with respect to this motion. In particular, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to reflect just briefly on the value of the energy industry in Canada, and I'll speak specifically to the bill in a few minutes. But I think it's important that we reflect for just a moment on how important energy and mining are to Canada in general. And I won't speak to Alberta because we all know that it's such a critical piece to the Alberta economy, but I will speak to the impact of the energy sector on the rest of Canada, just to highlight and emphasize how critical it is to the economies and to jobs in each and every part of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Canadian economic contribution of the oil and natural gas industry: to British Columbia, the 10-year projection, \$236 billion; to Saskatchewan, \$160 billion; Manitoba — we don't tend to think of Manitoba in this context but \$28 billion; Ontario, \$153 billion; Quebec, \$45 billion; Newfoundland and Labrador, \$103 billion. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can see that province after province after province is critically affected by the impact of the energy industry in Canada.

In fact in Saskatchewan alone we are number two in the amount of oil produced in the Canadian provinces, accounting for 12 per cent of Canada's oil production, which equates to 485,000 barrels per day; \$721 million in payments the industry made for the use of Saskatchewan oil and natural gas resources in fiscal 2017-2018; and the industry spent, on exploration and development, \$4.2 billion in 2017. Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly that speaks to incredible investment, a huge number of jobs in the province and across the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to talk specifically to the bill in a couple of minutes, but I do want to say that the pipeline industry, specifically in Canada, has been regulated since 1949. And it's been regulated and monitored and measured very, very closely. It's important to recognize that, because we have today approximately 825 000 kilometres of gathering transmission and distribution lines in Canada. And the United States also has, by



the way, 305,000 miles of interstate and intrastate gathering and transmission lines. So the existence of pipelines is not something new. It's not something that we're going to start a new process on. These have been around for a long, long time and are absolutely critical to the rest of our industry, in fact, to our very existence in our homes every single day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a quick pop quiz for you. I found a headline and it says, "Prime Minister Trudeau slaps tax on oil." I wonder, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which Prime Minister Trudeau would have done that? Well in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, October 1980, that was the headline: "Prime Minister Trudeau slaps tax on oil."

So I wondered then what happened in 2018. Prime Minister Trudeau himself said . . . Sorry, January 2017:

We can't shut down the oil sands tomorrow. We need to phase them out. We need to manage the transition off our dependence on fossil fuels. That is going to take time [he continued] and in the meantime we have to manage that transition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, clearly Trudeau 1 had every intention to shut down the oil industry in Canada. Trudeau 2 is continuing his father's legacy. And that's shameful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, absolutely shameful, and we need to recognize that the federal Liberal government is clearly on track to do everything possible to harm our energy industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak to some things in the bill itself. But first I want to recognize that there are many, many issues that I could speak to. I've been doing some research and reading on this, but I thought it might be interesting to just look into Bill C-69. I think we can kind of get a sense of what the tone and nature of the bill is by the use of words within the Act itself.

Now within the Act we would obviously expect to see words like "the minister," right. The minister has certain powers and authorities and so on. So the word "minister" was used 575 times in the Act. We would fully expect that. Power. The word "power" was used 428 times in the Act. We would fully expect that.

By the way, the Act is 370 pages long. So it's a good night read and I would encourage everybody to actually read it. I have. But it's equally interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what other words were used in the Act and what words were not and to what extent they were used.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the word "mining." This Act is intended to cover a broad range of things and the word "mining" was only used eight times, eight times in this bill. Interestingly the word "pipeline" was used 345 times, 345 times, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Interesting as well, the word "environment" was used 191 times. Remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have a Prime Minister and a Minister of the Environment who have day in and day out repeatedly stated that we're trying to balance the environment and the economy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the word "environment" was used 191 times, the word "economy," zero. The word "economy" is not in the bill. Speaks volumes, I would suggest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the word "opportunity." We want to talk

about building the opportunities for Canada, growing the economy of Canada. The word "opportunity," 29 times; the word "social" in the context of social engineering in the Act, 19 times.

Interestingly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act is built around a number of other things. Gender, the word "gender" is in this particular Act which is regulating industry. The word "gender" is entered into the Act six times, the word "indigenous" 174 times. The word "confidential" . . . This is supposed to be an open, transparent government? The word "confidential" is in the Act 33 times.

Mr. Speaker, other words that are not in the Act, nothing, no reference — this is a ministry and a federal government that's talking about renewable energy all the time — wind, zero times; solar, zero times. And yet gas is 144 times used in the Act and oil, the word "oil," 130 times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is absolutely no question what the intent of this Act is, no question whatsoever. The intent of this Act is to harm our oil and gas industry, and it is to regulate out of business the many parts of our industry and our opportunity going forward.

[12:30]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see that my time is . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sorry? Okay. I can go on for . . . I could probably go on for a couple of hours, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I should add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just real quickly, that a number of First Nations groups have spoken out strongly against this bill. The arguments against Bill C-69 range across industry, the Canadian mining association, the former president of Encana, numerous bodies across the country, the . . . A number of senators from Quebec have spoken out against this bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it goes without saying that this bill is sort of the final step of a long series of piling on against industry, particularly in Western Canada. We've been trying to deal with, obviously, the carbon tax and many other issues that the federal government have enacted. But I do want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the motion put forward is a very good motion. And at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move we adjourn debate on this motion. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Canora-Pelly 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 has moved that this House adjourn. Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:32.]



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