



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

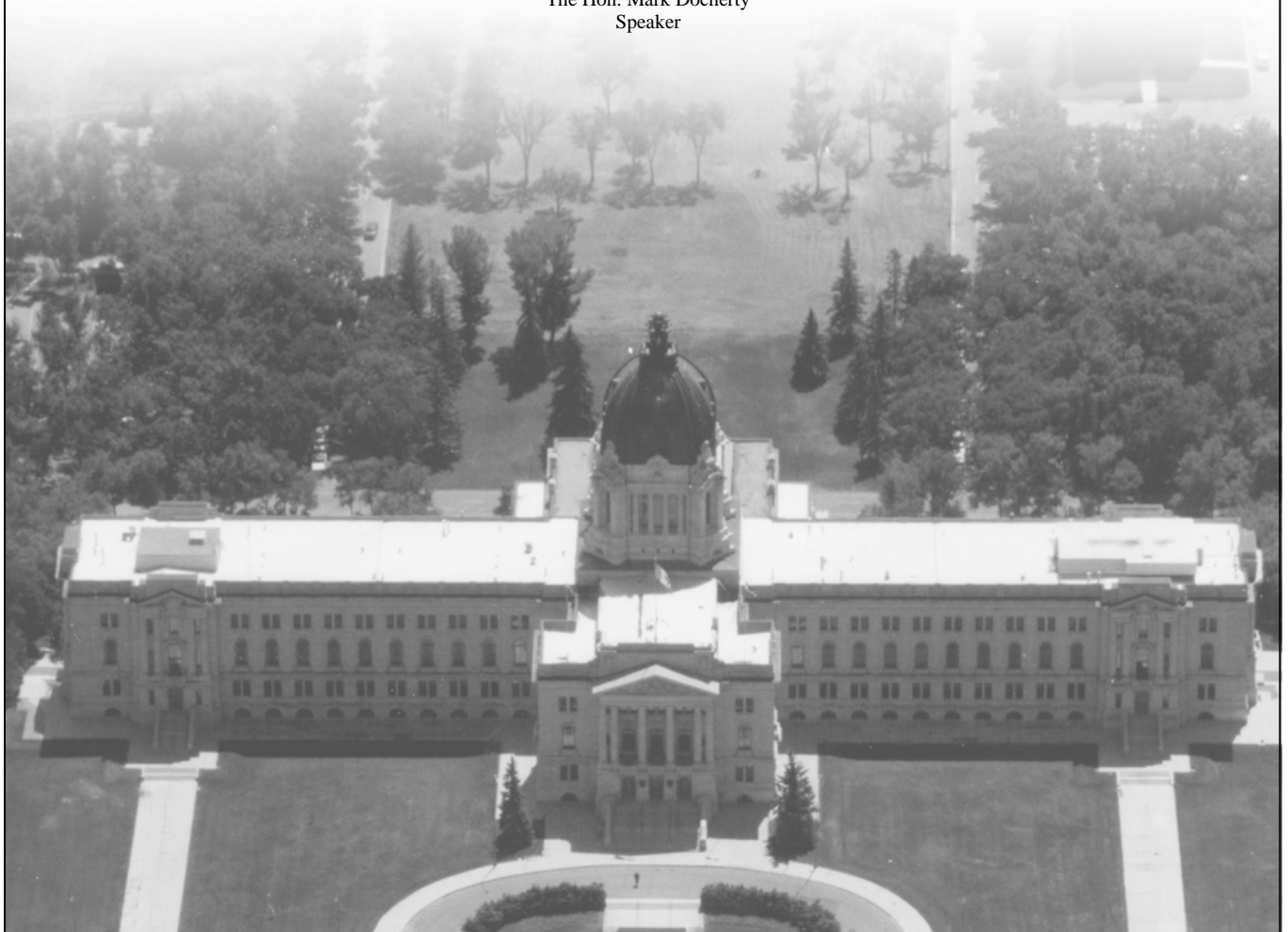
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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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**

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

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

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a great pleasure for me, through you and to all the members of this Assembly, to introduce some very special guests with us in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery we have Mrs. Jodie Hetherington from the community of Moose Jaw where her and her husband, Mark, are successful farmers in that community and great advocates for the province of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan agriculture, and the community of Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker.

They're good friends with the member from Lumsden-Morse as well as the Minister of Advanced Education. And today we have, accompanying Jodie, friends from the great state of Montana, the city of Whitefish actually, a community many of us in this Assembly have either been to or are very familiar with. With us today, with Jodie today, Mr. Speaker, are Melissa Meuter and her children, Zane and Devin. Welcome.

Mr. Speaker, Jodie and her husband, Mark, as I said, they're active in the community. They're huge boosters of the Moose Jaw Warriors. And the Warriors are at home tonight, I might add, where they have a little bit of work to do, Mr. Speaker. They've found themselves, like we did as Raiders last year, Raiders fans last year, right? Where's my P.A. [Prince Albert] guy there? Mr. Speaker, they've found themselves down three games to none in this series, and you can bet that you'll find Jodie and many other fans in the stands at the Mosaic Place in Moose Jaw, cheering for a comeback and cheering on their team.

Mr. Speaker, we're very grateful for the presence of Jodie here today as well as the Meuters visiting from Whitefish, Montana. And I look forward to meeting with them later this afternoon. And I ask all members to welcome them to this Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Premier stole most of my lines, unfortunately. I was going to also talk about big boosters in the community, but it's my great pleasure to also welcome my good friend, Jodie Hetherington. Her and her husband, Mark, have been friends of ours for a long time. Their three kids, of course, we know quite well: Lukas, Alyssa, and Jacob. And of course her father-in-law, Doug Hetherington, was also a very prominent booster in Moose Jaw and someone who I got to know prior to getting to know them. She's a bit of a political junkie, and I am really pleased to see that you brought friends from Montana here today to observe our legislature. I want to welcome you all and enjoy all members in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join the Premier and the minister in welcoming Jodie to her legislature. The Hetherington family's been friends with the Meilis for a long time, and her sister Kerri was in medical school at the same time as I was and is now a practising physician in Moose Jaw. Great to see you here in your legislature, and I ask all the members to join me in welcoming them.

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

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, in the west gallery, I would like to welcome some good constituents and friends to this side, George and Esther Haas of Langenburg. They've been long-time directors of our constituency association, and George was actually honoured several years ago by the Carnegie Hero Fund, which recognizes those who risked their lives to an extraordinary degree while attempting to save lives. In fact, he was actually written up in the "Drama in Real Life" in the *Reader's Digest* at one time.

Anyway, just an interesting little factoid today. So I thought I would like everyone to welcome George and Esther to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, we are joined today by several of my constituents. They're from College Park II. They're seated in both the east gallery and here on the Chamber floor as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to name out all of their names if possible. The staff that are accompanying them — always wonderful to see them — it's Alynn Skalicky and Sandra Kikulwe. And then the residents here today are Mary Irwin; Shelleen Ross, although I don't think I see her; Harvey MacDonald; Sheila Jameson; Sally McCallion; Martha Marbach; Ivor Brown; Weldon Moffatt; John McClement; Win Miller; and Miriam Richert.

They're here today for a tour of the Legislative Assembly. They're here to visit us, but I particularly enjoy my opportunities visiting them at College Park II. It's always a wonderful time. Most recently I was there for the Seniors Games opening and closing ceremonies, which were a lot of fun and gave us the opportunity to do some dancing together.

I hope they have a wonderful day with the rest of their tour. And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll join with the member across and welcome the residents of College Park II Retirement Residence here today.

We had a little bit of time to visit ahead of session, and just an enjoyable bunch, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to welcome the residents on the floor and those up in the east gallery to their

Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery, it's my honour to welcome Barb Dedi and volunteers and board for Spring Free from Racism. They recently held on Sunday their annual family day event that brings together community, Mr. Speaker, that marks the international day to end racial discrimination. I know you were there, along with some others on the Assembly. I'll be providing a statement here today, Mr. Speaker. But 20 years of organizing this very important event is something to be recognized. That's 20 years of bringing people together to celebrate, and 20 years of bringing people together to call for local action.

I'd like to recognize, certainly, Barb Dedi, who's been there as its lead every step of the way all of those 20 years. Barb, who's a friend and who's known to many in this Assembly, has been a leader with respect to human rights and women's rights and labour and workers' rights for a long period of time and had a long career in health care as well.

I'd also like to welcome some of the board members and volunteers that are with her here today: Albert Zwozdesky, give us a wave; Jackie Krasko; Brian Sklar; Jigar Patel, who also serves as the president of the Gujarati society of Saskatchewan; Nadeem Islam; and Noor Burki. I ask all members to welcome these very fine leaders to their Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. First of all I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome these leaders to their Legislative Assembly. As was mentioned, Barb Dedi has been a leader in our community for many, many years. This is the 20th year of Spring Free from Racism. I was able to attend for a little while this past Sunday, and lots of folks coming through there having a good time eating and experiencing different cultures, lots of dancing, and good times had by all. So thank you again for that.

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan is a big part of that and is funded through the ministry as well. So I'd ask all members to thank them once again for their work in helping bring different cultures together on a regular occasion, and it's great to see that. Thank you.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery is a group from here in Regina. They are the Sunshine Good Sam, the folks up there. Nice to see you all. They're accompanied by their recreation activity organizer. Bob Turgeon is with them, I believe, as well. So part of their pledge, Mr. Speaker, is give aid to others, give back to the community and to those less fortunate, and to always wear a smile. So it's great to see all these folks here visiting their Legislative Assembly this afternoon. Thank you.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and

through you to the Assembly, I would like to introduce, in the west gallery, 26 grade 8 students from the Redvers School. Give a wave. Mr. Speaker, they are accompanied by their teacher Kayla Henderson, as well as chaperones Kevin Raymond, Krista Naviaux, Greg Martin, Jessica Wolensky, and Aaron Mohrbutter.

Mr. Speaker, this morning they had the opportunity to participate in a mock parliament with you presiding and myself there as well, and I met them later for a discussion and question-and-answer period, Mr. Speaker. Very bright young students. I would ask everyone in the Assembly to welcome them to their legislature.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the members opposite and to welcome one of my friends sitting there. Jigar Patel is president of Gujarati Samaj in Regina, and right from him, Noor Burki, a good friend of mine, Mr. Speaker. We worked together about approximately eight years, if I'm right. And right beside him, Nadeem Islam. He is one of my constituents, Mr. Speaker, and he ran in the election in 2016 in Rochdale under Liberal candidate, Mr. Speaker. I ask all the Assembly to welcome these three, my friends, in their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal carbon tax decision imposing a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, my constituency is mainly made up of farmers and more farmers, and for them this is going to be just another terrible tax.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens from Battleford and North Battleford. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned people, local businesses, and communities from all across the province, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the Sask Party's imposition and expansion of the PST [provincial sales tax] onto construction labour, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, the Sask Party saw a slowing economy, and then they slammed on the brakes with the imposition of the PST on this front. Permits are down. Many people across the province, in fact thousands, have lost their jobs. Many Saskatchewan tradespeople have been forced from the province that they know and love and that they want to build, Mr. Speaker. And the PST has hit households hard, now \$800, paying \$800 more per year from just

four years ago in PST, Mr. Speaker.

And the prayer reads as follows:

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Vonda and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to restore funding to Cornwall Alternative School.

Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following points: that Cornwall Alternative School offers unique programming to students in grades 7 through 10 who are experiencing difficulty in the regular school setting; that Cornwall Alternative School has an outreach worker to help students transition back into regular classes, as well as provide services to both students and their families; that 95 per cent of Cornwall Alternative students report that they would not be in school if it were not for this program; and that Cornwall Alternative School has been providing quality educational programming for at-risk students for more than four decades.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to immediately reverse the decision to cut funding from Cornwall Alternative School and to honour the three-year agreement that was signed in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising to present a petition calling for a public inquiry and forensic audit into the Regina bypass land scandal. The people who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: land developers purchased 640 acres of land along Tower Road and had the Regina bypass moved to accommodate their developments; thousands of people were impacted directly and lost their land, homes, businesses, access, life's work, health, history, and future; and land developers were paid up to 80 times more for their land than long-term land, home, and business owners.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call for a judicial

public inquiry and forensic audit into the entire Regina bypass land scandal.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people who have signed this petition today are from the city of Regina. 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. And the undersigned residents of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, and even those living outside the province to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties. But 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, Mr. Speaker, 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. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people. You know, Mr. Speaker, the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today come from the southwest part of our province. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition from some of the hundreds of students who gathered here on the steps of this building a couple of weeks ago, students from our city and elsewhere — the petition calling for real action to fight climate change.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners wish to bring to our attention that Saskatchewan produces the highest greenhouse gases per capita in all of Canada, that the Saskatchewan Party government has failed to tackle climate change or reduce emissions to the province's own targets. Mr. Speaker, they want to draw our attention to the fact that the Saskatchewan Party's government, slashing programs and funding for the environment, have set the province on a backward course and that the government's inaction on climate change is reflected by per-capita greenhouse gas emissions that are more than three times the national average.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of

Saskatchewan enact a real plan and allocate appropriate funding in the provincial budget to tackle climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, helping families transition to energy-efficient homes, and encouraging everyone in the province to take real action to protect the environment.

I so submit.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Loon Lake Student Wins First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm delighted to rise in the Assembly today to share news about an outstanding achievement of eight-year-old Lilyanne Waskewitch, who competed in the First Nations Spelling Bee competition.

On March 2nd the fourth annual Saskatchewan First Nations Spelling Bee was held in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform you that Lilyanne, a grade 3 student from Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation School in Loon Lake, took the top prize. Lilyanne flawlessly spelled five words to earn herself a spot at the national spelling bee this spring. She, alongside of other spelling champs, will be travelling to Toronto in May for the next round of competition.

Lilyanne worked incredibly hard, setting aside time every week to practise nearly 400 words. And her accomplishment is a great example for her peers and a pride for her family and community. I want to say to her, I'm so very proud of her and thankful for the staff at the Makwa Sahgaiehcan School who encourage her to excel. The entire staff work incredibly hard. And in particular I want to recognize Ms. Sargent for her work to support student literacy.

To Lilyanne, her family, and her grade 3 class, you're the best.

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

And I said, I'm very proud of you and as you leave, our prayers are with you and we hope you go to Toronto and do well.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the Assembly to join me in congratulating Lilyanne for her accomplishments and wishing her success for the final round of this competition. Way to go.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

#### Carlrams Ranching Shows Champion Bulls at Calgary Bull Sale

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's always a buzz around the barns when you go to a cattle show, and this year at the 118th Calgary Bull Sale, all the buzz was around the bulls from Carlrams Ranching of Cut Knife. Carlrams ranch is a family operation run by Cal and Marilyn Ramsay, their son Carl and his family, and their daughter Robin and her family.

Mr. Speaker, at the bull sale their bull, 81Y Royal Lad, was judged as the best bull out of 120 Hereford bulls entered. The bull finished first in his class and went on to become the Grand Champion Hereford bull of the 2019 Calgary Bull Sale.

Mr. Speaker, this was the first time the Ramsay family had ever taken bulls to be judged at the Calgary show. The second bull that the family brought to the sale was sold for above average price, which was no surprise, Mr. Speaker, as the two bulls together won the Ross Miller Trophy as the best pair of Hereford bulls at the entire sale.

To be recognized at such a sale is a testament to all the farms and ranches in this province producing world-class products. Please join with me in congratulating Carlrams Ranching for their outstanding showing at the 118 Calgary Bull Sale.

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

#### 20th Annual Spring Free from Racism Event

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it was encouraging once again to come together on Treaty 4 territory and the homeland of the Métis with our community at the annual Spring Free from Racism family day event, along with the members for Regina Douglas Park, Northeast, Gardiner Park, as well as you, Mr. Speaker. This annual event celebrates the many cultures and many peoples that make up and strengthen Saskatchewan. It marks the international day to eliminate racial discrimination and calls for needed action locally.

This year's event, which brings together thousands of people each and every year, was in its 20th year. And this year we came together in challenging times, with hate groups on the rise here in Canada and in the wake of another horrifying attack on those at prayer, another attack beyond description. It's a time to stand together in solemn solidarity. It's a time to stand together with understanding, peace, reconciliation, and love. And it's a time to fiercely stand up against and call out Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, white supremacy, racism, bigotry, and all forms of hate.

Let's remember these words of Martin Luther King Jr.: "We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but the appalling silence of the good people."

Mr. Speaker, I can report that the Spring Free from Racism event was filled with good people and they were anything but silent.

I ask all members to join with me in recognizing the remarkable efforts of Barb Dedi, the board, the cultural associations, and the volunteers that have made Spring Free such a success for 20 years.

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

#### Pilot Butte Wins Go Out and Play Challenge

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise today to congratulate the town of Pilot Butte on winning \$10,000 after participating in the Saskatchewan Blue

Cross Go Out and Play Challenge. Forty-five different communities from across Saskatchewan took part in the 10-day challenge that had communities compete against each other to see who could log the most physical activity minutes.

Last year the winning community logged nearly 420,000 minutes but this year, Mr. Speaker, Pilot Butte broke that record with an impressive 485,316 minutes, to be exact, Mr. Speaker. The money that was raised will go towards building a splash park in the community, which I'm sure the kids will love on those hot summer days.

Year after year we are seeing this challenge grow in popularity and more communities are getting out and getting active. This year was a record for the challenge and, as a whole, 4.4 million minutes were logged. Mr. Speaker, as a parent of two fairly active boys — used to be boys, anyway — I can only imagine how excited the kids and families are feeling, knowing that their dream splash park will be built soon.

Every participant was a true winner in this challenge, Mr. Speaker, as there is nothing more important than getting out, being active, and having fun. I now ask all my colleagues to join me in congratulating Pilot Butte on winning the Go Out and Play Challenge.

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

#### **SK Jeep Tours Offers Off-Road Adventures**

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to highlight a new and exciting business from Saskatchewan, Jeep Tours. Mr. Speaker, this business is run by a passionate husband and wife team who are also my neighbours. Devin and Becky Fremont and son Charles share a love of off-roading jeeps and exploring their own backyard.

Devin Fremont had fallen in love with his jeep, which he named Yeti. He began going on off-roading adventures with his family and quickly discovered that there was a real opportunity for these excursions. He began inviting friends and family on his trail rides and created the off-road club called Wheelin 4x4 Sask.

Six months later, the family added to their jeep collection and Saskatchewan Jeep Tours was born. They now run a variety of different tours through the backcountry, featuring winding trails, breathtaking hilltop views, even a trailside barbeque.

Nothing beats summer in Saskatchewan. Thanks to Becky and Devin's creativity, so many families will be able to make lasting memories right here in our great province and diverse landscapes. I encourage everyone to head north this summer, take a tour with Devin and Becky, and join in on the fun.

I now ask all members to join me in congratulating Becky and Devin Fremont on their new business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Eatonia Oasis Living Providing Care in West Central Saskatchewan**

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place

today to recognize the work of a great non-profit organization in my home community of Eatonia, fondly referred to as a prairie oasis. When the NDP [New Democratic Party] government of the day announced the closure of the Eatonia hospital in 1993, the community took action to ensure that services could still be provided and the brand new building would not go to waste.

After years of transition and community effort, the Eatonia Oasis Living became a private community-owned personal care home. The building was purchased from the government in 2005 for \$1, and the EOL [Eatonia Oasis Living] community board took over full ownership and operations.

EOL has been operating on that basis for the last 14 years, providing excellent short- and long-term care to clients throughout west central Saskatchewan. Apparently Eatonia Oasis Living has four residents over 100 years old, which really speaks to the quality of care provided by staff and volunteers.

I want to recognize the staff, patrons, volunteers, including the board of directors, and specifically the town of Eatonia and RM [rural municipality] of Chesterfield councils, for their continued support of EOL. Your dedication to your community is exceptional and does not go unnoticed.

A population is aging well and living longer, fuller lives in rural communities because of facilities like Eatonia Oasis Living. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **BrainLove Campaign Launched in Prince Albert**

**Mr. Goudy:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regrettably, each year more than 2,500 people in Saskatchewan suffer a brain injury from common and often preventable actions. Unfortunately many of those injured can live with the effects for the rest of their lives. Brain injury is unpredictable and can affect every aspect of your life, and sadly there are no drugs or techniques that can cure a brain injury. Mr. Speaker, the point is that prevention is the only cure.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, the BrainLove campaign, a unique partnership between the Saskatchewan Royal Purple Association and the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association, launches each year in March. To kick off the campaign, the Royal Purple societies across the province gathered together in Prince Albert on March 1st to make donations and pledges to support brain injury prevention and education programs. My colleague, the Minister of Crown Investments, was in attendance, Mr. Speaker, and it was certainly a successful event.

[14:00]

All of the contributions have helped the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association expand into rural communities to support education and quality of life for brain injury survivors and their families. I commend everyone involved with the BrainLove campaign for their continued dedication to education and advocating for the reduction of brain injuries.

Please join me in congratulating the Saskatchewan Royal Purple Association and the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association on

another great year of raising awareness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Potash Royalty Structure

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For years, New Democrats have been calling for a review of our potash royalty structure to make sure that we get a fair return on that essential resource for Saskatchewan people. In fact we raised the issue publicly after the release of a report from the Johnson-Shoyama school on January 28th, six weeks before the budget was delivered.

My question for the Premier is this: when was the decision made to change that royalty structure? Did the Premier know on January 28th that those changes would be made?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, that decision, along with a number of other decisions were made through due course by the Government of Saskatchewan in the treasury board process, Mr. Speaker, the entire budget cycle process that the government went through this year, has gone through virtually every other year that I've had the privilege of serving in government that I'm aware, and I can only assume in years prior to that, irrespective of who was serving at the time.

Mr. Speaker, the difference about this process this year I think, in fairness, was it was the end of a three-year effort, Mr. Speaker, an effort to bring our province's budget back into balance. Bringing our budget back into balance, Mr. Speaker, was an initiative where there have been some challenging decisions, no doubt, that have had to be made over the course of that time, Mr. Speaker. But we feel it was very, very important to ensure that we get our budgets back to balance here in the province, Mr. Speaker, so that we can continue to invest in the projects and the services that the people of this province expect us as a provincial government to invest in, not just today, but preserve that investment capacity for generations into the future, for our children's generation.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be fair to interpret that that means that that decision was well known on January 28th. It would be very strange if it wasn't, six weeks before the budget, to make a decision that's going to make a difference of \$150 million in revenue for a budget they've been talking about for so long.

So the question then is, if the minister knew on January 28th that this decision would be made, why was she so dismissive of those calling for review: the Johnson-Shoyama study, members on this side. In fact on January 28th she said, and I'll quote:

Our province has the highest royalty and potash profit tax structure and collects the most revenue in the world, compared to jurisdictions such as Israel, where raising royalty rates contributed to a dramatic decrease in capital

investment, and New Brunswick, where similar increases helped lead to a complete industry shutdown.

Why the hyperbole is what I would like to ask the Premier. Why the contradictions, why the attempts to discredit those calling for a review when the plan was to raise those royalties in a much more abrupt way than a review?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure why the member opposite would stand up and attempt to discredit or know anything actually about the budgetary process that a government goes through, Mr. Speaker. It's a long and it's an arduous process, Mr. Speaker. And I would put forward, in this budget year, it was a process that struck the right balance on behalf of the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

It struck the right balance of ensuring that the people of this province are being compensated, compensated fairly for the resources that we have. It struck the right balance of ensuring that we have the opportunity to invest in schools, Mr. Speaker, in schools in communities across this province, and invest in the teachers and the educators and the people that are providing that opportunity to that next generation to our children in those very classrooms that we're building, with 46 new schools now in the process of being built across the province, across our great province, Mr. Speaker.

It further allows us to invest in health care facilities and the people operating in those facilities offering services across this province, Mr. Speaker. That's the right balance for the people of the province. That's the right balance that this government delivered on.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's almost impossible to believe that six weeks before the budget the minister, who was making inflammatory statements at that time about the impact on the industry, would not have been aware that this change would be made.

But let's say that's true for a moment. What about one week before? One week before the budget the minister rose in this House and, in a response to our repeated requests for a royalty review, said that a review promised in 2015 was, and I quote, "on hold." A week before the budget, Mr. Speaker.

Does that not strike the Premier as disingenuous to have the minister say the review was on hold when she clearly already made her decision? Why the contradictions and why did the minister choose to represent the situation so differently from her actual intent rather than be transparent and consult to make sure that as well as getting the best possible return for our resources, we have the least possible negative consequences?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — The members opposite actually supported this change on budget day, but I guess the lure of the camera lights have proved too much for the member for Regina



Rosemont in particular because he's now singing a different tune.

Mr. Speaker, this is all about getting the right balance for the people of Saskatchewan to discontinue tax credits that were, frankly, eroding the value of the base payment which is supposed to be a flat rate on production for our resource, Mr. Speaker. All other incentives remain in place, incentives that have been there, have been there during sometimes volatile, tough times — the last decade — and saw through expansion and development of our potash industry. These are never easy decisions. In this case of course, market sensitivities were also in play, Mr. Speaker.

But we will stand by our record any day. If it hadn't been for this side, former PotashCorp wouldn't exist and the corporate landscape here in the province would be very different. We have seen \$20 billion in investment from legacy, new, and merged companies over the last decade, Mr. Speaker, for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

### Federal Carbon Tax

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hard to call it standing by your record when the story changes so frequently and so quickly.

Mr. Speaker, we learned in last week's federal budget that Saskatchewan will see no reprieve from the Trudeau carbon tax backstop. This tax, designed in Ottawa, isn't right for Saskatchewan. But it seems the Sask Party has finally found a reason . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This tax, designed in Ottawa, is not right for Saskatchewan. But it seems, however, that the Sask Party has finally found a reason to do something they haven't done for a long time: to love the Crowns. Because they were able to use the Premier's office to direct SaskPower and SaskEnergy to politicize their bills, sending out letters and emails advising ratepayers of the federal carbon tax in bold, red letters, Mr. Speaker.

What they never mentioned is that the Sask Party had more than two years to negotiate a better deal, as other provinces have done. They didn't do the work, and instead the Premier is playing a tasteless April Fool's joke on all of us, leaving us exposed to have a tax imposed on April 1st.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is this: will he acknowledge that his refusal to do the work, refusal to meet and make a plan has left us with Trudeau's plan instead? And will he also be adding a line to our power bills that says how much more we're paying because of the \$2 billion carbon capture debacle or the neglect of our infrastructure? Or maybe a Bill Boyd tax to account for how much more we're paying because of the smart meter fiasco and the \$25 million in extra land they bought at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, right from the beginning of this entire carbon tax debate within this country, the federal government made it very clear. The federal carbon tax would be imposed on any province that (a) did not choose to have their own carbon tax, which we were not going to do; or (b) did not choose to put in place a cap-and-trade program in their province, which we chose not to do. There was no negotiation, Mr. Speaker. We put forward our own plan called Prairie Resilience, which the federal government have actually accepted, except they are still going to impose the federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we felt that in terms of the Crown corporations, that there is only one ratepayer, that is the people that pay the bills. And so for SaskPower the carbon tax was going to be a new cost that would be absorbed. Whether it's hidden in the bill, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's identified on the bill, Mr. Speaker, the ratepayers were still going to pay that, Mr. Speaker. We erred on the side of transparency so that the people of Saskatchewan could know clearly, they could know clearly, Mr. Speaker, that the carbon tax was being applied.

We knew all along the Leader of the Opposition likes a carbon tax. What we didn't know, until a couple of weeks ago, that he would impose it on the province and hide it from them.

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

### SaskPower Infrastructure

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I find it somewhat strange that the minister would refer to this as transparency when it's clearly nothing but politics, Mr. Speaker.

Back in December, a blackout rolled across Saskatchewan, forcing thousands of SaskPower ratepayers to go without power in the middle of winter. And this morning thousands in Regina and surrounding communities had no electricity to start their day. Now many thanks, Mr. Speaker, to the hard-working SaskPower staff for getting our power back.

But, Mr. Speaker, back in December SaskPower officials said that frost on the lines was causing the outages, an explanation some experts have called into question. And this morning we're hearing that the latest culprit is misty rain. Mr. Speaker, our public power infrastructure should be able to hold up to frost or misty rain.

A few months ago, the auditor blasted the government for not even knowing what maintenance was needed. Which assets that need fixing shouldn't be an unknown unknown. What's the plan to ensure Saskatchewan people can have reliable access to power?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also note to the member opposite there was a fire this morning that had an effect. There was a fire at the top of a pole, Mr. Speaker, but I'd be happy to get into more details about that.

Mr. Speaker, what is clear from this government is the capital

investment in SaskPower's infrastructure: \$996 million last year; \$886 million the year before that, Mr. Speaker; over a billion dollars in several years over the last 12 years compared to the members opposite where \$350 million was a great year for capital at SaskPower, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the transparency of people's bills, we wanted to ensure that it was clear on the bills that the charge related to the federal carbon tax was simply that — because of the federal carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, this is just me. But if we were going to be directing some political messaging, Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't have said, federal carbon tax. It would have said, the Justin Trudeau, Ralph Goodale, Liberal Party of Canada, job-killing, soul-sucking, unconstitutional, non-emitting, supported by the Saskatchewan NDP carbon tax, but we didn't go there.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That's the longest list of adjectives I think I've ever heard in this House.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about maintenance, maintenance of SaskPower assets. This government hasn't done its job to make sure the infrastructure at SaskPower is properly maintained. Just ask the Provincial Auditor.

In her report released last December, she found that SaskPower doesn't have risk assessments in place to ensure maintenance of its above-ground assets. It lacks complete and consistent data about its assets, and it doesn't even have enough resources to complete maintenance tasks assessed as very high or high priority.

So instead of putting money into needed maintenance, Bill Boyd spent \$25 million on unused land at the GTH. He also, Bill Boyd spent millions on faulty smart meters, and of course we have Bill Boyd spending more than a billion on carbon capture. How is that supposed to be acceptable to ratepayers, and what's the Sask Party's plan to make things right?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly SaskPower is responding to all the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, and we will be happy to work with the auditor's office to ensure that we are putting in those processes and reporting that information. Mr. Speaker, but I have to say in terms of what are we doing to make this right, Mr. Speaker, we're actually investing in SaskPower infrastructure across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent in capital alone in the last . . . so last year, 996 million, 886 before that, 990 before that, 1.279 billion, 1.318 billion, 981 million. And I'm only up to 2012, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, when you go back to the years of the NDP, \$200 million, \$230 million, \$250 million. And what were they doing at the same time, Mr. Speaker? Stripping more than 100 per cent out of the company in dividends, Mr. Speaker. They

were borrowing, not for capital, they were borrowing to pay a dividend.

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

### Funding for Alternative School

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it was something watching the minister tie himself in knots yesterday trying to explain how his government needed to slow down, be prudent, consult, instead of just honouring a funding agreement that they signed off on in the first place. Where was this abundance of caution leading up to budget day? How did this get missed with all of the minister's conversations?

It was the minister and much of that front bench that sat around the cabinet table to sign off on a three-year funding agreement with Cornwall Alternative School in 2017. People's lives have been turned upside down by the actions of this government and the uncertainty that they have caused. Will they commit today to honour the funding agreement that they signed off on while these after-the-fact consultations take place?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Just for confirmation, Mr. Speaker, I . . . He actually made me smile. Just to confirm, is the minister committing today that he will honour the contract with the Cornwall Alternative School during the current contract which is set to expire March 31st, 2020?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Management of Provincial Economy

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, last week's budget failed to undo the damage caused by Sask Party choices to families and our economy. Nothing to address the nearly \$800 more families are paying in PST or to help those struggling with the high cost of living. And today's average weekly earning numbers are just the latest example of how tough things are for Saskatchewan households. Growth in average weekly earnings are less than 1 per cent and less than half of the national average. In fact we're dead last when it comes to earnings growth all across Canada.

How can the Sask Party say their budget is balanced when it fails to address our worst-in-the-nation earnings growth for struggling Saskatchewan families who have also been hit so hard by cost-of-living increases like the more than \$800 per year the average household is facing in PST costs?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Mr. Speaker, the preamble was

completely wrong in that question. In fact what the stats showed, Mr. Speaker, is that Saskatchewan was first last month in terms of weekly earnings growth. That's what the actual study showed, Mr. Speaker. I'm not quite sure what he's referring to.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, what Statistics Canada has shown for the last six months has been consistent year-over-year job growth: now over 7,000 jobs created year over year, Mr. Speaker; 73,000 jobs created over the course of the last decade, Mr. Speaker, one of the highest rates of job creation in the entire country.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we know what their record was, which was the absolute dead-worst, last rate of job creation in the entire country during their time in government. Mr. Speaker, we will talk about the economy in this Chamber every day in the week. We are proud of our record, and they can't stand by theirs.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, so the table today that's been provided, the weekly earnings report, says Saskatchewan dead last at 0.9 per cent growth, less than half the national average, last in Canada. Mr. Speaker, you know, we expect better. A ministry should know those facts.

We also expected this government to fire up the economy in this last budget, but we didn't see anything on that front. They could have fixed their broken procurement model, improved the minimum wage, scrapped the PST on construction, ramped up renewable power and energy efficiency retrofits, invested in education, built a film industry — the list goes on and on. We need to build a strong and inclusive economy that works for families; instead, we're dead last when it comes to earnings growth, while households are being hit by massive cost-of-living increases like the \$800 per year in PST.

How much worse do things need to be before the Sask Party will step up and work to build the economy that works for everyone?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand in this Chamber and talk about the economic record of this government: 73,000 jobs created over the course of the last decade; 160,000 newcomers to this province over the course of the last decade, over 108,000 of whom have been from outside of Canada. We've seen GDP [gross domestic product] growth of nearly 20 per cent since 2007, the third-highest growth in the entire country.

And I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic. The Leader of the Opposition stands up, leads question period off by asking about the carbon tax, a carbon tax that he supports, Justin Trudeau's carbon tax whom he has had praise for, Mr. Speaker, which will do nothing but harm our economy. He has stood up repeatedly for Justin Trudeau.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we stand with the people of Saskatchewan.

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

## Services at Field Offices

**Mr. Pedersen:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a couple weeks ago employees, communities, trappers, hunters were surprised to learn that the Ministry of Environment was shutting down field offices in 19 communities. Mr. Speaker, these closures will have a devastating impact on the people and the communities affected, communities like Buffalo Narrows and Southend. Those offices were busy and those communities were already hard hit by mining layoffs.

Those cuts will bring \$600,000 into government coffers. This is another example of the government balancing its budget on the backs of people and communities that can't afford it. My question for the minister is, are those the last of the job losses or can we expect more as a result of last week's budget?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question. I just want to correct the premise of his question. We're not closing a single office, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, more than half of those 19 offices serve the public less than three days a week. Many of those were two-days-a-week offices, and yet those offices were still accessible for the members of the public through the conservation officers that will still be stationed out of those offices.

So as was in the past, in days where members of the public needed to get hold of a conservation officer or access a service from that office on a day that it wasn't open, there was a number to call to contact the conservation officer. So that still will take place. We're not closing any of those offices. We're not removing any of the conservation officers from those communities. And the public will still have access in a way that they have had for most of the time through those offices.

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

**Mr. Pedersen:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the job losses that the Ministry of Environment had announced in those field offices, one of the issues that we have is in relation to chronic wasting disease detection. And, Mr. Speaker, the number of zones where chronic wasting disease has been detected has more than tripled in the past year. So, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult to see how that detection is going to improve in the face of these job losses and services, especially in areas like Weyburn and Humboldt which have already been under-reporting CWD [chronic wasting disease] data.

So, Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, what is this government's plan to rectify that issue?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the plan going forward will be as it has been in the past. So for instance, he mentioned Weyburn. I believe Weyburn was one of the offices that was only open two days a week. So on the other three days out of the work week when members of the public needed to report, for example, CWD, or whether it was any other services that were provided, they had the opportunity

to phone the number, contact the conservation officer, and set up a time to take that sample to that office, Mr. Speaker. That already happened in the vast majority of those offices, Mr. Speaker.

So in terms of the offices, there are no closures, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, there are some layoffs that are as a part of this decision, Mr. Speaker. But I will say it's a far cry from 2004 when the member from Saskatoon Centre made decisions as minister of the Environment that did actually close offices and impacted 200 Environment employees. Twelve per cent of Environment staff either were fired or had their hours reduced. We're not doing that, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Sexual Assault Strategy

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the second-highest rates of sexual assault in the country, but still to this day, despite calls from the front lines and calls from this opposition, we don't have a sexual assault strategy. The minister has signalled the sexual assault strategy report will be released this spring. When will we see that report? And will it finally be accompanied by additional funding and won't simply sit on a shelf?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we've increased funding across a number of the agencies that we work with to deal with both domestic violence and with sexual assault. The issues that the member raised is something that I know is important to her and I think it's important to every member that's in this House.

A formal response will be coming forward within, I'm told, the next few weeks. The partners are working with officials in the ministry, and we expect to have something done and a more formal response in the very near future.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that our budget this year is \$11.9 million for interpersonal violence and abuse services. We take all of those things seriously. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the various agencies and CBOs [community-based organization] that we work with for their help that they've given to victims of both sexual assault and domestic violence, and we will continue to take those things forward.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 66 through 67.

**The Speaker:** — Ordered, question 66, 67. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question no. 68.

**The Speaker:** — Tabled, question 68. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 69 through 71.

**The Speaker:** — Ordered, 69 through 71.

### SPECIAL ORDER

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet again. I only had a few minutes last night and it's a pleasure to be able to be on my feet here today to finish off, Mr. Speaker, this balanced budget, this budget that's the right budget for the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'll start off again because I often do — well I always do on my speeches — of thanking certain people. But I'll only thank one today and that's my wife, Fran. She's not down here. She's away right now. But she is sort of the rock in our family and helps me and looks out for me and puts up with me. And I appreciate it all.

Mr. Speaker, I had to change my notes a little bit from what I was going to speak on, Mr. Speaker, because I did hear the member from P.A. Northcote speak yesterday about investments in P.A. and things that are just not happening in Prince Albert. I don't know if she goes to the — obviously not — to the same events I do, but I go to lots of events, Mr. Speaker. I've been to many.

I've been to, I don't know how many houses this last year, Mr. Speaker, Habitat for Humanity has opened with our government's participation. There's the housing development in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. Thirty units, Mr. Speaker, they opened up. I don't know. I've been there. You know, over the last number of years there's about 420 units in Prince Albert. I don't know if it's six or seven or eight city blocks, Mr. Speaker, but that's a lot of units that this government has participated in for those most challenged, those in need, Mr. Speaker.

So I was there and I seen all that. I'm in P.A. and I travel around for that, Mr. Speaker. There's that new Pineview Terrace. It's only a couple of years old, Mr. Speaker. I think that's pretty good for seniors. Some people might forget that it's there; I don't, Mr. Speaker. I like to stop in at Pineview Terrace. It's a wonderful facility and we're very fortunate in Prince Albert to have it. And it's something to actually brag about, not something to say it's not good enough, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

Revenue sharing, as I mentioned last night, Mr. Speaker, it's up from 2.9 million to 6.5 million. That's 118 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker. I think that's pretty darn fine.

Mr. Speaker, I've got to mention about the hospital. You know, Mr. Speaker, in this budget we talked about two and a half million dollars towards the hospital, pre-construction design for the hospital, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Prince Albert Northcote said something along the line of, you know, that's just a distraction. You know, that's just a deferral. That's just, you know, just a delay tactic.

Well I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I think two and a half million dollars is a lot of money. It is to me. And I think that's a pretty good commitment. In any workplace, two and a half million dollars would be a pretty darn good commitment, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, our Premier has committed. Whatever he's committed to he's lived up to, and I'll take him at his word, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I could also quote the mayor of Prince Albert. This is Mayor Dionne, the mayor of Prince Albert. I quote:

As the mayor of Prince Albert, I couldn't be happier to see the government put in this year's budget to proceed with construction plans to the new Victoria Hospital. It's exactly what we were looking for and we're very excited about it.

So I think that speaks pretty well of what the city thinks of our plans for the hospital in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. So we're happy with that there.

The member also talked about impaired driving, Mr. Speaker, and we should be doing more. Mr. Speaker, I could never argue with that. You know, one death on our highways due to impaired driving is too many, Mr. Speaker. But I'm very, very proud of the record of this government on impaired driving, Mr. Speaker.

We introduced legislation. On January 1st it come into effect — January 1st, 2017, Mr. Speaker — giving us probably the toughest laws in this country, Mr. Speaker, against impaired driving. And I was happy, Mr. Speaker, not that . . . I was happy not that there was any deaths in 2017, but by the end of 2017, Mr. Speaker, the number of deaths from impaired driving had dropped by 40 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that's significant.

And, Mr. Speaker, that led to . . . You know, I accepted an award from MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] Canada, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government for the hard work that they've done with impaired driving, Mr. Speaker. And that was the Citizen of Distinction of the year award, Mr. Speaker, because of the good work that we've done. And right in our city of Prince Albert through SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Mr. Speaker, the Prince Albert Police Service has received a number of ALRPs. I believe it's up to four now that they have on their vehicles, Mr. Speaker, that's helping get all those people that are still driving even though they're suspended. So I'm very proud of that. Mr. Speaker, there's lots more to do and this government's committed to doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the free-standing hospice. I touched on it last night, but boy, I only had a couple minutes. I rushed through it and I didn't give it the justice that it needed.

Mr. Speaker, the Rose Garden Hospice, Mr. Speaker, that is a facility. It's going to be a free-standing facility, one of the first in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, that donation from a philanthropist in Prince Albert, Malcolm Jenkins, started off the capital project with a \$500,000 donation, Mr. Speaker, which is substantial towards the \$3 million capital expenditure to build this facility. This government, Mr. Speaker, committed to \$2 million annual funding for that facility, Mr. Speaker.

And that facility, I know because both of my parents passed away in a hospice in British Columbia, that facility is incredible for that patient. A lot of people want to die at home, Mr. Speaker. I know my parents would've just as soon have died in their house, and I understand that. Mostly they don't want to die in hospital. And it's not because the people there are not good. They're awesome people in the hospitals, but it's a hospital, and they don't want to be in a hospital. And if you've ever been in a free-standing hospice, Mr. Speaker, not one that's attached to the hospital, but free standing, the rooms are large. There's lots of room for family. I know where my father, the hospice that he was in, in his final days of his life, it was down near a river. He was in Prince George, BC [British Columbia]. It was down near a river. There was some bush around it. Deer were coming up around the window. You know, he was so happy, so pleased that he could just see that one last time and not from a hospital room.

I think this 10-bed facility is going to be incredible for the city, not only the city of Prince Albert but for people in the North who are going to utilize that. Because they not only take care of the patient, but they take care of the family. They counsel the family. They help the family through this very tough experience. You know, because I don't care who it is, it's a tough experience. My father was 91, my mother was 88. My father lived a good, good life. I'm very happy for him. I don't care . . . It's still my dad, and it's very difficult. So, Mr. Speaker, I backed this hospice in Prince Albert for a number of years, and I will continue to fight, fight for this. I'll continue to work on their capital project with them, to help get the funding from the city and the citizens of Prince Albert to move ahead.

So you know, when you get good things like this, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty rich to say, from the member opposite who is also from Prince Albert, to say nothing good is happening in Prince Albert. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's pretty good. I've talked to a lot of, a lot of people in Prince Albert who are pretty pleased with that, Mr. Speaker.

Most of the other members here, Mr. Speaker, you know, they've spoken on the budget and they've gone through all the numbers. I mean the hon. member from Turtleford last night, he quoted just a few numbers that . . . Well you had to be here to listen to it just to . . . I don't think he missed any numbers. I think he got more numbers probably in his speech than the Finance minister had in hers, Mr. Speaker. But anyway he covered it off. He covered it off pretty well, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, I'll sort of finalize because I did have some time last night. So I'll kind of finalize with just a couple of more things. But, Mr. Speaker, there's one announcement in there, and relative to the size of budget that it is, it might seem like a small amount to some people but, Mr. Speaker, to me it's a large amount. It's \$1.1 million and that's for Alzheimer's, Mr. Speaker. That's the fight against Alzheimer's.

And I spoke of my mother, about the hospice, Mr. Speaker, and my mother suffered from Alzheimer's and ended up . . . Her death was partially related to Alzheimer's, Mr. Speaker. She took a fall. She broke her pelvis and through nobody's fault but her own, Mr. Speaker. It was not through any staff's fault. It was not, Mr. Speaker. And then she couldn't remember she broke her pelvis. That was the problem. So when she had to be restrained so that she would not walk and try to do things . . . She already had a weak heart, Mr. Speaker, but it ended up being too much strain for her and she passed away. And her final days were again in a hospice, Mr. Speaker.

But my mother was an incredible woman. And I have full respect for the staff that worked in there, that did take care of her, both in the home that she was at and in the hospice where she ended up, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to read a little something here, you know, because there was a post, and it was a true story post. And it has to do with Alzheimer's, Mr. Speaker, and it's about, you know . . . A fellow wrote and it's about "My last trip to grandma's house." And it goes along and it says:

When I was a boy, we took a trip to grandma's house. Sure, grandpa was there and he was the star of the show, but it was grandma's house. It was a big house with a big yard. She ran it with love, care, made sure everything was in proper order, and that everyone who came was looked after. She loved me enough to tell me when I was doing something wrong because she wanted me to be a good person when I grew up. Her hair was brown. She was beautiful. She loved me, and I loved her [Mr. Speaker].

I grew up and grandma moved. I took a trip to see her now and then. Her house was smaller but still looked after with loving care. She would be there at the airport with grandpa to pick me up, and my wife and my son. She would laugh and smile and play with her great-grandson. She didn't worry as much if her great-grandson touched things as long as he was safe. She knew life was about love and not about having a perfect house, even if she cleaned up all the crumbs after we went to bed. Her hair turned white but she was beautiful. She loved us and we loved her.

Grandpa died and grandma moved on. She moved on again. I waited to visit her. They said she had forgotten things and I didn't want to be one of the things that she had forgotten. She got sicker. And I went to visit grandma's house again. Now it was a small room with a shared bathroom, well kept by other people because she couldn't anymore.

I walked in scared of what I would experience, and she smiled at me. She knew me instantly: so good to see you. She remembered me. She had only the robe the hospitals make you wear. She had no teeth but her smile was so genuine I didn't care. We talked in a way that people do when there's nothing left to say, only the most essential. "I love you, Grandma." "I love you too; you're a special boy."

For a fleeting moment all past memories were present. She was grandma and she always had been. I went for lunch and came back to grandma's house, except now the pain and weight of life had come back. The blessing of that fleeting

moment was amplified by it but now suddenly it was gone. Now it all became very simple. The next breath was no guarantee and there was nothing left, just to be there beside her, hold her hand, tell her she was safe, and how so much she was loved.

The pain I felt was so great only because the love was even greater. In the last moments there is nothing else and I'm grateful for the chance to tell her I love her. So if you have a grandma, go see her. Call her; tell her you love her. You never know when it's your last trip to grandma's house.

Mr. Speaker, Alzheimer's is a terrible, terrible disease. I know far too many people who suffer from Alzheimer's, and it does run in my family. I know I lose my memory a little bit here once in a while and I get criticized by it. My chief of staff says, I told you that yesterday. But, Mr. Speaker, it's so important. That family is so important. Grandmothers are so important. People are getting Alzheimer's at a younger age and the fact that this government has contributed another million-one to the Alzheimer's Society is so important. And I know, like I say, Mr. Speaker, when my mother passed away, there was moments of clarity. And I spent the last seven days of her life with her, and those moments weren't always there but when they come, you wanted to be there, to take care . . . to take those 10 minutes, to take those 15 minutes in when she knew exactly everything that was going on. It was just like there was nothing wrong. And it was so, it was so incredible, Mr. Speaker.

And while she was a little bit better, I mean just before that, Mr. Speaker, I used to, because I lived here and she lived in Prince George, so we arranged, my wife and I arranged to send on Tuesdays. Tuesdays was bath day at the hospital. It was a great day for her at the home. And so we arranged on one Tuesday it would be a fruit basket that would be delivered to her. And on the next Tuesday, it would be a flower basket. And each Tuesday I would phone her and say, hi Mom, and she knew it was one of her kids. And then I'd say, it's Joe. Oh, yes, Joe, it's so good to talk to you. And I'd say, so did anything happen today? And she says, yes, I got some . . . I got a fruit basket or I got a flower basket. Oh, really? And who was that from, Mom? And she says, I don't know; let me look. And so she knew there was a card on it. She picked it up. Oh, she says, it's from you.

And every Tuesday I would do the same thing. Every Tuesday, the same call. Every Tuesday, the same answer. So it was always a thrill to me, and it cost me, Mr. Speaker . . . And I don't think people realize this because everybody looks, oh, the government should pay, government should pay. It cost me \$35 a week to hear my mother say that. It was the best \$35 a week I ever, ever will spend. Mr. Speaker, anyway, I get emotional when I talk about my mother and I get emotional when I talk about Alzheimer's, Mr. Speaker, because it is very, very important.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, this government has brought in a balanced budget, you know, and a budget I believe is the right budget for Saskatchewan. I've very proud of our Finance minister and the hard work that she did. I'm very proud of our Premier and the job that he's doing. I'm very proud of our caucus and all the members that are out there working hard every day, Mr. Speaker, for their constituents, and not only for their constituents but for everybody in this province, Mr. Speaker. I am so very proud of them, Mr. Speaker. I most definitely will not be supporting the amendment

to the budget, Mr. Speaker, but I most definitely will be supporting the budget by our Finance minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for once again having the opportunity to rise and speak on this year's budget. Before I begin, there are a large number of people I would like to say thank you to.

[14:45]

First of all, Mary Anne and Don Telfer. Mary Anne is my CA [constituency assistant] and she's backed up by her husband, Don. And they've been there to support me right from the very beginning. So I thank them for their support and their friendship. Thanks much, team Telfer.

I would also like to thank my wife. We've been together now 43 years and I so much appreciate her support and being there with me. Thank you, Valerie.

I'd also like to thank my supporters from the Batoche constituency. I spent most of the past winter meeting with them personally and I thank them for once again nominating me as the Saskatchewan Party candidate for the Batoche constituency for the 2020 election. It's been a privilege, an honour to serve as their MLA for the past 15 years. Now for the fifth time to be nominated again is indeed very humbling.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget was presented on the first day of spring. I think there are some interesting parallels. Spring is a time of renewal, a time that nature starts over. It is the rebirth of lush vegetation. The leaves on the trees unfold and even the air smells new. All the while, creatures are giving birth to new young. On the farm there are lots of new births going on as well, from cats, puppies, lambs, and foals to newborn calves. The grain farmers are getting ready to seed a new crop once again, along with the ageless anticipation and prayers for a bountiful crop.

The budget is very much like that, where you're opening up a new legislative year with great anticipation. A new budget lays out our plans and, just like the farmers, we pray for a bountiful year. We have looked at the challenges we are facing and we are stating how we will tackle them. This year's budget is like that spring crocus, opening up and showing the world that spring is truly here.

The budget marks a new beginning. After years of hard work and careful planning, we are back to a balanced budget. The last few budgets were like Buckley's Mixture. We didn't much like it, but it works. If it weren't for those tough budgets, we wouldn't be here today, being able to present a true budget for the future of our province.

Other provinces look on with envy and can only dream of a balanced budget. This of course didn't happen by chance. It was the hard work of our Finance minister, the member from Humboldt-Watrous, and of course her dedicated team of officials and the members of treasury board. It has also been very much the work of previous Finance ministers and their team. I speak of my friend and former colleague Kevin Doherty and the legendary

Ken Krawetz and their teams. This has been a long-term goal, and we are here. We are balanced.

Mr. Speaker, if you check *Hansard*, the member from Regina Rosemont spoke of PST as doubling, as though it had gone to 12 per cent. He then later spoke that it brought in twice the money because we were charging in so many new commodities. But let's tell the complete story. He failed to mention, however, it is that the number of people paying PST has dramatically increased due to the large influx of people into our province. This means more people to pay PST. The past year alone, we have increased the population of our province by 11,459 more people. This is a huge factor that he conveniently leaves out, because perhaps that side of the House always said that increasing our population couldn't be done.

Other projects that he and members of the other side oppose is the Regina bypass and the GTH. They call it a scandal. Mr. Speaker, already 4,800 trucks a week are passing through the GTH, and construction isn't even finished. 4,800 a week, and they say scandal? The scandal is they are not supporting it.

They also say that the GTH and the Regina bypass are way over budget. Once again they choose to ignore the fact that the project was expanded. There is definite documentation that the project was expanded. Mr. Speaker, once again I will spell it out. The project was made larger. It was expanded . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You listen to me; I listen to yours. That's the way it works, the member from Cumberland. The true fact there, the project is on time and on budget. Mr. Speaker, I must say again, on time and on budget.

Mr. Speaker, the oppositions are from the same NDP party that were against the Co-op upgrader in Regina, the Husky upgrader in Lloydminster. How about Gardiner dam and the amazing Lake Diefenbaker? There was also the Rafferty-Alameda dam. Can you imagine Saskatchewan without any of that? They are the team that has held Saskatchewan back. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, that is their mantra.

If it would be a step forward for Saskatchewan, they don't want it to happen. They would prefer to stay the wee province. What I now see as the biggest contradiction of the NDP stance on this fantastic budget is they are trying to do as follows. First they say we haven't spent enough — health care, mental illness, education. In fact every point of the budget, they say we didn't spend enough. They keep on saying we need to spend more. There's not one area where they say we've spent enough. Then on the other hand, they say we're going too deep in debt and have spent too much. They criticize endlessly, saying the budget spends too much. Mr. Speaker, which way is it? Have we spent too much or too little? To quote an old saying, you can't suck and blow at the same time. It's time to say where you stand. Is it too much spent or too little?

Mr. Speaker, this side knew even before the budget was presented that the opinion of the members across the way would be negative. But they are not the true measure of this budget. The people of Saskatchewan are the true measure of this budget. The vast majority of the people of Saskatchewan approve of this budget. They agree it is the right budget for the right time. The polls that CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Regina and Saskatoon ran show that this budget is indeed the right budget for

the right time. The people of Saskatchewan see this budget as deliberate and fiscally responsible. They want a balanced budget and they got a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, we also have other issues to deal with that are big factors in future budgets. I speak of the carbon tax. The carbon tax is the most destructive tax imposed on Saskatchewan. It does nothing to increase the amount of carbon. All it does is fill in federal coffers. For the member from Regina Northeast, the true be known: Saskatchewan sequesters more carbon than it produces, sequesters more carbon than it produces. Our agricultural land, shall we say, eats carbon all summer long. With 47 per cent of Canada's cropland, we sequester a lot of carbon. Our vast forests do the same. They live on CO<sub>2</sub>. In reality, the federal government should not be charging us for CO<sub>2</sub>. They should be paying Saskatchewan.

The people of Saskatchewan overwhelmingly support our government's fight against the carbon tax. They see it for what it is, a giant tax grab. Mr. Speaker, we know that the people of Saskatchewan are with us against the carbon tax, but where do the NDP stand? We have direct quotes from the Leader of the Opposition stating his support for the carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, after hearing the voice of Saskatchewan people, the Leader of the Opposition said that the NDP is not ready to lead this province. Mr. Speaker, we very much agree with him.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is becoming a province that can stand and proudly say we are no longer the wee province. We're becoming one of Canada's strong provinces with our natural resources — oil, potash, uranium — and of course our ag sector, the cornerstone of our province. And the greatest strength we have are the great people of this province. They have endured much. Now, led by the Saskatchewan Party team, they have an incredible future.

God bless Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I will not be supporting the amendment but because of the above reasons and many, many more, I will be wholeheartedly supporting the budget because it is the right thing to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to rise in this House and respond to the 2019-20 balanced budget put forward by my colleague from Humboldt and the Minister of Finance. Beginning three years ago, Mr. Speaker, it took some courage, tenacity, grit, and sticking to our plan in order to get us here today with a balanced budget, a balanced budget that is right for the people of Saskatchewan and the right balance for continuing to move our province forward.

Mr. Speaker, like many of my colleagues have done, I too would like to begin with some thank yous and to talk about my family before getting into my comments on our 2019-20 balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, I am blessed with a very loving and supportive family. I have known my husband Kim for 43 years and been married for 38 of those years. He is my best friend and most supportive confidant. His batching skills leave much to be

desired but I can easily overlook that because of his love, support, and encouragement of my job and the work I do on behalf of my constituents and the people of Saskatchewan. He has served as a Provincial Court judge for 33 years and continues to be well respected in the courts and the community.

Mr. Speaker, after raising eight children, I am very proud of the growth I have seen in their character, careers, and life choices. Much of this is due to the opportunities and decisions made and afforded by this government since 2007. My daughter Nevada lives in Lloydminster and is a grade 12 biology teacher at the Lloydminster Comprehensive High School. She loves her job and I know from comments I hear in the community from parents and students, they love her too.

She is an exceptional teacher who is passionate about helping students and always goes above and beyond to ensure all her students get the supports they need in order to be successful. She is a strong and amazing young woman. She loves to travel and has been many places in the world. She is the lead teacher who has been taking students to explore and learn about other parts of our world each year, and during this Easter break will be taking 36 students to Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, which were the countries she visited on her very first world travelling experience when she was in grade 11.

My eldest son Casey is an amazing young man. He is a radiologist in Lloydminster with two clinics located in Lloydminster, five ultrasound clinics in Alberta, and five ultrasound clinics in Saskatchewan. He also owns the Eagle Ridge Golf Course in St. Walburg and is currently building a beautiful new clubhouse there. Besides being a full-time doctor, he is a hands-on guy and has been involved in a lot of the design and construction of all of his projects commandeering his parents and brothers to help out along the way. He also believes in contracting and employing as many local contractors in the communities where he has built.

He is married to Jessica, a special ed teacher, and they have given us four beautiful granddaughters: Pearl, who just turned six last month; Belle who is four; Hazel who is two and half; and Ruby who just turned one last week. The opportunity to open private ultrasound clinics in communities in Saskatchewan has allowed him to provide citizens of this province with faster, high-quality, and efficient services right in their communities, and has helped to take the burden off our health care system. His investment has saved the health care system and taxpayers thousands of dollars.

[15:00]

Sons Chester and Riley are dentists in Chestermere Lake. After spending a few years as dentists in Lloydminster, they chose to strike out on their own and set up their own practice together. They own and operate Rainbow Falls Dental services in Chestermere Lake which has been very successful, and because of growth, they are currently expanding. They are also building another clinic in the northeast of Calgary, which they hope to have open early next year. They too love to travel and we have a hard time keeping up on their adventures. Riley has been hanging on to a young pharmacist, Ashley Young, for a year now, so we hope she'll stick and will become part of the family in the near future.



Fraser's also a dentist, and after practising for a couple of years in Lloydminster chose to go back to school. He applied to orthodontic schools across Canada and was one of three accepted to the three-year program at Western University in London, Ontario, and is currently in his final year. During his first year back to school he married Chantal, who is a dental assistant. And on his birthday, January 5th of this year, they gave us our first grandson, Beck Everett Young. This is an honour for me as my maiden name is Beck and my married name is Young. My dad, Anton Beck, passed away just a short two and a half years ago, and he would be honoured to know his great-grandson carried his name. They also have a miniature dachshund named Wally. They are planning on moving back to Lloydminster next March and possibly taking over a current orthodontics clinic in the community. We are so looking forward to that day.

My son Percy has been away at the University of Sydney, Australia in the College of Dentistry, and after four long years returned home in December and began work this week as a dentist in Lloydminster. I'm also happy to say he brought with him a fiancée, who is also a dentist and has begun work in Lloydminster. We will be having a wedding next July. They decided to begin a family too with a miniature dachshund named Moze.

Twin Duke is just completing his third year of dentistry at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Duke is a very strong student at the top of his class. He may be looking to join one of his brothers in their practice in the future and we are glad to know the opportunity exists in this province for him to be a successful professional.

Twin Ace is studying hard as he wraps up his second year of dentistry at the U of S. He too is a strong student dedicated to his studies. His girlfriend, Shelby Hassal is graduating from the University of Lethbridge as an RN [registered nurse] at the end of May and has secured work in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, my husband and I attended the U of S and all eight of our children have attended or are still attending the U of S and are or soon will be graduates of the U of S. So if the opposition was worried about funding for post-secondary education, I think my family has contributed our fair share over the years.

Mr. Speaker, Tracy Patterson is my constituency assistant back home, and I cannot do justice in expressing how much I appreciate all that she does in working with me, keeping me organized and my office running smoothly, but more importantly how she serves the people of the constituency when they call, email, or show up at the office. She is caring, compassionate, and ensures that every constituent's concerns are treated with her undivided attention and with some action. I couldn't do this job without her. She is also very involved in many of her community of Marshall's events, and you will always find her volunteering. She is also a first responder and a volunteer with the Midwest Victim Services.

Her other job is a wife to Rob and a mother of three grown boys. Her middle son, Brodie, has Down syndrome and is one of my biggest fans. He can make you laugh no matter what kind of day you're having, and never goes anywhere without letting everyone know how dedicated of a Saskatchewan Roughrider fan he is. I don't think I've ever seen him not wearing some kind of

Roughrider clothing or paraphernalia. Thank you, Tracy, for being you.

Finally I'd like to thank my constituents for placing their trust and faith in me to be their representative. I am humbled and honoured to serve them. I believe I have worked to the best of my ability on their behalf to address their concerns and advocate on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, just after I was first elected in the November 2014 by-election, oil prices began to fall, and oil and gas companies started playing a little bit of a caution game when it came to more investment and spending as they had done in past cycles. But as we were soon to see, this was not like cycles in the past where, after a year or year and a half, prices would climb back up and business would resume.

A new, inexperienced prime minister and an NDP government next door in Alberta shortly thereafter began creating challenges that saw our province see revenues from an important and valuable resource in our province, the oil and gas industry, drop to new lows. 1.3 billion reduction in the oil and gas resource sector annually since 2016 had our government challenged to continue providing strong and efficient services to a rapidly growing population.

We had to make some very difficult decisions. And I have to give credit where credit is due. I was on treasury board at the time, and I remember our former premier, Brad Wall, encouraging us to work hard at reducing spending, show good fiscal responsibility in management to prepare us for being able to present a balanced budget today. But not just to reach a balanced budget for today, Mr. Speaker, but for the future of this province. And we did it. A promise made and a promise kept, despite the challenges of keeping up with priority areas of health care, education, social services, highways, and infrastructure needs for a growing population.

Mr. Speaker, after talking about my own family and raising eight great kids, I want to draw a parallel to my home and how my husband and I managed our finances and budget while ensuring all of our household living needs were met. I also want to state that most of the hardest times of managing our household budget was during the years from 1991 to 2007.

Well guess what government was in power during those difficult years? The NDP. An NDP government who raised taxes on us 21 times. An NDP government who saw property tax revolts and an NDP government who chose to close schools, hospitals, long-term care beds, chose not to fix highways, and saw surgical wait times of up to three years for knee and hip replacements. Mr. Speaker, my mom was one of those people who had to wait nearly three years. All because they couldn't manage their finances in order to invest in the needs of the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, up until 2014, my household has been a one-income family. And it took good fiscal management and even restraint, many times, to ensure we were not living beyond our means and could also make our monthly utility payments, mortgage payments, our annual property taxes, pay our income tax on time, while at the same time keeping up with home repairs, vehicle needs, our children's school and community activities, and

beginning to invest in our older children's further education as they went off to university.

My husband and I had to make tough decisions, on many occasions, and saying no to your children who always want what every one of their friends had, was not easy, but was necessary to ensure their future success. Everyone in the household had to co-operate, and of course there was major pushback many times, but my husband and I knew we had to persist, stick to our bottom line, and make sure our expenses did not exceed our income.

Mr. Speaker, three years ago we asked the people of Saskatchewan to do the same. To help share in reducing expenses, to hold the line on expenses, and to support us in getting back to balance so that we could, as a province, as citizens, ensure that our children's futures were secure. Yes, there was whining and complaining about can't have or we need more, but we all had to share in this vision. Some difficult choices had to be made because, as we on this side of the House know and understand, budgets don't balance themselves.

Mr. Speaker, that's how this government got to a balanced budget in just under three years. And just like my family at times had to share in the pain for the gain, so did the great people of Saskatchewan. And it is they, Mr. Speaker, who we have to say thank you to. Thank you for their commitment and support in helping us achieve a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, the 2019-20 budget is not only balanced with a small surplus, but it sets Saskatchewan on a path to ensure balanced budgets in the years ahead. The right balance is important because, just like my household, kids grow and their needs change. So has Saskatchewan been growing and its needs have changed and continue to change. Newcomers from around the world continue to come to our great province to create better, safer, more prosperous lives for themselves and their families. I ran a household of 10; this government runs a household of 1.16 million people. A growing province means growing demand for the vital government services that keep us all healthy, happy, educated, safe, supported, and able to contribute to society in many ways.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is the right balance to keep our economy strong. It contains no new taxes or tax increases and it does continue to make significant investments in health, education, social services, and assistance.

Mr. Speaker, my household was fortunate as my husband always had a good job. This is important in order to have money coming in the door to pay for things we needed. In parallel, we know on this side of the House that a strong, consistent, and sustainable economy is important to ensure revenues to cover expenses.

One of those very valuable and important streams of revenue, Mr. Speaker, is our oil and gas industry. The challenges and the impositions from our federal government on an industry that has not only provided a significant amount of employment in this province but contributed significantly to the revenue streams of all provinces in this country is sad, and has created a hole that we needed to fill in order to get back to balance and keep Saskatchewan strong and economically viable.

I was glad last week to speak to the private member's motion

proposed by my colleague from Swift Current, and to see the opposition stand with us opposing Bill C-69 and send a message to our Prime Minister and senators to halt and repeal this legislation that will create even more regulatory uncertainty and politicization in the Canadian energy sector and hurt Canadian workers and prevent pipelines from ever being built in this country again. Now I can only hope the opposition would support our Prairie Resilience plan and stand with us on fighting against the carbon tax, a tax that will not reduce GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions but will only hurt our economy and burden Saskatchewan families.

Mr. Speaker, despite our revenue challenges in the oil and gas sectors, this government knew and understands the resiliency of Saskatchewan people and put a plan in place that we all had to take part in to get this province back to balance, the right balance for this province and its people.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007 we were left with a \$6.4 billion debt from an NDP government. Many facilities and highways in this province were left in very poor condition due to a lack of maintenance and repair investment. Many had reached their lifespan and needed replacement, but the NDP government during the years in office prior to 2007 chose to not invest in the needs of Saskatchewan people. Instead their response was to close 176 schools, 52 hospitals, and 19 long-term care facilities, and left highways in horrible condition. Mr. Speaker, it is evident they were out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan then and they are out of touch now. Mr. Speaker, that is not how you look after your home.

Since 2007 our government has invested nearly 1.5 billion in building new schools, hospitals, long-term care homes, renovations, and equipment upgrades. This is more than double what the NDP spent in their last 11 years in office. We have worked hard to curb and reduce our expenses, but in this budget we have also shown the people of Saskatchewan that we will continue to make significant investments in priority areas.

Mr. Speaker, many of my colleagues have already spoken about the budget increases and investments we are making this fiscal year. Other jurisdictions have chosen the path of ongoing deficits with no commitment to balance. In Saskatchewan we have charted a different course, with a sustainable plan that ensures a bright future for our children and for generations to come. In the years ahead, the right balance will continue to be the foundation of our government's sustainable fiscal plan.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is my home. It is the home of just over 1.16 million people and growing. We need to take care of our home. We need to meet the needs of all those that live in our home. We need to maintain our home with upkeep and tender loving care, and we must live within our means.

Mr. Speaker, this is the best budget this province, I believe, has seen in a very long time. It is balanced and it is the right balance for Saskatchewan and its people. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget put forth by our Minister of Finance and I will not be supporting the amendment proposed by the opposition.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Athabasca, to give my perspective on the budget and the not-so-balanced budget that's obviously being viewed by many people throughout Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

But before I get into my presentation on the actual budget, I want to first of all recognize a friend of mine from back home. His name is Terry. Terry is part of the Hansen family. And, Mr. Speaker, I know a lot of people in northern Saskatchewan are aware of how impressive and how strong and how great in numbers the Hansen family are. But I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that Terry doesn't like to admit it, but we're his cousins. Our fathers were first cousins. And a lot of times Terry does not want to admit that he's cousins to politicians and to the Belanger clan.

[15:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, as the saying goes, when it comes to your friends you can choose who you want, but when it comes to your family you simply have no choice. And in Terry's position he has no choice but to accept us as his cousin. But I want to say hello to him and also to his family, his wife, Arlene, who is a very impressive, educated lady. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, many people throughout the constituency of Athabasca are watching what their MLA speaks about today.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the member from Lloydminster, the member from Indian Head, the Premier, and every cabinet minister sitting across the way, that it's been 11 years that you've been forming, that you've formed the Government of Saskatchewan, 11 years. And in those 11 years, you've had record revenue. So why is it every day we hear them whining and complaining about the NDP when they've had 11 years to govern? And sooner or later, Mr. Speaker, they've got to let go of their training wheels as a government and start standing up on their own and stop blaming the NDP for every problem they've encountered in 2019.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the people of Saskatchewan this. Number one is that they have had . . . In 2007 when the Saskatchewan Party government came into office, the debt in Saskatchewan, the debt, the total debt in Saskatchewan was around 7 billion, the total combined debt between the Crown corporation debt and the general revenue debt. Why was it down to 7 billion, Mr. Speaker? Because they, Mr. Speaker, inherited \$2.3 billion from the outgoing NDP government. And this is what the important part is, Mr. Speaker, that after 11 years of Sask Party rule, Mr. Speaker, what's going to happen by 2023? Well we're taking that \$7 billion debt that they had when the NDP were in power in 2007 and it's going to triple to \$22 billion here within the next couple of years, Mr. Speaker. They're going to triple our debt in 11 years of Sask Party rule, Mr. Speaker.

And they have in essence broken the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And they stand in their place and they tell and remind the people of Saskatchewan what the NDP did. And I say to people every single day, that's all the conservatives do, Mr. Speaker, is they whine and complain about the other parties. When they have had the opportunity to govern, they have driven every jurisdiction that I know of . . . Look at Alberta, Mr. Speaker, 44 years of Tory rule. And look at the debt that the

Alberta people find themselves in. Now we look at Ford, look at Ford in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. They're cutting and gutting everything. That's the same as the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

Now people ask me, well why do you refer to the Saskatchewan Party as conservatives, Mr. Speaker? Well they changed their name from the Saskatchewan Conservative Party to the Saskatchewan Party.

So I was wondering, well why would they do that? So the fundamental question I have for every member across the way, why did you change your name from the Conservatives to the Saskatchewan Party? Why did they change their name, Mr. Speaker? Because they wanted to hide from their past. My theory is, is that it's part of their conditions under the witness protection program that they not use a conservative party any more.

That's what they did. They entered the witness protection program from their history of corruption under the Conservatives. They changed their name. And you know the two runnings that they had for the name to replace the Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker, was the apple pie party or the Saskatchewan Party.

And some people say, well the apple pie party is just a little too . . . it's not hard enough and it's kind of . . . Everybody uses apple pie, so let's use Saskatchewan Party.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know a Tory is a Tory is a Tory. And there are Tories across the way, Mr. Speaker. So the fundamental question I'm going to ask is, why did they change their name? Why did you change your name? Why did you change your name? Because you wanted to hide from your history, Mr. Speaker. That's what they wanted to do. And they were successful at that, Mr. Speaker.

But don't come in the Assembly and pretend to be someone else. And especially what I don't want them to do, Mr. Speaker, is stop blaming the other political parties. You've been in power for 11 years — 11 long years. And sooner or later take off the training wheels and start acting accordingly, Mr. Speaker. Start acting accordingly.

Now I find at times passing strange, Mr. Speaker, they say, oh we're not Conservatives, we're Saskatchewan Party. Well, Mr. Speaker, they were told by Andrew Scheer, you will not fight for Saskatchewan under the equalization plan. You be a good little conservative buddy in Saskatchewan and sit down. Don't talk about the equalization argument because it will make us look bad nationally.

So what does the Premier and the company across the way do? They sat down, Mr. Speaker. They sat down and did not take the fight to Ottawa because Scheer told them, gave them a little pat on the head. Be good little provincial conservatives and you listen to us and maybe we'll form government federally.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, you look at some of these other points. As you look at the whole notion around the SNC-Lavalin affair where Scheer says, what we need to have, we need to have an investigation into this. We need to have a forensic audit. We need to have a look at the books.

So these guys are all clapping across the way, these provincial conservatives, they're all clapping away. So my challenge to Scheer and company, if you're asking for investigation under SNC, let's have an investigation and a full forensic audit into the Global Transportation Hub scandal. Well come on, the national leader, you want to talk about the SNC-Lavalin affair? Well we have one provincial one that needs a forensic audit, and it's called the GTH, where there were some horrible mistakes made, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Saskatchewan continue to pay.

So as they look in their rear-view mirror, continue blaming the NDP for every crisis that they've had, my argument to them is, grow up. You've been the Government of Saskatchewan for 11 long years. You've had record revenue. Take off those little training wheels that you have as a government and start standing on your own record, Mr. Speaker. And they refuse to do that because their own record is riddled with a lot of problems, Mr. Speaker, a lot of problems.

And when the NDP were in power in 2007, Mr. Speaker, we had a debt of 7 billion. By the time these guys are done in 2020, Mr. Speaker, that debt will be creeping up to 23 billion, over three times what they had when they assumed power, Mr. Speaker. And that is a crying shame because you know what's going to happen? They will be long gone, Mr. Speaker. They'll be long gone. And who'll be left to pay the bills? The people that are left behind to pay the bills are the young people, the young people, the families, and our grandchildren, Mr. Speaker.

Now I point out again if Scheer is being requested to and is calling for investigation into the SNC-Lavalin affair, I would challenge him to call an investigation right here in Saskatchewan on the GTH. Because a fraud investigation in Ottawa is the same thing as a fraud investigation in Saskatchewan, so do both. Do both. And that's exactly my point, Mr. Speaker, is these guys are sitting on their hands for little pats on the forehead every now and then to make sure that they don't disrupt the federal Conservative plans to try and form government nationally.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this government has had record revenues, record revenues in their last 10 years. No other government in the history of Saskatchewan has enjoyed the revenues that the Saskatchewan Party, the conservative party across the way, no other government has ever enjoyed this, this kind of revenue coming in, Mr. Speaker.

And I find it's absolutely . . . I was smiling in my chair, Mr. Speaker, as I drove by a billboard in 2007, maybe eight or nine months after they were elected. And it said on the billboard, we have paid down 40 per cent of the debt. I said, oh my goodness, these guys have only been in government for seven months, they're paying 40 per cent of our debt down. And then the premier at the time was Brad Wall, and he said, when he was asked about the finances of the province, the reference he made was, stark. That's what he said, they were stark. So the cupboards were bare, and the future looked gloomy, and the finances were stark.

Seven months later they're paying 40 per cent of the debt down. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? That goes to my point. They had two and a half billion dollars left in the bank, left it in by the people of Saskatchewan. And a mere 11 years later the Tories are back, we are now tripling our debt, Mr. Speaker. And who is

going to pay? It's not going to be them. It's going to be the future generation of this province, Mr. Speaker.

And who is paying it? And I might add, Mr. Speaker, when you see \$800 increase for families under the PST, Mr. Speaker, \$800 for every single family. When you look at in northern Saskatchewan, the land leases, they're quadrupling, if not five times for people who have leases in the North, and this goes with companies that lease land. This goes with the outfitters. This goes with private citizens. You know, people are paying five times more in lease fees because of this government, Mr. Speaker.

Now in the last several months, a couple months ago, I lost my brother. He lost his battle with cancer and as part of his will, he bequeathed his truck to my younger sister because she never had a vehicle. And as my sister inherited his truck, he was living in the territories at the time, Mr. Speaker, she brought the truck home and she had to pay PST on this. And she come to me and said, what is this PST about? It's \$700-and-some I've got to pay on this truck that I inherited. And I said, oh that's part of the PST is required on any sale of a vehicle coming into Saskatchewan.

Well my sister works very hard. She has a family. She's adopted two children, and she has a tough time making ends meet. Well, Mr. Speaker, in a sense she was very lucky to receive a truck, but she had to find the money to pay the tax on that truck. And that is who is paying this government, paying for this government's mismanagement after all these years, Mr. Speaker. It is the families that are paying for it, Mr. Speaker. It is not the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker — absolutely not.

Well what's also painful, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Minister for SaskPower today talk about the federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, in those power bills, in the power bills that people are receiving. Yes, the Saskatchewan Party's going to highlight the federal government's carbon tax.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we think they should add the not-so-smart meter costs of \$35 million that Bill Boyd put in place. Put that under that carbon tax; put the smart meter fiasco cost you this much on your power bill. Next one, put the carbon capture tax. You guys put the carbon capture tax, put that \$2 billion price tag; your fee for this month for the power bill is this amount. Due to tax increases on the power bill, show that as well. Show the debt-ridden tax. Put that in there as well, Mr. Speaker. The increased PST costs for families, put that on a separate line in your power bills.

So if you want to put the federal carbon tax, put all your taxes in that bill and explain to the people, explain to the people what they're paying on their power bills, don't just select the federal Liberal carbon tax. Put your boondoggles, put your taxes in there as well.

If you want to politicize the power bill, well come on you guys, let's be transparent. Let's be transparent. I almost feel like doing this, Mr. Speaker. I feel like taking a copy of my power bill, and I'll break down the costs for the people. I think we're paying \$60 per tonne on carbon tax, a carbon capture tax. I think that's the amount, if it's not \$80. Mr. Speaker, that carbon capture tax we're now paying for in our power bills. It has all been hidden in there, Mr. Speaker.

So I tell the people of Saskatchewan, if the Saskatchewan Party want to be truthful of all the surcharges and taxes in the power bill, well bring it on. Bring it on. Bring on all those transparent costs so every family in this province knows the truth behind your boondoggles, behind the GTH, your carbon capture \$2 billion failure, Mr. Speaker. Talk about your tax increases. Talk about the smart meter fiasco. And when all this was going on by the former member from Kindersley, none of the cabinet ministers had the courage to stand up to challenge that. They sat on their hands, Mr. Speaker. And who's paying for that today? We are all paying for that, Mr. Speaker. We are all paying for that.

And I'll point out, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Speaker, not to be completely unfair, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower, Mr. Speaker, they have some excellent employees. And it's a Crown corporation and we're going to protect our Crown corporations. But when we see the Sask Party stripping them of their dividends, using them as a political tool, Mr. Speaker, using them as a political tool, Mr. Speaker, we know that the Sask Party is once again trying to hoodwink the people of Saskatchewan. And it's important that people know when you get your power bill, a big chunk of your bill is the result of the Sask Party mismanagement called the carbon capture tax, called the not-so-smart meter fiasco of 35 million bucks, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

Families are paying more. We're paying more for our power. We're paying more for our gas. We're paying more for our insurance. We're paying more for our food. And the Sask Party is not an innocent party in all of this. This is tax on tax, Mr. Speaker. One year alone, one year alone, a billion-dollar tax hike — 1 billion bucks — and that from the provincial conservatives. I thought at one time they didn't like tax increases. They're just hung up on trying . . .

**The Speaker:** — The member is well aware that this is the Sask Party government and this the NDP opposition. They're not conservative provincially. Continue on.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, the question I would ask, and it's factual, Mr. Speaker, is why did they change their name? Why did they change their name? That's a fundamental question I have to this day, Mr. Speaker.

So as we sit here and look at the future . . . I tell people in northern Saskatchewan, you're going to pay more for the mismanagement of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. And I look at the history of the Saskatchewan Party and the conservative parties across the country. Alberta is no different. If people think that four years of Rachel Notley created this huge mess for the Albertans, Mr. Speaker — absolutely not. She inherited all that from who? From the Conservatives, Mr. Speaker. So it's the same old, same old.

But do you know what they'll do, Mr. Speaker? They'll get up and they'll whine and they'll complain about every other party. They'll talk about a party that done something 40 years ago, and they'll talk about that. You know why, Mr. Speaker? The intent is to misdirect people's attention. The Saskatchewan Party, like their conservative cousins across the country, all point out to the other party. That's all they ever do because they cannot provide

leadership on their own and every jurisdiction that they have managed in this country, and any time they've managed in this province, they have driven our economy to the ground and they have saddled us with years of debt, Mr. Speaker. And that trend continues. That trend continues. So no matter how many times they get up and say, oh, no, no, no, we on this side of the Assembly know families and corporations and people of Saskatchewan are paying more and more because of the mismanagement of this government.

Now I'm going to finish off, Mr. Speaker. I want to finish off my address on something I think is really fundamentally important. Northern Saskatchewan enjoys a lot of resources, Mr. Speaker. We have such beautiful lakes, we have such clean, pristine lakes, Mr. Speaker. We have forests. We have gold. We have rare earth, Mr. Speaker. We've got tourism opportunities. We've got outfitting opportunities. We have uranium. The North is rich, Mr. Speaker. The North is rich in resources. And all the time people in the North are saying, like my father before and his father before, they've always maintained the North can survive on its own if it's granted access to those resources and they're not sold out from underneath our feet.

And what happened, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP were in power? We had forestry rights owned by the First Nations in northern Saskatchewan and owned by the Métis communities. And what happened, Mr. Speaker, again going back to the Saskatchewan Party, their former member from Kindersley, he took those forestry rights away, and he turned around and he gave it to a company in BC. And no investment into training for northerners. No investment into the highway infrastructure. None whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. So when I hear people complain about some of the Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal people being on welfare, Mr. Speaker, I say to them they do not understand that the Aboriginal people and northern people in general don't want welfare.

They want their fair share of the resources that surround their communities. That's what they want, Mr. Speaker. They want that determination and that pride back that my father had and my grandfather had. But these days the conservatives have sold everything, Mr. Speaker. They have sold everything from under our feet, and once again we're seeing how that lack of vision is hurting our communities, disrupting our lives, and really creating a grey cloud of doom and gloom for our future, for our children and grandchildren, Mr. Speaker.

Now on that point I want to say that the northern people, the northern people overall — indigenous and northerners, non-indigenous alike — they are very strong, resilient people. We have seen this act before, Mr. Speaker, where we're totally ignored, and we're seeing that again. The people of the North will not back down. They will not give up. They will continue fighting for their fair share of the resources around their land, because until you get them, Mr. Speaker, we don't want to hear no complaining of any of these social programs that some of our families are forced to take because we're denied access to land. And now we see that more apparent as the land fees increases are going through the roof.

How is it that you expect the people to rebuild if you take away their basic rights to access the land and resources in and around their community? How would people feel? How would the

agricultural community feel, Mr. Speaker, if they were not allowed outside their farmyard? Everything around, all the farm land around their properties, they could not access. They wouldn't like that one bit, Mr. Speaker. But I'll tell you one thing. That's exactly what the Saskatchewan Party and the conservatives do when they view how the indigenous people operate in northern Saskatchewan.

Now saying the point about northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we come from a region that's had difficulties over time. And most recently we've had the closures of the mines. It has had a devastating impact and effect on our communities, Mr. Speaker. It is a crisis.

And we see once again the minister of SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] shut down some key positions within SERM offices, Mr. Speaker. I know of staff members in Buffalo and Southend, P.A., La Ronge, some of the people that have lost their jobs in the most recent cuts, they have dedicated their lives to Saskatchewan Environment. And in one case, the Buffalo Narrows office was a busy ... the second-busiest office in all of Saskatchewan. And yet the support staff were stripped of that office, Mr. Speaker, and all that remains are COs [conservation officer].

So I would point out, Mr. Speaker, some of these cuts to a community like Buffalo Narrows, where they've had program after program slashed, they've had education challenges within their school because of funding, they lost their regional correctional centre a couple of years ago, and now we have more desperate losses around SERM. And then you couple that with the loss in the mine sector, and you imagine how devastating that is to a community.

But the most amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, is this community and this region and these people have not given up. No matter how much this government kicks them in the stomach when they're down, they're going to continue fighting for their rightful opportunity to share the resources and benefits associated with all the land in and around our communities. That is fundamentally something that I think the people of Saskatchewan, northwestern Saskatchewan, want to say, Mr. Speaker.

And I would end on this point as it pertains to the northern Saskatchewan people: continue being resilient, continue being strong, and never give up. Because that's exactly what the conservatives want. Because they always say, they always say that there's nothing in the North. These guys say, well if there's nothing in the North, why do you want it all? There's so much there for everyone to enjoy and benefit from. Mr. Speaker, it is a social and economic justice matter, Mr. Speaker. And our issues should matter to this government. And apparently, Mr. Speaker, from this budget and other budgets and other actions, they absolutely don't.

But nonetheless, as they send me forward as their MLA, they want to send a message: that as hard as you are on the northern people, the stronger that they will become. Because you're denying the basic right to be able to access opportunities in and around their land. And, Mr. Speaker, this is by design, and this is through no fault of northerners. And that's why I tell them to continue being very strong.

Now the northerners themselves, Mr. Speaker, they aspire greater and grander things for the province. Many northerners will talk about financial management of our province. It's amazing, I've said it many times in this Assembly. Northerners don't like to see debt go that high. Northerners don't like to see certain programs that are being dismissed. Northerners don't want to see the Crowns sold. There's some basic, very fundamental principles that northerners believe in, Mr. Speaker.

And the most amazing thing that I find is the high regard that northerners have for the agricultural community. Through time I think they have become very educated as to the incredible value of the agricultural community. The economy attached to agriculture is one of the mainstays in our province. So they often tell me, if farming suffers, then we all suffer, and it creates more problems for everyone. So we're in this boat together. That's what the premise that many of the northerners explain to me, and you'd be surprised at some of the places I hear that from, Mr. Speaker. So they understand and accept the fact that you've got to have a strong agricultural economy to have a strong Saskatchewan.

So it begs the question: so what does the North have to offer on that front besides encouragement and respect for the agricultural sector, the rural part of Saskatchewan? Well people in the North are telling me that this government had the opportunity over the last decade to do something phenomenal for that sector so that we can all benefit, and they failed miserably. And let me explain how, Mr. Speaker.

I go back to my earlier point. Blaming the NDP for all your problems, people are tired of that. It's really an old, passé argument, Mr. Speaker, that people don't even hear anymore. Somebody mentioned Grant Devine's name last week. That's the first time in the years I've been here I've heard that name mentioned across the way, Mr. Speaker. But the problem is nobody knows who they are. They forgot who Grant Devine was.

And when you hear the Saskatchewan Party blame the NDP for everything — or the federal Liberals, but it's never a fellow conservative — then people basically say, well what's that about? That's a lack of leadership is what many northerners tell me, that they refuse to accept their responsibility and do the right thing. They have degraded the whole purpose of politics to simply blaming the other guys.

And in the end of the day, if you don't provide that sound leadership and that solid direction, you're doing a great disservice not just to the northern people but to the agricultural sector, to the corporations that operate within Saskatchewan, and more importantly, to the children and grandchildren of our province, Mr. Speaker. And that includes everyone, indigenous and non-indigenous.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at the last 11 years, including this budget, as a decade that wasn't. That's exactly how I would describe the Sask Party's rule, the decade that wasn't, because they went down to the cheap theatrics of blaming the NDP without providing solid leadership.

Nothing on addressing the grain transportation crisis. I continue talking about that. Why? Not because I'm the critic for transportation, Mr. Speaker. It's because we have a grain

transportation crisis that is still looming. You look at the fact that not one inch of pipeline was built to tidewater under this party's rule — not one inch, Mr. Speaker.

You look at now, now the agricultural sector is being hit with cancelled shipments of canola and grains. Well the Sask Party in the last 11 years must have noticed that there would be trade disputes in this world. What can we do to prepare for that? They didn't do any of that, Mr. Speaker.

Water management strategy. I spoke about the water management strategy, that we should have 100 Lake Diefenbakers built in this province to retain water. For what? For agriculture and for our lives. And not one dollar was spent on trying to look for a major water strategy, Mr. Speaker.

So as you look at the grain transportation crisis, you look at the pipeline issue that has not been addressed by this government, you look at now the cancelled shipments of grain, canola that affects us all. That affects people in La Loche, in Fond-du-Lac. That affects people in Esterhazy. It affects everyone, Mr. Speaker. That hurts us.

So as a landlocked province, Mr. Speaker, which we are, northerners say, why didn't the Saskatchewan Party do something significant in the last decade when they had record revenue? And after 10 years of record revenue, Mr. Speaker, what do we have to answer to this? We have record tax increases and we have record debt. But you'll never get a Tory to admit that, Mr. Speaker. Instead it's, oh, those NDP, they closed down 20 schools and 15 hospitals. Well my argument to them is, reopen them. You had the money. Reopen them.

It sounds pretty quiet over there. It sounds pretty quiet. You know why it's quiet, Mr. Speaker? Because they've been exposed for their MO [modus operandi]. Their only tactic in politics is to criticize the other guys. So you're blaming the NDP for shutting down schools and hospitals because Grant Devine put us in huge debt — \$15 billion we owed in 1991. That was a lot of money, Mr. Speaker. Despite what the member from, from, I don't know where he . . . Cannington, despite how he might try to rewrite the history, Mr. Speaker, we had record debt under Grant Devine and we almost went broke. We were at the point in 1991 when we almost couldn't pay our own staff members. That's how broke we were. But the Saskatchewan Party won't talk about that. As far as the Saskatchewan Party is concerned, the world was created in 2007, when they were elected, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

Now the member from Regina Walsh Acres is chirping from his seat, Mr. Speaker. The first thing I would do, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP resume government of this province, Mr. Speaker, and if I am, my suggestion would be that as him and his colleague are campaigning for their federal Conservative seats and they're now sitting as the MLA, they should do Saskatchewan a little favour. Because when you run for federal politics or provincial politics, you have to keep a copy of all your expenses. Then after the election is over, then you get half of it back, you know, as part of the electoral process. So they're sitting as MLAs, being paid each \$94,000 a year, those two members across the way there, and they're campaigning for federal MP [Member of Parliament] positions. So my argument is, as you're out there campaigning,

can you please claim your MLA salary as a campaign expense so we can get at least 50 per cent of that back and that'll come back to the Saskatchewan taxpayers? Because, Mr. Speaker, they're out campaigning for federal jobs. So do us a favour. Help us try and find the balance. Claim your MLA salary as a cost for your federal ambitions . . .

**The Speaker:** — I'm looking forward to you connecting this to the budget debate, so continue on.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to say from the perspective of northern Saskatchewan, we once again are being kicked at when we're down, but we're not going to give up. And that is the fundamental point I want to share with the Saskatchewan Party. Secondly, sooner than later the northern people are going to band together and start fighting for a fair return on the resources in and around our lands, that we're going to motivate the federation of indigenous nations, the Métis Nation, our New North, and many of the communities in the North to sign up and start demanding our fair share. Mr. Speaker, it is a question of economic and social justice. That's what the matter is all about.

And I would say as well for the northern people, Mr. Speaker, we saw what the Saskatchewan Party failed to do. It was a decade that wasn't. Imagine for a moment if we addressed the water management strategy so required for the future health of our agricultural sector, if we had a sound water management strategy. Nothing, Mr. Speaker. Imagine for a minute that we had a modernized pipeline system that got our product to market, Mr. Speaker. Not one inch was built under this particular government. Mr. Speaker, imagine if we had a solid grain transportation system that got our products to market faster and quicker and efficiently, Mr. Speaker. And imagine, Mr. Speaker, above all else, that we had a government that managed their finances well so our future generations wouldn't be saddled with the debts that they're being saddled with today.

So as we ponder some of these opportunities that were missed by the Saskatchewan Party, what is left, Mr. Speaker? Despite having record revenue, we saw record tax increases last year, Mr. Speaker, and now we're seeing record debt two years from now.

And mark my words: 90 per cent of them will not be around within the next two or three years, Mr. Speaker, because they're going to be out and about — gone. And who'll be left paying the bill here once again, Mr. Speaker? It'll be the people of Saskatchewan. That's why we can't afford the Saskatchewan Party anymore.

And when they get up and blame the NDP all the time, Mr. Speaker, I tell them they're doing a great disservice to the future generations. They're doing a great disservice to their role as government. They're doing a great disservice for cheap, political theatrics, Mr. Speaker, to the role that they were elected on by the people of Saskatchewan, and that to manage our affairs well. They have failed miserably on this front, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I'll be supporting the amendment and not voting for their budget.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, I'm very honoured to rise and say a few words on this year's budget, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I do though, I want to say a few thank yous, first to my constituents for giving me the opportunity to do this. Mr. Speaker, it will be 13 years I think this June, Mr. Speaker, and it has gone by incredibly fast and so I want to thank them for their support.

I want to thank and congratulate our Minister of Finance and the treasury board and our cabinet and the caucus for putting together a budget that we certainly believe is the right balance for the people of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ministry staff within the Ministry of Environment as well as the Water Security Agency and SaskPower that I have the opportunity to be the minister responsible for. And I want to thank my staff here in the office at the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to thank, Mr. Speaker, my constituency assistant, Marcie, who is back at the office in Weyburn. Mr. Speaker, she has done a tremendous job for the constituents of the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency even before I was elected, Mr. Speaker. She was the constituency assistant for the MLA before me, Mr. Speaker, and she does a tremendous job, Mr. Speaker, and I really can't thank Marcie enough.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my family. We are a growing family. So Jack will be five in June and he is a delight. He is a very sweet boy. He is testing daddy's patience on a daily basis, Mr. Speaker, but we're just having so much fun most times, Mr. Speaker.

His little brother, Ephram, turned two just last week, Mr. Speaker. And he's quite the personality as well, Mr. Speaker. I think Jack right now is probably more the athlete but Ephram is more of the artist, Mr. Speaker, so he likes to . . . He actually likes to do some singing, Mr. Speaker. And it's pretty cute because the words aren't quite audible at this point but he's got the melody down pretty good, Mr. Speaker.

And I think members will know that we're expecting number three in April, Mr. Speaker, in the next couple of weeks. And we are very excited about that. We're having a girl so I'm very nervous about that, Mr. Speaker. My colleagues have been making sure that I know that the, you know, first 12 years or so are pretty good and then after that is a different story. So I was nervous enough about this, Mr. Speaker, and they haven't helped.

But I want to thank my family and most especially Amanda, my wife, Mr. Speaker. It will be 20 years that we've been married come this July, Mr. Speaker. She's just tremendous. She's wonderful. I can't say enough about the mother that she is and the wife that she has always been, Mr. Speaker. And so I do want to thank my family for their support.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll just inform members, so as we're expecting the baby, I've had some questions. This is my baby beard, Mr. Speaker. I've told my wife that I'm going to keep it until the baby's born, but I'm kind of maybe considering keeping it a little bit longer, Mr. Speaker. But I have to say that the longer that I'm the Environment minister, Mr. Speaker, and the longer this beard gets, I don't know what it is, Mr. Speaker, but I find myself looking through the autoTrader looking for a late '90s model Suburban, and I find myself reading Norwegian cowboy poetry. So I don't know what it is, Mr. Speaker, but . . . [inaudible

interjection] . . . I'm glad some people around here have been long enough to understand what that was a reference to, Mr. Speaker. So again thanks to all those and thanks to my family.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say . . . So the member from Rosemont and I are about the same age. And I was thinking this while I was sitting here watching the budget reply. The Finance critic for the opposition has to be one of the toughest jobs, especially on budget day because the room is full of people that are here to hear the budget, and especially as we have been working hard over the last number of years to get into a position to table a really good budget, Mr. Speaker. And you know, I would say, not unlike the opposition to a carbon tax in this province, I think the support for this budget by the people that were invited guests is about 90/10 in favour of the budget, Mr. Speaker. Certainly a lot of supporters of the government were in the room, Mr. Speaker. And that's got to be a tough job to get up and try to say something.

But I remember it differently when we were in opposition, Mr. Speaker. So I had the opportunity to be on staff for about a year and a half, so I would sit in the lounge behind those doors and watch budget day as I'd watch every question period with the staff. And then I was fortunate to be elected in 2006 and took my seat for at least one year in opposition, Mr. Speaker. And I just thought it seemed like it was different.

So last night I went back and I watched the delivery of the 2007 budget. It was March 22nd. A lot of things have changed, Mr. Speaker. The carpet was red. I noticed that. A lot more members were sitting on that side of the House than today, Mr. Speaker. The member, the Government House Leader, was younger, Mr. Speaker. He was in the camera shot; that's the only reason why I say that, Mr. Speaker. And the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove — I want to say Silver Springs, but I don't think it's been Silver Springs for about one or two elections — he was the opposition critic for Finance. For the opposition he was the Finance critic, so he was delivering the speech.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would say that, you know, the word I would describe him and I think even previous Finance critics was happy warrior, knowing that it's, you know, the government, it's kind of the government's day. They have a budget to present and they're going to have things in it. And especially 2007, it's an election year so it's going to be as, you know, should be a decent budget. You would hope it's going to be a decent budget. And by the end of watching the then Finance critic, our member, our Minister for Central Services, deliver his speech and watching the reaction of the crowd, you wouldn't have known who the government was because there was a smile on his face because he was making I think very good points that were resonating with the people who were likely invitees of the government of the day, Mr. Speaker.

And so I say all this because I actually feel bad for my friend from Rosemont because totally different, like *Apocalypse Now* different, Mr. Speaker. But it's a tough job, but it . . . You know, I'm not in a position to give anybody advice, Mr. Speaker, but I'll maybe leave it at that, Mr. Speaker. But I kind of know why. And it's you probably can't be that happy to spend so much time with people like the member from Athabasca, who just finished speaking, Mr. Speaker. That's probably got to rub off on you after, you know, 10 or 12 years of sitting in opposition, Mr. Speaker.



And I, you know, following . . . I've had a couple of opportunities in budget and throne speeches to follow the member from Athabasca. And I've got to say, that's kind of a treat. No, I'll say this, Mr. Speaker: it's a little bit like being in the NHL [National Hockey League] draft lottery, Mr. Speaker, in that it's good and bad. It's bad in that, like you weren't very good so you're in the lottery. It's good because it kind of feels like the number one pick.

So in this case, I won't probably get to most of my speech just because I need to respond to the member from Athabasca. And I will in this, Mr. Speaker, a couple of things. So he started at about 3 — 3:15 was the time on the clock, about that. And he started to talk about . . . I don't know why he would start here but, you know, this is kind of a quote. I put it in quotes but I'm not sure if I totally got it, but you'll get the drift: you've been in government for 11 years. Stop talking about the NDP government. Stop talking about the past. So that was about 3:15 on the clock.

And at hour 3, 3:18:47 seconds, "A Tory is a Tory is a Tory, Mr. Speaker." It took him three minutes after telling us to stop talking about the past, to start talking about the past, Mr. Speaker. I actually give him credit because it wasn't until about 3:44:27 that he actually mentioned Grant Devine for the first time, Mr. Speaker. I was thinking, like Grant Devine, set the over/under at about 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker. I would have been . . . I would have gone with the under, and I would have lost on that one, Mr. Speaker.

To the member from Athabasca, live in the now. That's my only advice, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. Well the Leader of the Opposition . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Leader of the Opposition wants to get into the debate, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition wants to get into the debate, Mr. Speaker, and I'll get to him in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that we hear a lot from the NDP is record revenue. This government's had record revenue. Record revenue, Mr. Speaker. Well I want to quote from something I heard in that video, March 22nd, 2007, Andrew Thomson: "Today's budget is our largest ever at \$8.3 billion . . ." Record revenue, Mr. Speaker, that would be the definition of record revenue.

I think you could go back, and I think I've actually done this probably in a speech in the past, almost every single government in the history of this province can claim record revenue. That's just kind of the nature of growth, which I know they have a problem understanding the nature of growth, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, a few other things that I noted from his speech, Mr. Speaker, on our power bills. So, Mr. Speaker, and I had an opportunity to speak to this in question period, but the fact that the federal government is imposing a carbon tax, you have two choices. You can either bury it in the bill, you can either bury it in the bill, Mr. Speaker, or you can actually tell people what they're paying on their bill like we already do with the GST [goods and services tax]. We don't just give you a bill that has one number on it and in that number is all your utilization of power and the rate and the GST. We actually separate out what

you actually pay in your bill. And I think the member from Athabasca actually referenced PST on residential bills. You don't pay PST on residential bills, so I thought I should clarify that, Mr. Speaker.

But he wanted all these things to be itemized on everybody's bill, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, well where does that begin and end? When we bring on wind power, Mr. Speaker, should we put on . . . Because in the past, while prices are coming down, there's still a premium that you pay for wind power, Mr. Speaker. Certainly when the NDP were bringing on wind power in the province, there would've been a premium paid for that power. Do we put that itemized on a bill, Mr. Speaker?

What about the missing \$15 million from Channel Lake? Should we put that on the bill and SaskPower as well, Mr. Speaker? Should we put the \$15 million in missing money from when SaskPower purchased Channel Lake Petroleum? Maybe that should go on the bill as well, Mr. Speaker. So I think the member opposite maybe should think about that before he wants everything else . . . Perhaps Guyana power, Mr. Speaker, maybe that should be itemized on the bill as well.

Mr. Speaker, and the final point, I have actually probably two or three more, two or three more that I could put on here. But the other one, Mr. Speaker, is that he admonished this government. We should have 100 Lake Diefenbakers in this province. We should have 100 Lake Diefenbakers in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, a couple points on that. According to a story in the *StarPhoenix*, 2017 . . . So it was the 50th anniversary of Gardiner dam, which created Lake Diefenbaker, Mr. Speaker, "It would cost more than \$1 billion in today's dollars to build." And that member wants 100 Lake Diefenbakers. Okay, well let's come up with \$100 billion somewhere, Mr. Speaker. But don't take on any debt. Build 100 Lake Diefenbakers. Spend \$100 billion to do so. Find 100 river bottoms that the members opposite would be okay if we flooded. Because, you know, in order to create a Lake Diefenbaker, you've got to build a dam. In order to do so, you've got to find a river to dam and therefore you create the lake, Mr. Speaker. So I wonder if the members opposite . . . I wonder if he kind of ran that by perhaps the member from Nutana. Would you be okay if the government went and flooded 100 riverbeds across the province, Mr. Speaker? What about the environmental questions that I would hope that that member would have?

And it just seems so odd that the member from Athabasca would be so adamant and to admonish this government that they apparently had a plan, which I've never found, Mr. Speaker, but 100 Lake Diefenbakers. The same outfit, though, that when it came to Rafferty and Alameda, well that was a huge thing. Like they weren't exactly onside with the government of the day in building those, but we need 100 Lake Diefenbakers, Mr. Speaker, at \$100 billion cost. So always a thrill to follow the member from Athabasca in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about . . . He did, and this is . . . I was going to talk about this before I knew what he was going to talk about, Mr. Speaker. But in my responsibilities as Minister for SaskPower, one of the things that comes up is debt, Mr. Speaker. And so I just, I think it's important to put that into context, Mr. Speaker.

In 2007 — just some numbers that I know everybody's writing these down — in 2007 we had 155 000 kilometres of power lines, 451,713 customers, and generating capacity of 3668 megawatts, and about \$4.4 billion in assets within SaskPower. Fast forward to 2018, we have 157 562 kilometres of power lines, so about 2500 additional kilometres of power lines that have been built over the last decade. We have 532,719 customers. That's 81,000 more customers, customer accounts that we're dealing with, Mr. Speaker, and 4492 megawatts, nearly 1000 megawatts in additional capacity within the system, Mr. Speaker.

And so I think it's important to just put all of this in context and why SaskPower has incurred the debt. And I think our argument — and I would hope this would be the argument of everybody — SaskPower is a going concern that is able to service their debt. And so when you look at debt, this is not operational debt. This is not credit card debt. This is managed debt. This is self-sustaining, supporting debt through the operations, Mr. Speaker.

And I put some of these numbers on the record in question period, Mr. Speaker, but the capital expenditures. So in 1998 — and I hope the Leader of the Opposition will forgive me about putting some of this into historical context and going into the past — but 1998 is 136 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well just hear me out. \$136 million in capital in 1998, so 136 million, went up to 184 million; then 210 million; then a big jump, 364 million. 2002 was just short of 300 million; then 263 million, so you know we're in that 2 to \$300 million range. 2005 was a big year, \$473 million.

Compare that to the last 10 years or so. So keep in mind, \$473 million was the high-water mark year under those years, Mr. Speaker: 2008, 421 million; 2009, 640 million; 2010, 565 million; 2011, 625 million; 2012, 981 million; 2013, 1.318 billion; 2004, 1.279 billion; 2015, 990 million; 2016, 886; and then \$996 million. So several years over a billion dollars, well over a billion dollars; several years just under a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. So three times the amount of capital that has been required over that time frame, Mr. Speaker.

So again keep in mind the number of customers that are now being serviced, the amount of generating capacity that has had to be built into the system. So there's a couple of choices that we could make as a government. You either don't build that capital, so maybe we just keep it at \$300 million a year. So all those years over a billion dollars, all those years at 900 million, let's just keep it at \$300 million. But that's a choice. You can make that choice. So there's no upfront costs to do that, Mr. Speaker. There's no, you know, there's no borrowing. There's no borrowing those dollars. Rates can remain the same.

But here's the problem. 80,000 customers won't have power. So you know, we think it's a good thing that 160,000 people have moved into the province, but imagine that sales pitch. Come to Saskatchewan; the economy is growing; bring your families with you; half of you are going to get power. That doesn't really fit on a brochure. I'm not sure . . . like I'm sure marketing people could do something with that, but I'm not sure. Or, come to Saskatchewan; we're only investing \$300 million in capital; rolling brownouts are, you know, maybe twice a week is what you're going to get.

And, Mr. Speaker, think of the industry that relies on that power that wasn't here before. There's no K+S mine without that capital expenditure. There's no expansions. There's no K3. And you know, I looked at the numbers of just new developments in the province, new capital developments. None of that is possible.

So if you make the decision you're going to build, which I know wasn't a problem for the NDP because the province wasn't growing, so it's pretty easy to keep \$300 million in capital rolling forward and replace some poles because you're not actually . . . the economy's not growing. So I know they were never really faced with this challenge but we have been.

So you have a choice. You can build. So if you choose . . . First choice, not build or to build? You choose to build. Then the second choice is how do you pay for it. So you can take on debt to pay for it, because the revenues of the company, Mr. Speaker, are not high enough to just self-generate, to self-pay for that capital expansion, Mr. Speaker. And we have, you know, very few years in the last 12 that we've actually taken a dividend from SaskPower — and I'm only speaking of SaskPower at this point, Mr. Speaker — when the record had been 90 and 70 per cent dividends each and every year from the NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

In fact they actually took on some debt in SaskPower in years where they had not enough cash to pay that dividend. Plus there were years, Mr. Speaker . . . In fact I remember 2003, so the dividend was paid in 2004, Mr. Speaker, and the dividend was . . . So net income was 187 million. They took 90.4 per cent of the dividend, which is \$169 million, but only about 115, if memory is correct, 115 million of that was actually cash. The rest of it was a non-cash . . . I think it was an exchange rate issue or something like that. So they actually didn't have enough cash to cover the dividend, the 90 per cent dividend that they stripped out of the company, Mr. Speaker.

So we have taken relatively few . . . Most years we've not even taken a dividend, Mr. Speaker. So either you take on debt to service and grow the province as the province is growing, Mr. Speaker, or you just do it through rates, Mr. Speaker. You think they complain now about how high the power rates are, Mr. Speaker. And even though the member opposite, the member from Rosemont was talking about how, you know, the number of customers that are in arrears, although the percentage is actually the same — 93 per cent are current today as they were in 2007, Mr. Speaker. But we have more customers, so yes, the overall number is going to be higher, Mr. Speaker.

But can you imagine if we funded capital through the rates, Mr. Speaker? For anybody who thinks rates are high today, we would have had to average likely 20 per cent rate increases each and every year for a decade. So take your bill today and add a couple hundred per cent onto that bill. That's what it would have been like to not have SaskPower take on debt, Mr. Speaker.

So those are the choices that we've had to make within a growing province, Mr. Speaker. So they can't really have it all ways. They can't say don't take on any debt; they can't say don't raise rates, and then complain when things have to get built or complain when there's an outage, Mr. Speaker. You can't have it all those ways, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so I'm cognizant of the fact that I wrote down when the member opposite from Athabasca started, but I didn't write when I did, so I'd better wrap up here pretty soon.

Mr. Speaker, I just really quickly want to talk about the impact of the budget in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. This is a, you know, we've come through a couple of years that have been, you know, I think as the local economy is waiting for I think just some stability, particularly on the oil side, Mr. Speaker, knowing that a big part of our constituency are facing headwinds that are not of their own making. Frankly, I would say not of the province's making, Mr. Speaker. These are things that are out of a lot of people's control. But I think there's a lot of optimism that's returning, and certainly I think this budget does support the work that is taking place in my constituency.

I do want to just note three things that I think are noteworthy for my constituency. First, I want to thank the member from Estevan, the Minister of Highways, for the ongoing work that was started under the member from Wood River, the now Agriculture minister, on the twinning and passing of Highways 6 and 39, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think this has been very well received in my constituency. And I think people will appreciate the, I think, the pragmatic approach that we're taking where, you know, it would be nice to twin everything if you could, Mr. Speaker, but not take on any more debt to do it.

But it would, you know, generally speaking I think twinning would be certainly everybody . . . if dollars were not a question, Mr. Speaker. But I think people really appreciate that we're moving forward with the project and we're going to do it in a pragmatic approach, with twinning areas that make the most sense and then doing passing lanes in areas. So all the way from North Portal through Estevan, all the way to the city of Regina, we're going to see over the next number of years in, actually, construction. Some of the lanes opened last year.

[16:15]

And I think I got more calls of complaint, not because it's not all twinned and not maybe because of when they opened or what part . . . I got more complaints about how people actually drive on passing lanes. I think that a lot of people must think that when you get to the passing lane, that's the time to speed up. And so when somebody's pulling over to the left side to overtake that slower vehicle, the slower vehicle uses the passing lane to speed up and it becomes a bit of a . . . Getting the signal. Mr. Speaker, so that . . . So thank you to the minister for that.

A new school, a new elementary school is . . . So the old junior high school has been levelled, much to the delight of every former student of the old junior high, Mr. Speaker. And we're getting a new elementary school that's going to replace three elementary schools, consolidate them. And the city of Weyburn's actually building a \$25 million recreational and cultural facility attached to the school, and that's going to be great. It's going to have an indoor track centre and a field house and some areas for the Weyburn arts organization.

And, Mr. Speaker, last but I think most important for certainly the people of Weyburn and area, is the announcement that dollars

are going to be split between Prince Albert and Weyburn on the next stage of the hospital project, Mr. Speaker. And so that I think has been top of mind for everybody in Weyburn. And our hospital has served us well since 1951, but it has come time for a new hospital and so we are well under way with that.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you. I thank the members. And I will not be supporting the amendment, but I will be happily supporting the budget. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today to address the legislature with my second speech in support of a provincial budget. And they just seem to get better and better every year.

Before I get into any detail on my budget commentary, I'd like to make a few thank yous first of all. I'm very thankful for the opportunity to represent the constituents of Kindersley, and I can't thank them enough for selecting me as their representative here in this legislature.

In the year since being elected, I've come to appreciate more and more every day the responsibility and privilege we have as elected members. I also can't thank enough the two wonderful gals back in my constituency office, my CAs Judy Penner and Rita Syrota — who share one job, by the way — do a great job of handling case files, phone calls, emails, and just do an overall great job on a daily basis. Their jobs, as ours, are often thankless, Mr. Speaker, and so on behalf of myself and the constituents of Kindersley, I want to thank Rita and Judy.

As well I'd like to thank the ministers and their staff for helping my office with case files and constituency concerns. We know that you have 60 other constituencies to look after and prioritizing everything must be an enormous task. You have served my constituency so well this past year. And also a special thanks to the Premier, my colleagues on this side for their friendship and advice, the staff here at the legislature, including Hansard, the security team, cafeteria staff, legislative services. The list goes on. All of you have helped me to navigate my way through the building over the past year.

And of course, I would also like to thank my family for allowing me to pursue this opportunity. Without their support, sacrifice, and patience, I simply wouldn't be able to properly represent my constituency. I do enjoy when we get together on weekends and have some good debates and discussions. Much like their mother, my kids, who are now young adults of 17, 20, and 23, all have strong opinions and relish the opportunity to put the old man in his place, especially on political issues of the day. We end up agreeing on many things but certainly not everything.

It's great for me to get a young person's perspective on things as a person gets a little older — very sobering at times — but educational for me to see how our younger voters sort out the political substance from refuse that is sometimes spewed out in the media. So far there are no indications that they will plan to vote Liberal or NDP so the world gets to stay intact for the time being. And a hard lesson on socialism isn't required at this time.

I find it interesting to hear what some of their profs have to say

to them, especially about politics as they continue their studies in Saskatoon. The oldest is finishing her accounting degree this spring and has applied to the College of Law for this fall. She attended the Softball Academy at Tommy Douglas Collegiate in Saskatoon and also played two years on the U of S softball team.

Our oldest son is finishing up his second year in Arts and Science with potential plans for a kinesiology degree and possibly an undergrad chiropractic program if things work out. His main focus seems to be hockey as he enjoys playing on the PJHL [Prairie Junior Hockey League] Saskatoon Royals team. If that keeps him in school long enough to get his degree, then great. The investment was worth it.

The baby is finishing up grade 11, loves baseball, hockey, football, as his older siblings did.

Mr. Speaker, I'll digress to the budget. I've often heard that in every budget there are winners and there are losers. Mr. Speaker, I don't see any losers in this budget. I see winners. I see balance, the right balance, balance on so many levels across so many ministries. There are many people to thank and give credit for getting to a balanced budget, decisions that far precede my election. Two budgets ago some very tough decisions were made to get us to this point. Some tough decisions are necessary at times to reach an end goal and pave the way to a greater and more sustainable future. It takes courage and resolve to stick to such a plan. Our former premier and his cabinet had the vision. Our current Premier and cabinet shared that vision and carried out that plan. I'm very proud to be part of this team, proud of the balanced approach we take in spending taxpayer money.

Our Finance minister and her team deserve so many accolades for putting together and finalizing this budget. Her hard work and insight made this budget what it is today, that, coupled with countless hours in the treasury board committee, hundreds of hours putting everything together. Well done to all of you in treasury board.

But perhaps most importantly, Mr. Speaker, a point which I think is sometimes lost or sometimes forgotten, I feel the need for us to thank the taxpayers of this province. The Premier has mentioned this on several occasions and I heard it again last week in a speech from the member from Indian Head-Milestone. We need to expressly thank the residents of Saskatchewan. The taxpayers had admittedly endured a less-than-smooth ride over the past couple of years. Thank you for your persistence and resolve. The trust and support you've shown all of us through this process is admirable. Thank you for accepting tax changes that enable us to get away from resource revenue reliance, all for a better end result. We appreciate that fact more than you'll ever know. We did this together. We shared the load, so again thank you for working with us in these last three budget cycles which brought us back, brought us back to black.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, you know, I've never a fan of the colour red. It's my least favourite colour, next to orange. But as far as a business person and a farmer, you learn that red ink or numbers in brackets or parentheses means trouble on a ledger or a balance sheet. Yes, sometimes things happen and it's necessary to spend more than you make in a particular year, but the goal is always to stay in the black. I'm very glad that our government takes that same approach. Not only is this budget in the black and balanced,

but more importantly it allows for additional spending on services while still showing fiscal responsibility, all without cuts to services or tax increases.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to touch on a few of the highlights that I feel are important in this year's budget, highlights that show that we care and we are listening to the people of the province.

Record investment in health care: \$5.55 billion in total programs and services; in mental health and addictions, 402 million, up 30 million; 140 new treatment beds; money to recruit and train professionals; funding for 18 new walk-in counselling clinics.

Money for education funding: 1.9 billion in operating funding this year, Mr. Speaker, an increase of 26 million, while keeping education property taxes unchanged; funding to replace and build new schools; additional infrastructure investment, Mr. Speaker.

I want to expand a little bit more on a couple of those items, because they're quite important. First, the Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, what can you say about that facility? You need to see it for yourself to appreciate it. We had the pleasure of touring and attending the grand opening there earlier this month. I believe there was over . . . around 20 of us, including the Premier. Truly a great day for The Battlefords and the province. That facility represents the single largest investment in mental health in the province's history, at 407 million.

And it is a fantastic facility: a 188-bed, non-secure psychiatric side and a 96-room secure side, Mr. Speaker. At a glance, you can't tell which side is which. The design and the decor makes the facility seem more like an education facility or a school, rather than an institution. And the comfort and safety of residents and staff is built right into that P3 [public-private partnership] design. The residents and staff say they love it. They commented that they feel safe and valued, as they should be in a public facility. I know the members from The Battlefords and Cut Knife-Turtleford are very proud of this facility, and so they should be. Members on this side are all proud of that facility, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite apparently aren't, as I don't recall one positive comment about that facility being built, from that side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, this fall another provincial jewel will be added. Jim Pattison Children's Hospital will hopefully open this fall. Currently 92 per cent complete, this 176-bed facility partnership project for dedicated maternal and pediatric care will finally open, another fantastic partnership project. What a great thing to be able to say of a province of just over a million people, that we have a dedicated children's hospital.

Mr. Speaker, those are some of the major investments that took years to come together. This budget also has great current year projects taking place. There's additional investment in highways, Mr. Speaker: 20 million in safety improvements in this year's budget, including upgrades; an upgrade to the intersection of Highway 21 and 307 in my constituency, which is one of the busiest oil field intersections in my constituency; passing lane continuation from Rosetown to Kindersley this year, Mr. Speaker; game-changing projects as far as traffic safety for my area — not just my area, across the province — with 1000 kilometres of highway improvements to happen this year.

Record investment in social services, Mr. Speaker: an additional fifty-five and a half million in this year's budget, an increase of almost 5 per cent to total \$1.23 billion in spending. And more importantly, simplifying and improving the programs that would hopefully allow clients to more easily work their way out of the program and so the program can ensure its sustainability. There's more money for foster families, Mr. Speaker, more money for those with disabilities, more money for children, more money for families, more funding for our most vulnerable.

More funding in the Ministry of Government Relations. In my previous abbreviated political career as deputy mayor in Kindersley, we found revenue sharing to be a big deal in those communities. This budget increases the support to municipalities and, more importantly, consistent and predictable funding so they know what they're dealing with every year.

I attended yesterday, Mr. Speaker, an announcement. The Minister of Government Relations had an announcement on some infrastructure projects. Kindersley was awarded one of those projects, federal and provincial funding, a much-needed project, and the mayor was in attendance. And the mayor indicated to me that they're not only happy with their budget, they're happy with the way the municipalities are being treated by this government.

Mr. Speaker, that's just a few highlights. And yes, certainly we're proud of the investment that we've made in this province, and I think we should be proud. There's always more to do. That's given in government. But the members opposite try to portray us as boastful braggarts most of the time, spouting off about the things that we've done. From watching the members over the past year, the work . . . the members on this side, from watching, anything we do on this side is not self-serving. It's very well intended, in my opinion. As the member from Canora said yesterday, we're just simply doing our jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP really has limited experience in building anything or simply in making any good financial decisions. If I was a part of that legacy, I would sit in silence and reflect on the dismal track record of their party. Dismal doesn't even begin to describe how the NDP treated rural communities like mine from 1991 to 2006. School closures, hospital closures, job losses, neglect in crumbling infrastructure — they abandoned rural Saskatchewan.

But things got better in 2007 and a decade of growth began. The NDP are perhaps envious of others' success, which is a real shame as the successes we experienced over the last 11 years are being realized and enjoyed by the people of Saskatchewan.

[16:30]

And while doing a little research the other day, I ran across an interesting fact. This week, 110 years ago, the *Titanic*, construction on the *Titanic* began. And I think we can all agree that the sinking of the *Titanic* was a tragedy. There's no question about that. I'm not making light of that at all. But then I thought of what about the owners of the *Titanic*? What were their thoughts? And past the guilt of the boat sinking, how did they owners feel? Did they feel envious every time a boat crossed the ocean and got the passengers to the other side? I think that's maybe how the NDP feels seeing all the things that this party

does, takes them to completion, and they can't be happy for anybody. Can't be happy for the passengers. They can't be happy for the residents of the province for all this infrastructure that's being spent on them and all the services provided.

So anyway, you know, we sit here on this side of the House and listen to unconstructive criticisms by the NDP. As the member from Swift Current stated, they seem very similar to armchair quarterbacks. Plenty of negative commentary with absolutely no game plan or game experience. We hear they don't believe we should borrow money; debt is bad. Yet they want more funding for classrooms, teachers, support staff. And the silence when all that is rolled out in this budget. They pushed for more money for mental health and addictions and yet not one positive comment about the Saskatchewan Hospital being built, let alone a single person in attendance for the ribbon cutting. They claim that we don't care about the environment because we don't drive electric cars or have a climate change strategy, yet won't mention Prairie Resilience. They complain about the cost of carbon sequestration, and then complain about higher power bills for consumers. It doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP never, ever believe that the pie can be made bigger and for more people, so everyone can have a bigger slice. And that's why people flocked away from here under their government, and our government has built on to the house. There's 116,000 more people living here. We have more infrastructure. We have more services.

Mr. Speaker, I've tried to comprehend and understand the NDP position, so I made a list. The good: if you're going to be fair, if you're going to be fair, you have to look at both sides. So the good list is a bit short but there's still a good list. They're honest; they're hard working for the most part, from what I see; and they're loyal to their constituents and their values. That's the good.

The bad: they criticize with no plan or solution; they attempt to divide with virtue signalling on things like climate change, environment, or racism; they make insinuations with regard to honesty, ethics, big money, and scandals. And as I made that list I thought, wow, this sounds very familiar. And lo and behold it dawned on me, they're like every other socialist cousin from coast to coast in this country. And the list grew from there, so the good and the bad got to the ugly.

And their ideals and ideas seem to be better than anyone else's. They love the planet more than we do. Their cars are smarter than ours. A carbon tax is a good idea, even though 8 out of 10 Saskatchewan people don't. The absence of a platform — they'll tear down the other person's, any tactic necessary to seize power. And the ends always justifies the means. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid the folks in good old Saskatchewan don't buy that list and they don't much like it.

But you know what they do like, Mr. Speaker? They like our Premier, the most popular Premier in the nation. They like that we're concerned about the economy. They like investments in their community. They like fiscal responsibility, and they like balanced budgets. They also like a party that picks a lane, the right lane.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude with opposing the amendment and

fully supporting the motion put forward by the Minister of Finance. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to start with a few thanks to, first of all, my constituents from Regina Pasqua who gave me this privilege to represent them. And of course this is indeed an honour to represent them and speak on their behalf to this budget, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to say thank you to my family, my . . . all brothers, six brothers, and of course my mom, a very important person in my life, and for her prayers and everything. I also would like to say thank you to my family: my wife, that in this coming July we've been together since last 20 years, Mr. Speaker; three boys, Mr. Speaker, grade 11 and grade 8 and one is in grade 4 — Arsalan and Kashif and Ayaz. They all go to French immersion school, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say thank you to my CA. Waqar Bukhari is keeping my office very up to date and listening to all my constituents on my behalf and forwarding all those issues or challenges to the ministry. And I would like to say thank you to all my caucus members and all this cabinet for solving all those issues from my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, for the last 10 years this government spent every single dollar wisely and very carefully to get its maximum value with the commitment and determination for economic growth and investment in infrastructure, in health, in mental health, Mr. Speaker, education, and all essential needs of the people of Saskatchewan while living in our means. Mr. Speaker, it is wise to live in your own revenue, not to go into debt. Do not borrow money and do not pay interest. Rather, you spend that money in your own community and your own province for your needs.

Mr. Speaker, people from other jurisdictions and members across the floor, they're not very serious about finance and fiscal policies, and they say we don't have to balance the budget because the budget is going to balance by itself. Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely incorrect. This budget did not balance itself. It has been very hard work for three consecutive years by former Premier Brad Wall and former Finance minister Kevin Doherty, and this Premier and this minister and all the cabinet and the caucus.

It was three years ago. It was a very tough decision, but very right decision, Mr. Speaker, when Saskatchewan had very difficult economic times with revenue shortfalls. When the NDP had a difficult time, they closed schools, made classrooms crowded, sent teachers out of the province, and closed hospitals, which made Saskatchewan the longest surgical time in this country. They closed long-term beds, created difficulties, and devastated seniors' lives. They eliminated essential services to the people of Saskatchewan who sent them to represent them, Mr. Speaker.

When we had the difficult time, we controlled our finance, and the same time we invested in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. We invested in highways. We invested in health by building hospitals, long-term cares, hiring doctors and nurses. We invested in education by building, repairing schools, hiring more teachers, and spending record money in education, and kept

Saskatchewan strong, created more than 60,000 jobs, and kept unemployment rate minimum, Mr. Speaker, kept the economy on track, and finally delivered a right, balanced budget in 2019-2020.

And this 2019-2020 budget reflects a strong economy in the future, more employment, and providing essential service for people of Saskatchewan in every area: in social services and assistance, protection of persons and property, education, agriculture, community development, environment, and natural resources, also in transportation, Mr. Speaker.

This is what this budget's all about, Mr. Speaker. It is for the people of Saskatchewan. It is all about our future generations. In this budget there is no new tax, Mr. Speaker, a budget which promotes new business, small, medium, and large, and big-sized business.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is not like an NDP government budget. When they had difficult times they raised taxes, where they ripped the economy off. We remember the frustration and migration of Saskatchewan people when the NDP government was handling our finance. Failure to provide basic needs to the people of Saskatchewan by closing schools and hospitals, plus they inherit deficit to pass on to the next generation, Mr. Speaker, where the Saskatchewan Party government paid about \$3 billion debt repayment.

Mr. Speaker, recent high potash prices and modest recovery of oil helped our oil and mining sectors. We all know, Mr. Speaker, these businesses are our strength. Agriculture is our strength. As the Premier mentioned many times, that is our backbone. Manufacturing is our strength, Mr. Speaker, and there are exports — an engine for our economy, Mr. Speaker, and sadly, being threatened by this NDP opposition since they are supporting Trudeau's carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

As the Leader of the Opposition said, Saskatchewan will not receive \$62 million in funding for emission reduction initiatives by not signing the federal carbon tax plan, ignoring the harmful effects of carbon tax on our economy. An analysis from the University of Regina Institute for Energy, Environment and Sustainable Communities: a federal carbon tax could potentially reduce Saskatchewan's gross domestic product by \$16 billion, Mr. Speaker, with little effect on emissions.

Mr. Speaker, this opposition driving our Saskatchewan business community into the situation where it will simply make it impossible to make competitive transactions in the world market. Saskatchewan business communities are simply afraid from Trudeau's carbon tax which will increase the cost of energy, and then higher energy costs work their way through the economy, raising costs of production, reducing income, and reducing employment. It will be a direct burden on our economy.

Mr. Speaker, there is no carbon tax in our budget. Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote what leader from opposition said, CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], October 30th, 2016. I quote, Mr. Speaker: "We also need to look at what's been done in other places and consider a modest carbon tax." Mr. Speaker, this is not Saskatchewan people's voice. NDP is not what is representing the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

When it talks about taxes, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the province where the family of four pays no income tax on their first \$50,495 of income which is the highest tax-free threshold in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we have the record investment in health. In 2019-2020 budget, the Ministry of Health budget invested a record amount of 5.89 billion in health care, which is an increase of 196 million over last year. It is up to 60 per cent since 2007 and '08. This includes record funding of almost \$402 million for mental health and addiction services, up nearly \$30 million over the last year budget.

Mr. Speaker, new funding of \$558,000 will be supporting the creation of a provincial organ donor registry. Work will commence immediately with the goal of launching a registry before the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, 2019-2020 health capital budget includes \$12 million to begin construction of a new long-term care facility in Meadow Lake, with the capacity increase from 55 to 72 beds. And we are expecting construction in spring 2020, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the 2019-20 budget increased operating funding for Saskatchewan Health Authority to \$3.6 billion, \$113.3 million increase for doctors, nurses, and staff for providing the best possible care for children at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, which is now 96 per cent completed and will open in Saskatoon this fall. And I would like to invite all those opposition members to come for the ribbon cutting.

[16:45]

Individualized funding for the children under the age of six with autism spectrum disorder will increase from \$4,000 to \$6,000 annually, providing parents with greater flexibility to choose from the range of therapeutic interventions and support for their child. An estimate of 700 children are eligible to benefit from this \$700,000 funding increase, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this budget made the largest investment in mental health and addiction services in Saskatchewan history. The Ministry of Health funding for mental health and addictions increases by nearly \$30 million in the 2019-20 budget. The budget is, total, \$402 million. This includes a \$13.7 million increase to support the new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our record shows that how serious are we in education. And we have been, and we know that the support Saskatchewan students by increasing the funding for the classroom, libraries, and the community-based organizations and early learning programs in the Ministry of Education in the 2019-2020 budget.

The 2019-20 budget provides \$2.48 billion for the Ministry of Education which supports the pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to grade 12 classroom, early learning and child care, libraries, and literacy programs. Saskatchewan's 27 school divisions will receive \$1.9 billion in school operating funding for the 2019-2020 budgets for the school year, Mr. Speaker, an increase of \$26.2 million over the last year's \$1.87 billion budget, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to the classroom learning, school infrastructure investment will increase by nearly \$20 million over last year to the total of 95.6 million in the 2019-2020 budget. This includes \$3 million to provide planning and designing funding for the following new major capitals: the replacement of École St. Pius elementary school and Argyle elementary school in Regina, Mr. Speaker. And there are a few other schools as well in Moose Jaw. And in Moose Jaw, there's a replacement and consolidation of Sacred Heart, St. Mary elementary school.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that, how did NDP support education? What was the NDP's standard supporting our students, Mr. Speaker? The NDP was sitting on this side and here is the story of that, Mr. Speaker. I would like to quote from *Hansard* in April 5 in 2004, page 348, and Mr. Taylor said:

On the expenditure side, Mr. Speaker, we are spending in this budget a record [amount] \$2.7 billion on health care. And we are spending an increased amount on education — \$1 billion. So together, Mr. Speaker, health care and education are costing this province \$3.7 billion.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan deserves better than this, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, health and education are very essential to Saskatchewan, and we are spending in health \$5.89 billion and in education in this budget, 2.48. Together it is \$8.37 billion, compared to what they spent, \$3.7 billion, Mr. Speaker. We all know that, Mr. Speaker, that we're serious about our future. We are serious about health care. We are serious about the education system. And we are not taking any suggestions from that side.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is also investing \$728 million in Saskatchewan post-secondary education. Government will provide \$673 million in operating and capital grants to post-secondary institutions. Students will also benefit from 33 million in direct financing support, and there is a scholarship program. There is the graduation retention program. Mr. Speaker, the province has invested \$10 billion in post-secondary institutions and student support.

Mr. Speaker, our government is spending record money on our highways and not asking our farmers to do voluntary road repair, as the NDP was one time very serious about it. Our Regina bypass is on time and on budget, and in this budget, 2019-2020, we will invest \$20 million in safety improvement across Saskatchewan provincial highways. We are spending \$65 million enhanced intersection safety program. In addition, \$7 million will be invested through the safety improvement program to reduce frequency and severity of collisions.

Mr. Speaker, it was our commitment in last fall's Throne Speech to deliver a strategy to reduce the risk of collisions at intersections. The enhanced intersection safety program will accelerate the completion of intersection safety enhancement, complete major intersection improvement, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan will invest an additional 55.5 million in Social Services in this budget, increasing the ministry's budget by 4.7 per cent, whereas the inflation rate was only 1.4 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

The government is continuing to work towards improving and increasing funding for the Saskatchewan assured income for

disability program. Mr. Speaker, the ministry's income assistance budget will increase by \$10 million, including a 6.3 million increase for the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program and a remaining \$3.7 reflects overall program costs and the further investment in this service delivery, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government took care of the people with disabilities. The ministry will also simplify the way income exemptions are calculated and increase them so SAID beneficiaries who are able to work can keep more of what they earn. Mr. Speaker, currently exemptions are calculated monthly and are equivalent to annual amounts of 3,900 for individuals and 5,100 for couples and 2,500 for the families. Beginning in summer 2019, Mr. Speaker, these exemptions will be calculated annually and will increase to \$6,000 per year for individuals, \$7,200 for couples, and 8,500 for families.

Mr. Speaker, the balanced budget increased 3 per cent, which is \$391.3 million, ensuring programs to support the success of farmers, researchers, and agri-businesses. This will encourage our agriculture sector to continue to grow. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, the money will be spent in agri-biosecurity program introduced last year, a federal-provincial Canadian Agriculture Partnership including crop insurance, AgriStability; AgriInvest; and western livestock price insurance. Mr. Speaker, it is a balanced budget, provides the right balance for Saskatchewan with investment into infrastructure for the growing province in both urban and rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the 2019-20 budget delivers 2.7 billion for infrastructure investment in 2019-2020 consisting of 1.6 billion of capital investment in the commercial Crown sector and \$1.1 billion in capital investment by executive government ministries and agencies. Mr. Speaker, this budget is balanced and has no new tax.

Mr. Speaker, after the NDP's 16 years in government when they messed up Saskatchewan health care and education, the Sask Party government worked hard to reshape this province, to reshape Saskatchewan health care, to reshape the education system. The NDP government hurt the Saskatchewan economy enough by raising taxes. They're simply not serious about our finance. That is not representation of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They are out of touch, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm not supporting the amendment for sure. And this side of the people has the true voice of the people of Saskatchewan, and I'm supporting the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into this debate around the budget this close to 5 o'clock. You know, Mr. Speaker, I've been trying to pay attention to what members opposite have been saying in the budget debate because it's always an important opportunity to hear from members on the other side, especially those that we don't normally ever get to hear from, Mr. Speaker.

But frankly this sitting, my resting heart rate is higher than it normally is. I'm hungry and I'm uncomfortable all the time. So I

go from happy to rage very quickly, so I've purposely tried to avoid most of paying attention to what the other side have been saying, Mr. Speaker, for my own health.

I will say . . . I know I don't have a ton of time, but I do want to take the opportunity to thank those around me who help me and support me every day, in particular my CA, and my partner, Jared.

I do want to talk a little bit about the budget. I am going to be relatively brief because I know the members on this side have done a very good job of eloquently explaining to members opposite all of the concerns that not only come from the NDP — and I'm sure they would think that's not the case — but also from what we've been hearing largely in the community, Mr. Speaker, about this budget and about the previous budgets and the impacts that have had on our community.

So when they talk about slight increases that may have been made in certain areas — and I do want to talk about a few areas in particular — when you compare that to the past few years of significant cuts, and the members opposite want to pat themselves on the back for the work they've done on this budget, really the impacts are still being felt in many sectors from the cuts that have been happening and that have happened over the last few years.

And I try really hard, like I said, not to pay too much attention to the speeches on the other side, but we hear from members opposite, speech after speech, about how we're living in the past and we're not focusing on the future and then quickly move on to some revisionist history dating all the way back to the building of the *Titanic* apparently, Mr. Speaker, which was a new . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it was an interesting step back into history, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time talking about how apparently it was the NDP that weren't being fiscally responsible. And I could spend way more time than I'm going to have to correct them on their revisionist history, but I will focus mainly on this budget in particular because I do know that I'm limited in the amount of time that I have. And I don't want to get too angry, Mr. Speaker.

This budget is not balanced — we've said this a few times — when you look at the debt and the growth of the debt, which needs to be considered and how exponential it has been over the last decade, Mr. Speaker. These are interest payments that we're going to be paying for generations to come, Mr. Speaker, and that will have an impact on the amount of revenue that we will have to pay into ministries that need it, Mr. Speaker. So it is important to have that discussion. Members opposite don't want to have that discussion, but it's important for us to do that, Mr. Speaker.

Like I said, debt continues to rise and it's been tripling. It has tripled, Mr. Speaker, since 2009. There are many impacts as a result of that, and that's something that members opposite don't want to talk about. And I know the Finance critic speaks about it very, very eloquently, Mr. Speaker.

There are many cuts in this budget that I want to be able to talk about, and I probably will have to tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** — It now being 5 p.m., this House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.



[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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