



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

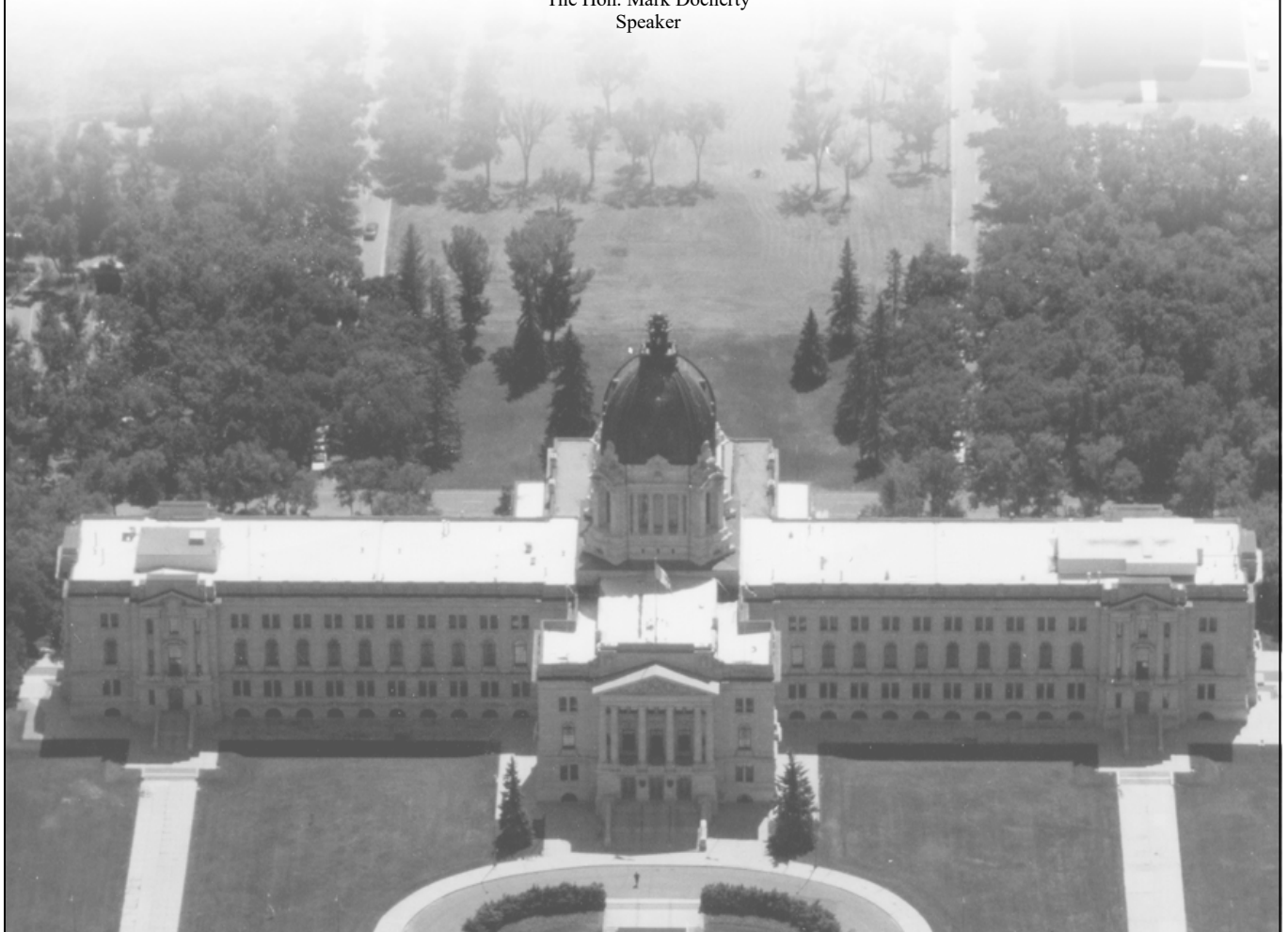
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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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**  
**4th 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> , 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> , Hon. Todd — Melfort (SP)	<b>Stewart</b> , Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
<b>Hargrave</b> , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Tell</b> , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harpauer</b> , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	<b>Vermette</b> , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Harrison</b> , Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Weekes</b> , Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Hart</b> , Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Wilson</b> , Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
<b>Heppner</b> , Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon</b> , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Hindley</b> , Everett — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Wyant</b> , Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Kaeding</b> , Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Kirsch</b> , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	
<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Vacant</b> — Regina Walsh Acres
<b>Lawrence</b> , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	<b>Vacant</b> — Saskatoon Eastview

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13; Vacant — 2

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Buriannyk

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Speaker:** — I've got a few school groups to introduce. So sitting in both the east and the west galleries, I'd like to introduce a total of 37 grade 7 and 8s from Imperial Community School and McDermid Community School. And with them are their teachers, Karen Anderson, Michael Duck, and chaperone Colin Mantyak.

They're here to participate in the Provincial Capital Commission's A Day in the Legislative Assembly program. I have the honour of calling them my constituents. It has been a privilege of myself and my predecessors since 2012 to welcome more than 500 students to this important program.

Today these students will meet with me and the Minister Responsible for the Provincial Capital Commission, the member for Regina Lakeview, and the Clerk and have a guided tour of the rotunda, the Cabinet room. And then we're going to have a little session here towards the end of the day. So I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these two awesome school groups to their Assembly.

I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to join with you in welcoming this group of 37 students here to a day in the life of the provincial legislature. I look forward to meeting with you later this afternoon, and until then invite all members to join with me in welcoming these students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would also like to welcome these grade 7 and 8 students from Imperial Community School and McDermid Community School. Mr. Speaker, as you mentioned, these students are here for A Day in the Legislative Assembly, experiencing first-hand the excitement involved in this Assembly. I'll have a chance to speak to this group later this afternoon about the role of a minister and how I made my way to serve in this Assembly.

I hope the students enjoy their time exploring their Legislative Building and are inspired to participate in government processes at some point in their future. I'd like to thank these students from McDermid and Imperial community schools for their interest in government, and I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome guests that are seated in the east gallery here today.

These are folks that represent the Wascana Solar Co-op as well as the Distributed Energy Association. I want to welcome Shanon Zachidniak, John Brazill, and Donna Nelson to their Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery we have a number of guests from two of our regional colleges that are working together, from Cumberland and Parkland, Mr. Speaker. I'll just ask if you could give a wave. Mark Hoddenbagh is here. He's the CEO [chief executive officer] of Cumberland-Parkland. We have Ray Sass and Corrina Stevenson. Ray Sass is there. Corrina Stevenson is there. They co-chair the board. Brian Hicke, Lori Kidney, Wendy Becenko, and Marcel Head. I hope I haven't missed anyone.

I know the member from Yorkton will also be speaking to this a little bit later, Mr. Speaker. Our regional colleges are very important stakeholders in the Advanced Education space, and I've had the opportunity to meet with these good folks several times in their space and others.

I'd also like to just very quickly, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, in the east gallery way up at the top there I have two individuals from the Hill Business School. Lee Elliott and Sean Tucker are up there today to watch proceedings. They love to be here to catch the action, Mr. Speaker, so I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'd just like to quickly join with the minister in welcoming the guests that we have here today in the gallery from our regional college system. Certainly in a province like Saskatchewan one of the big barriers to getting at post-secondary education is geography and the distance. But the regional college system bridges that distance, gets the learning opportunities to the learners, and is a very valuable part of our post-secondary education system in this province. So I'd join with the minister in commending these folks for the great work they do.

And as well to give a quick shout-out to Sean Tucker and Lee Elliott from the Hill Business School, but you know, frequent, frequent subscribers to the comings and goings at the legislature. But I just want to say as well a word of special thanks to Sean Tucker for all the work that he does around occupational health and safety, a nationally, internationally recognized expert and a lot of good things to be learned there, Mr. Speaker. So again, I'd join with the member opposite in welcoming these very important people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Professor Tucker to the legislature today. He has done a lot of good work on identifying trends and peeling back the layers, statistical layers, so we can do better on occupational health and workplace safety. So the work

and the comments and advice he's given us have been invaluable. I may not agree with all of his social media commentary, but of course in a democracy he is entitled to make the comments as he sees fit. But I certainly appreciate the work that he's done in partnering with the ministry. So I want to thank him for that and welcome him to the legislature today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join in with the Minister of Advanced Education and welcome these representatives of Parkland and Cumberland College to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

President and CEO Mark Hoddenbath of course, he's a welcome addition to the college system. He has a lot of experience in business as well as education, administration, and community engagement. So we're really looking forward to working with him in the years ahead.

Ray Sass and Corrina Stevenson are Co-Chairs. Ray's actually a good friend for many years. I've known him for quite some time. And on another note, he's actually our provincial representative on national for Civil Air Search and Rescue Association, so very involved in his church and his community and the province as well.

Board governors are Brian Hicke, Lori Kidney, Wendy Becenko, and Marcel Head, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to welcome these people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the east gallery — I can't see them — but there is 31 bright, shiny students from the Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw. It's always nice to be able to welcome this Peacock class. They come here every year. And I want to especially thank their teacher, Carrie Kiefer for being so astute and bringing them here. And along with them is Cody Campbell.

We're going to have a little visit after then. And I've also got a special flag that I'm bringing for them that was signed by the designer, Anthony Drake, on the 50th anniversary of the Saskatchewan flag. So we'll be talking to them and we'll have a picture taken. And I ask everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Steele:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, four individuals I'd like to introduce. Amanda Farnsworth, a long-time friend and campaign manager. We made many miles back in 2016 I think it was. Kept me on track as I was wandering around in the Southwest. And her friends are Kody Pritchard, and Mae and Gerald Skeels from Rocky Mountain House. Amanda and Kody live in the Alberta part now. So I'd like to welcome you into your House. Thank you so much.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to

introduce, sitting in your gallery, Cheryl Ginter sitting with her mom, Pat Ginter. Please wave.

Cheryl is the store manager in Lowe's in my constituency, Regina Pasqua. Mr. Speaker, Cheryl is doing a lot of good work and fundraising for many community schools and different organizations. More will come in my member's statement, Mr. Speaker. I ask all the members to join me and welcome Cheryl and her mom in their Legislative Assembly. Thanks.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of northern Saskatchewan residents: that *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act* was introduced in 2018, but it has not been passed because it has not received support from the Sask Party government; that suicide continues to affect families throughout Saskatchewan; that the rate of suicide among First Nation girls is 29 times higher than other girls.

Mr. Speaker, we are receiving letters from school divisions, from grand councils, from chiefs, from municipalities, from all over. Not only are they signing hundreds of petitions — the residents — but we're getting lots of letters of support for this suicide prevention strategy to come forward. People know there's a crisis going on in our province, and it's time that we have some action. And the leadership, many people are asking for the government to please do act on this petition and on the bill that's before this Assembly.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly call upon the Sask Party government to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to address suicides in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by many, many good people of this province. I so present.

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

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition on behalf of citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose an unfair and ineffective carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following 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 good citizens of Waldheim. Thank you.

**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 citizens, businesses, and communities from all across Saskatchewan as it relates to the Sask Party's choice to impose the PST [provincial sales tax] onto construction labour, and of course to expand it to a whole range of goods from children's clothing through insurance, Mr. Speaker, as well, and to hike it. This accounts for a billion-dollar tax hike, Mr. Speaker, and it's hit households really hard. The average household is now paying more than \$800 per year more in PST each and every year than they were just four years ago.

And as it relates to the tax being applied to construction labour, it's the epitome of a job-killing tax. Sadly the results speak for themselves. Projects have been shelved all across the province. Permits are down all across the province. So many hard-working tradespeople, in fact thousands of hard-working tradespeople have lost their jobs, Mr. Speaker, forced out of their industry, and so many forced out of Saskatchewan, out of the province that they know and love, a tremendous loss for their family, a tremendous loss for us as a province, 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 businesses and families.

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Saskatoon and Regina. I so submit.

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

[10:15]

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present, yet again, another petition calling on the Sask Party government to call by-elections in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. You know, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that the seats of the Legislative Assembly for Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview are currently vacant. And we know that because of a loophole in *The Legislative Assembly Act*, by-elections are not legally required to be called in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview because the former MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] did not resign before August 6th, 2019. They resigned just a few short weeks later in September.

Now we also know that unless a by-election's called, the constituents of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview will go without representation for nearly 14 months. And I know many members on that side don't think that's right. And the next provincial election is held in late 2020. And we also know that the Premier has the power, the authority, and the moral responsibility to call by-elections in Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the Premier to call by-elections in the constituencies of Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing these petitions come from Regina Walsh Acres and Saskatoon Eastview. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this morning to present a petition calling on the Legislative Assembly to stop the cuts to our classrooms. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: that the Sask Party has continuously cut and underfunded funds to our classrooms which is having a devastating impact on schools and classrooms right across this province.

We have almost all of the school divisions in this province currently drawing down their reserves just to balance their budgets, Mr. Speaker, something that is obviously not sustainable. And we also have concerns expressed right across this province about an increasing number of students with additional needs in their classrooms and fewer and fewer supports to address those needs, as well as concerns about overcrowding in the classroom and a withdrawing number of supports, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that needs addressing today. It is not something that lends itself to a plan to make a plan.

And I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to fully restore the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making families, teachers, and everyone who supports to work our education system pay the price for this government's bad management and waste.

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

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for access to trans health care. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that the Government of Saskatchewan states it is committed to meeting the health needs of all residents; that trans-related hormone therapy or hormone replacement therapy, HRT, be respected as a medical necessity and covered completely by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health; that all HRT be covered equally, regardless of type or amount required; that puberty-suppression medication be covered.

And I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan direct the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health to respect the necessity of HRT and remove the financial barrier to receive HRT.

There are a number of individuals that have signed this petition — 784 signatures, 51 pages, Mr. Speaker, from 31 different communities. And I'll just note the communities are Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Abbey, Swift Current, Gull Lake, Yorkton, Kindersley, Warman, Wilkie, Chaplin, Duck Lake, Hafford, Hague, Crane Valley, Turtleford, Langham, Montmartre, Weyburn, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Maple Creek, Lumsden, Fillmore, Eatonia, Radisson, Success, Mortlach, Shamrock, and Manor. Mr. Speaker, I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Eatonia Spartans Beat the Odds to Become 1A 6-Man Champions

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 9th, the Kerrobert Rebels hosted the 1A 6-man football provincial championship, and the team they hosted was the Eatonia Spartans, the team I proudly suited up for many, many, oh so many years ago. Both teams are in my constituency, and this is the first time these two teams have met up in a provincial final.

Kerrobert had a 6 and 0 record, beating Eatonia twice in league play. Went on to defeat Viscount and Raymore in playoff action, while Eatonia had a 4 and 2 record in league and eliminated Hague and Southey on their route to the final.

It was a barnburner final for sure, Mr. Speaker, with both offences firing from the opening series. The lead changed hands five times with the Spartans defence finally holding the Rebels in check through the final quarter. When the gun sounded, the Spartans were on top 63 to 48.

This championship was a long time coming for the Spartans, as the last time they hoisted the trophy was back in 1999. But, Mr. Speaker, what makes this championship even more special was the fact that the football program in Eatonia was resurrected just three years ago, and that team went all three of those seasons without a single win. They entered this season as underdogs, but their winning mindset carried them into Saturday's victory.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Eaton High Spartan players, coaches, and fans on their 2019 provincial championship. Thank you.

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

#### World AIDS Day

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, today I rise to acknowledge World AIDS Day on Sunday, December 1st. I want to raise awareness of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] and AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome], and to take this moment to remember those who have lost their lives.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the highest rate of HIV of any province in Canada. This rate is nearly three times higher than other provinces, and it has increased again for the fourth year in a row. The HIV crisis in Saskatchewan should be a cause for concern for every member of this Chamber.

The impacts of the HIV crisis can be felt most in rural, northern, and Indigenous communities where access to testing and prevention measures are limited. The consequences of not doing enough are disastrous, and we must address this issue by working with communities and prioritizing strategies to deal with the crisis. We must do more to support those affected by HIV, and by doing so we can work to end the stigma of living with HIV.

Let us recognize those who, in the past four decades, have fought on the front lines of the HIV and AIDS crisis, and remember the lives lost due to government and legislative inaction. Mr. Speaker, I call on all members to join with me in not just remembering but also recognizing our province's HIV/AIDS activists, medical professionals, and every person living with HIV and AIDS. Thank you.

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

#### Remembering Gord Staseson

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise in the House today to speak about the legacy of the late Gord Staseson who passed away earlier this year. Gord was a lifelong champion of all things Regina. Impossible to list all he was involved in, Mr. Speaker, but here's just a few. He played a key role in the development of the Agridome, the Queensbury Centre, and several Regina neighbourhoods. He was involved with REDA [regional economic development authority], REAL [Regina Exhibition Association Limited], the construction association, the Regina Home Builders, and the Queen City Kinsmen.

He was committed to mentoring youth in the sports of figure skating, equestrian, golf, and hockey. I understand he was a pretty good hockey player in his younger days. He was fond of and raised a lot of funds for the Cougar women's basketball team. The Saskatchewan Roughriders were very near to his heart, and he was involved as the club president. The term "Rider pride" and the expansion of Taylor Field were part of his legacy. He was the Chairman of the CFL [Canadian Football League] board of governors as well.

He raised funds, as I mentioned, over the years for many, many causes and initiatives, including the MacKenzie Art Gallery and North Central Community Play project. Gord has also been recognized in the Regina and the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fames. He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Regina, Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and he is a member of the Order of Canada.

He packed so much into his 93 years, Mr. Speaker. The province of Saskatchewan will certainly miss him. He was indeed Mr. Regina. And I ask all members to join me in remembering Gord Staseson and all that he accomplished in our great city. Thank you.

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

#### Treaty 6 Adhesion Plaque Unveiled

**Mr. Vermette:** — On August 28th, our leader, Ryan Meili, and I joined many delegates of Treaty 6 territory at the Molanosa

Cultural Grounds to see the unveiling of the Treaty 6 Adhesion plaque, which served as a reminder of the special relationship between the Woodland Cree and the Crown.

The Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, and Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation are the First Nations that make up the Woodland Cree sector. One hundred and thirty years ago on February the 11th, 1889, the Adhesion Treaty 6 was signed in Molanosa by the Woodland Cree and the Crown.

There were many dignitaries in attendance for the ceremony, including the Saskatchewan Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty; Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde; the Prince Albert Grand Council Chief Brian Hardlotte. And the three Woodland Cree chiefs included Montreal Lake Cree Nation Chief Frank Roberts, Lac La Ronge Indian Band Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Chief Peter A. Beatty.

There was an exchange of gifts and a traditional feast that was enjoyed by all. I would like to thank the planning committee for all their hard work in organizing this special day. The ceremony was important for leadership in our province. It shows that relationships is about mutual respect and that adhesion to Treaty 6 goes on as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow, and the grass grows. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I'd like to just remind the member to refer to members with their constituencies. Thanks.

I recognize the member for Regina Pasqua.

### Canada Heroes Campaign

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to share the success of the 2019 Lowe's Canada Hero Campaign. For the month of September, over 270 Lowe's and Rona stores across the country raised funds to help a non-profit organization or public school of their choice. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that in total \$1.2 million was raised.

All the money raised will be presented to over 245 communities and organizations across the country. Lowe's Regina South is in my constituency and raised \$4,564 for the Saskatchewan branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. Lowe's Regina North raised \$4,603 that will be given to Eden Care Communities here in Regina. Mr. Speaker, Rona Home & Garden centre raised \$5,548 for the Cancer Foundation of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the store arranged various fundraising activities, and some employees have chosen to support the organization by volunteering in their personal time.

Taking the spirit of the Heroes Campaign one step further, Mr. Speaker, I now ask all the members to join me in acknowledging the generosity of many Lowe's and Rona employees and congratulate them on the success of the 2019 Heroes Campaign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Innovative Technology Firm Benefits Oil and Gas Industry

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today

to highlight a company from Moosomin constituency which is developing cutting-edge technologies for the oil and gas sector. Mr. Speaker, in 2010 Dan and Olga McCarthy incorporated IJack Technologies and produced their first run of fully-automated hydraulic pumping units in 2013. The IJack hydraulic pump has many advanced features: it's fully automated, it's proven to optimize production, it reduces wear, and it can be monitored from a smartphone or a computer.

Mr. Speaker, during the resource downturn in 2014, most producers were cutting back on their drilling programs. But IJack saw an opportunity and developed a gas compression unit which allows producers to increase production from existing wells. That's Saskatchewan innovation at its best. Mr. Speaker, in January of this year IJack moved into their new 24,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Moosomin where they have seven full-time employees.

On February 16th, Dan and Olga hosted the Pro-Resource Rally where I was pleased to share the stage with many industry leaders and politicians, including our Premier. The event was a tremendous success and provided a perfect opportunity for our government to show our support for the energy sector.

Mr. Speaker, I now invite all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating Dan, Olga, and IJack Technologies for their contribution to the province and to the oil and gas industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Opposition's Position on Pipelines

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. How do I love pipelines? Let me count the ways. That's what the NDP [New Democratic Party] in this province would have us believe, but we know the opposite is true. If they truly supported pipelines, the member for Regina Northeast wouldn't be lamenting, "All that the Saskatchewan Party wanted to talk about was carbon tax and pipelines . . ."

If they truly supported pipelines, they'd be condemning their federal leader's anti-Saskatchewan position, the leader who said, and I quote, "I believe that we have to fight Trans Mountain, so I'll continue to fight it." If they truly supported pipelines, they would not have voted against Northern Gateway. Their leader at the time said, "Looking at the facts of Gateway, I don't think it's a wise project."

If they truly supported pipelines, they wouldn't have voted against Keystone XL, and that includes the member for Saskatoon Nutana and the member for Regina Rosemont. If they truly supported pipelines, they would have sat out this last federal election campaign. Instead, Saskatchewan NDP member after NDP member actively campaigned for their federal leader.

Their position is clear. When it comes to our energy sector, the Saskatchewan NDP's position is the same as the sign that their own leader stood in front of not so long ago; they're all very happy to keep it in the ground.

[10:30]

**The Speaker:** — Yes, I guess it would be worthwhile to get a little harder look at the ruling yesterday.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Management of Provincial Economy

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So I guess the record clearly shows our support for pipelines, and the member would only need to reference debates in this Assembly this session, Mr. Speaker. It's those damaging, divisive games that compromise our ability to get those projects built.

But this morning's mid-year report is more proof that this government is letting people down. Economic growth has been cut in half from what was projected in the budget, down to .06 per cent growth. Saskatchewan is on track to have the second-lowest growth rate in the country. Retail sales are down, exports are down, building permits, housing starts, and construction jobs — all down compared to last year.

This is a government that saw a slowing economy and slammed on the brakes. How much worse do things need to get before this government will accept some responsibility for the damage they've done to people and our economy, and start taking some action to turn things around?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, only the members opposite would put a negative spin on a budget that's balanced, Mr. Speaker, on a budget that's based on population that's continuing to grow, a budget that's based on the fact that our job numbers are continuing to grow. And those members opposite will just criticize that budget that's a balanced budget.

What would they do, Mr. Speaker? Well just this morning that very member said that, he said, you know, we could grow the deficit here this year and those are dollars that they need. That's what they would do, Mr. Speaker. We wrote down the credit card debt. Those members, if they had the opportunity, would write up that credit card debt. Well, Mr. Speaker, in 2007 the voters took the credit card away from those members opposite and they're never giving it back.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — What a bunch of partisan nonsense, Mr. Speaker. The comment was that not a single new dollar to invest in the suicide crisis that grips this province, or the crystal meth crisis, and the mental health supports that are needed will save lives and save dollars over the long term. It's an investment, Mr. Speaker. The government is letting people down on front after front, and it's their bad choices that are making things so much worse.

They've hiked and expanded the PST, taking a billion dollars out of our economy, out of households all across Saskatchewan. They've killed the solar industry, putting hundreds of dollars, hundreds of jobs at risk. And what's their plan going forward? Cross their fingers and hope for economic growth next year that

again is being pegged by this government 20 per cent above what private sector forecasters are forecasting.

Mr. Speaker, hope isn't a plan. When will this government stop letting people down and fire up the economy that they've damaged through their choices?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, it's kind of humorous. The member opposite just made that statement not even an hour ago, and he's calling it partisan nonsense. And he said, and I quote, "could grow the deficit bigger this year." And that is what he said. It is a quote.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why he's calling his own . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — I don't know why he's calling his own words partisan nonsense, Mr. Speaker. It's important to balance the budget. We have done that. We have balanced the budget in very difficult times. The oil prices have still not recovered to where they once were, and we know that. So that's why we had to shift where we get our revenues within this province, so that we can sustain those very services that that member opposite and other members opposite are asking for.

He also knows that the health budget is up in this particular budget year, as is education up to a record high education spend in this particular budget, Mr. Speaker. So I think there's partisan nonsense happening here, but it's on that side opposite.

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

#### Solar Power Net Metering Program

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, we're joined here today by representatives once again of the solar industry in the province — part of our economy that was growing, that holds so much promise for our future, but that's been devastated by the choices of the Sask Party.

Renewable energy is a multi-billion-dollar industry globally. And yet we watched this fall as the Sask Party shocked investors, companies, workers, and let people of this province down with a sudden change to the net metering programs, shutting down an industry and failing on the environment all at once, instead of listening and coming up with a better program. To the minister: why?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've explained before, SaskPower has gone through a process not unlike other power utilities, including the city of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Light & Power; including BC Hydro, Manitoba Hydro, as well as various utilities in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, when the energy charge contains much of the distribution and transmission charge embedded in it, Mr.



Speaker, the more the people are able to reduce the amount of electricity that they're buying from the Crown corporation. They're able to defer their share of the transmission and distribution, Mr. Speaker. And that's why SaskPower made the decision, not unlike other utilities, Mr. Speaker, to make changes to the net metering program.

But I can report, Mr. Speaker, that we know that 2018 and most of 2019 was a bit of an outlier year, especially with the additional 25 per cent top-up with the rebate by the federal government. But to date, in the month of November we've had eight applications. In November of 2016 we had 10 in the entire month. In November of 2017 we had 14, Mr. Speaker. So we're on track where the program has normally been in the last few years.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — The comparison to BC [British Columbia] just doesn't stand. BC for one is consulting the industry and working with them. The minister characterized last week that they were doing something the same as this government is, but that's not the case. They paid for excess power. That's not something that was done here. We had a credit. And it's my understanding that they're going to have a one-to-one credit in place, exactly what the solar industry's calling for here.

The Distributed Energy Association released new statistics on the state of the solar industry this morning — a 99 per cent reduction in committed projects, a 56 per cent reduction in the size of the workforce. This is the association. They're here today. When we talk about slow growth, these are real and visible impacts of the Sask Party's terrible leadership and choices on our economy. Will this minister admit that shutting down a growing industry is no way to fire up an economy?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we certainly are not shutting down a program, Mr. Speaker. We have made adjustments though, recognizing the fact that, as has been stated in this House, has been stated by experts, Mr. Speaker, across North America, that the more that people are able to forego paying a power bill, the risk is that they can transfer the cost of distribution and transmission — which is not a separate item on a SaskPower bill — to those that cannot afford solar panels, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we wanted to ensure that we had a program that was fair for the industry, that they could count on, Mr. Speaker, acknowledging that it is a change while also ensuring that people that cannot afford solar panels are not paying more of the share of the distribution and transmission system.

And you don't have to take my words, Mr. Speaker. A number of weeks ago on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio, all across the province, MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] professor emeritus — and my Latin's a little rusty, Mr. Speaker, but I think that means a pretty big deal — Dick Schmalensee said, and I quote:

So the more people that signed up for the net metering program, the more the cost rose for everyone else . . . Those

costs have to be covered by somebody.

We want to ensure we have fairness for everybody.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — I think I'll stand with the local businesses and the workers in Saskatchewan and their knowledge of this industry any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

But, Minister, if you don't like the program you've got, figure out how to make it better. Don't make it worse. Don't kill an industry, Mr. Speaker. But that's exactly what the Sask Party chose to do. We're losing jobs, losing investment, and losing out on an opportunity to reduce our emissions. Instead of pursuing the worst possible option, why won't the minister look at our plan, Renew Saskatchewan, and work to fire up renewable power in Saskatchewan once again?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for people that work in the industry, Mr. Speaker. I've met with the DEA [Distributed Energy Association] on several occasions, Mr. Speaker. We've made a commitment that SaskPower and myself will continue to work with them, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, but I also trust what the information that not only SaskPower has provided but Saskatoon Light and Power, Mr. Speaker. They brought to council the exact same concerns despite the fact that Saskatoon Light and Power has less than 150 net metering customers, Mr. Speaker. But in the information that was provided to council, this is a risk for a utility the way that it is structured that those costs would be shifted to others.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of Renew Saskatchewan, I'm not going to put my faith in a program when the member from Nutana has to stand in this House — I think on the very first day of the sitting — and ask me how much the program was going to cost the people of Saskatchewan. They have no idea, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you that the program that they have put forward, Mr. Speaker, is not a sustainable program, Mr. Speaker, going forward, and that's why I think the people of Saskatchewan are going to reject it.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Some really disappointing words coming from that minister to the folks that are here today. And you know, these folks are here because they're struggling, and it's really discouraging to see that that minister is not acknowledging this in any way.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health got a little worked up yesterday when we asked questions about hallway medicine and short staffing in our hospitals. If only he'd put that same energy into fixing the problems.

Concerns about equipment failures and short staffing in a brand new health facility should be serious concerns to that minister. The SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union-West]

president told the media that staff shortages have forced her members to literally run between patient appointments. The minister told this House, “Financial resources are not to get in the way of rectifying this problem.”

If it's not a resourcing issue, can the minister tell us why there aren't enough staff to provide adequate patient care in the new children's hospital?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member chose to lead with a preamble that related to solar power net metering, Mr. Speaker. So I want to have an opportunity to . . . Mr. Speaker, I want to have an opportunity to . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I'll say this. I recognize the changes to the program and the effect that it has on the industry, Mr. Speaker. I also know though, Mr. Speaker, full well the effects that it will have for every single SaskPower customer who cannot afford solar panels, who choose not to have solar panels, seniors on fixed incomes, Mr. Speaker, that choose not to have solar panels.

We want to ensure that we have a sustainable program, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. But we also want to ensure that we're not unfairly penalizing people who cannot afford solar panels or wish not to have solar panels, Mr. Speaker. So I acknowledge that the changes have had an effect on the industry. That's why we're committed to working with the industry, Mr. Speaker, on a going-forward basis.

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

### Staffing of Health Care Facilities

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, maybe I wasn't clear that this question was for the current Minister of Health. The minister told this House, “Financial resources are not to get in the way of rectifying the problem.”

I'll repeat the question. If it's not a resourcing issue, can the minister tell us why there aren't enough staff to provide adequate patient care at the new children's hospital?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, for staffing at the new children's hospital, there was over 900 employees at the previous RUH [Royal University Hospital], Mr. Speaker, dealing with this that were transferred to the new hospital and I think as of the end of October, Mr. Speaker, in the neighbourhood of between 200 and 250 new staff that had been added.

Mr. Speaker, there are sometimes recruitment issues but the staff have done a very good job of doing recruitment, Mr. Speaker. Shift by shift, if there's urgent situations, they're able to call in extra overtime staff, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't mean that if on

short notice a staff member is sick or unable to come, they make every effort to replace that person, Mr. Speaker, but it can't always be done.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, this again, as I said yesterday, this just reverts back to the tactics of the NDP. Not long ago they were claiming that we wouldn't have enough physicians to open the hospital. Mr. Speaker, was that true? No, absolutely not. Mr. Speaker, we're making every effort to staff this brand new hospital appropriately.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister can't pretend there's not an understaffing problem. Fifty-two understaffing reports since the hospital opened on October 9th. Fifty-two, Mr. Speaker. That tells a different story.

Yesterday the minister suggested the hallway call bell was installed in an abundance of caution to make things safe. But the bell isn't the issue. It's a symptom of a much bigger problem. And the reality of hallway medicine at St. Paul's in Saskatoon isn't isolated to the fifth floor. SEIU said St. Paul's can be so overcapacity that the hallway is “plugged with human beings.”

To the minister: beyond adding a few beds at RUH sometime down the line, what is the immediate plan to get patients out of hospital hallways?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, the Health critic's right. That issue is not restricted to that one floor at St. Paul's, which she raised yesterday, Mr. Speaker. But it's also not restricted to Saskatchewan. It's an issue that all provinces are grappling with, Mr. Speaker. There's difficulties around this in the health care system. Our officials at the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] are making every effort to rectify it. We've went through this many, many times on the floor of this Assembly — what they're trying to do short term, Mr. Speaker, what they're doing long term, Mr. Speaker.

The critic mentions that beyond the new medicine bed unit in RUH. But, Mr. Speaker, that's going to have an impact in the entire system, including St. Paul's, right through Saskatoon. So, Mr. Speaker, again this is a complex issue. It involves repatriating patients to other hospitals. It involves admissions and discharges, Mr. Speaker. But we're going to trust our officials to do the appropriate work.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, the fact that we're seeing this issue in other places in Canada doesn't mean that that minister can shirk his responsibility to address these very serious issues.

Mr. Speaker, this mid-year update had close to \$10 million in funding for this government's plan for surgeries over the next decade, but it didn't include a cent in targeted funding to get the

current and ongoing capacity crisis in our emergency rooms and hospitals under control. We need a new approach, not recycled lines about old announcements. And we need more resources into our ERs [emergency room] to address these unacceptable wait times.

Again, what immediate steps will be taken to get this crisis under control?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, the \$10 million for the surgical initiative is going to have a significant impact on the health care system. I find it ironic that today she's criticizing that we put \$10 million in there. We made the announcement; they said it wasn't near enough. Well which is it, Mr. Speaker?

The fact of the matter is that action is being taken. A command centre has been set up by the Saskatchewan Health Authority to deal . . . Again I've said this many times on the floor — short term, long term, how they're going to deal with the emergency room wait times and the hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker. They're putting new processes in place that the CEO assures me is starting to see results now, Mr. Speaker. We're monitoring that extremely closely. We're very concerned about this but, Mr. Speaker, we're going to let the officials that have been put in place do their work.

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

### Supports in Classrooms

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education should know that you can't solve issues with class composition without also looking at class sizes. For that minister to suggest, as he has, that the number of kids being taught in a single classroom doesn't make a difference is simply ridiculous.

In school divisions that recognize the importance of class size and still track, those numbers are alarming. In Prairie South, for example, there were 68 classes with more than 28 students. In South East Cornerstone's, teachers have sounded the alarm about classes with more than 40 students, and 75 classes between 31 and 35 kids.

The minister says, we don't offer solutions. So, Mr. Speaker, here is a plan. How about adequately funding our classrooms and capping K to 3 [kindergarten to grade 3] at 24? Will the minister commit to that today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, we've had this conversation on the floor of the legislature, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that the issue that's facing our classrooms, Mr. Speaker — and I've been clear on this and I've been honest about it — that composition is a challenge, Mr. Speaker. We also know, Mr. Speaker, that class size has been raised by a number of people, Mr. Speaker.

But here are some quotes, Mr. Speaker. The dean of education from the University of Saskatchewan says class composition is at the heart of the issue. Mr. Speaker, the former leader of the

New Democrats in BC said the key issue is composition, Mr. Speaker. We know that composition is a challenge, Mr. Speaker, and we know that there are more children in classrooms that have complex needs, Mr. Speaker.

And that's precisely the reason why we've struck a committee, Mr. Speaker. And for the information of the member opposite, they had their first meeting yesterday, Mr. Speaker, so to suggest that this government isn't interested or isn't interested in moving forward as quickly as we can, Mr. Speaker, with developing a path forward on the issue of composition, Mr. Speaker, class size will be considered as part of that, Mr. Speaker. But it's clear that composition is the real challenge in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, and that's precisely the issue that's going to be focused on by the committee that's been struck.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it's not either/or. It's both. And a plan to make a plan is not going to address the very urgent needs in our classroom today, and that minister should know that. The minister has expressed regret that classrooms are getting more complex, and he wants his hand-picked committee to find solutions. But the minister need only look in the mirror to figure out why the educators are struggling with more complex needs in the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

For the last two years of his tenure, school boards have been forced to pass budgets that have cut vital positions to support kids with special needs — speech and language pathologists, counsellors, English as an additional language teachers. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on. The minister has had a choice to make things better for those kids and he's chosen not to. When will the minister stop blaming school divisions for his failures and accept some responsibility for the crisis that he has allowed to continue and intensify in our classrooms?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — The investments that this government has made in public education, Mr. Speaker, speak for themselves — \$2.48 billion, Mr. Speaker, that's invested by this government in public education in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12], a record investment, Mr. Speaker, including \$57 million over the last two years. Now, Mr. Speaker, here's a quote. The member from Lakeview, my good friend . . . And I know she cares deeply about public education, Mr. Speaker. We hear it every day. But she says a cap on class size is not the solution, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there is increased demands in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker, with regard to children with more and more complex needs. That's precisely, that's precisely why we need to develop a path forward. Mr. Speaker, she complains about the fact that all we're doing is planning to plan. Well, Mr. Speaker, there's been no plan that's submitted by the members opposite in terms of how to deal with these very complex issues, Mr. Speaker. If we're going to invest more money in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, we need to know how it's going to be invested and what resources are required to deal with those individual students, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Minimum Wage in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, a few weeks ago the minimum wage inched up 26 cents to a whopping \$11.32 an hour, the lowest in Canada. You know, Mr. Speaker, three-quarters of the minimum-wage earners are adults, a third are college graduates, and a majority work for large businesses.

This government has turned their backs on nearly 100,000 workers in this province making less than \$15 an hour. Apparently there's some predictability in pegging the minimum wage to cost-of-living increases. For thousands of workers in Saskatchewan, the only predictability is the poverty wage they will continue to take home to their families. When will this government rethink their laissez-faire, we-don't-care approach, and give 100,000 working people in Saskatchewan a decent raise?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite called for indexing of the minimum wage. We consulted extensively with business, with labour, and with the members opposite, and came up with a formula. Mr. Speaker, the formula was based on an equal weighting of the changes to the consumer price index and the average hourly wage for Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, we adjusted low-income cut-offs. So the effect of that was 112,000 people were taken off the tax rolls completely. Mr. Speaker, we want to do what's right for the people in our province. The goal of having indexation is to provide predictability, sustainability, and to ensure that those people can continue to work.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we've heard this line about 112,000 workers. We'd like them to prove that, give the proof on that line that they continually spout off.

But this is what's happening, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party lets their friends and insiders cash in. Nearly 100,000 workers are struggling to make ends meet. A full-time worker making minimum wage would gross about \$2,000 a month. A two-bedroom apartment averages \$1,222 in Regina and utilities another 317. That leaves about \$100 a week for food, transportation, medications, clothing, and other costs.

To the Minister of Labour: how far would you get on 100 bucks a week?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the Bank of Canada — and I presume that members opposite think the Bank of Canada's fairly reputable — says that a \$15 minimum wage would result in 60,000 job losses in Canada.

More recently, an economics professor suggested that an increase could lead to reduction in the number of hours worked and split the minimum wage labour force. Mr. Speaker, in Seattle that professor said the ones without experience will tend to lose out and often get shut out of the market completely. He's found that

an increase of the minimum wage by 3 or 4 per cent would result in the workers' hours going down by some 6 per cent. The average minimum wage would be worse off for that, Mr. Speaker.

We need to look at market conditions and we want to do what's right for the workers in our province, and taking 112,000 off the . . . [inaudible] . . . certainly in my view appears to be a very right thing to do.

### STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

#### Question of Privilege

#### Deferral of Ruling

**The Speaker:** — Just before orders of the day, I wish to inform the Assembly that I will be deferring my ruling on the question of privilege submitted on November 26th, 2019.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 64 to 75.

**The Speaker:** — Ordered, 64 to 75. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 76 to 78.

**The Speaker:** — Tabled, 76 to 78.

### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

#### Saskatchewan's Growth Plan

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak about three very important things to me: family, communities, and the economy. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we understand that without a strong economy, it's hard to build strong communities that serve our families. You can't have services such as health care or attend community activities if there's no money behind it. And where does the money come from, Mr. Speaker? Our economy. Whether it's farmers or energy sectors investing in Saskatchewan, it all comes back to our families. If our families are strong, we are strong.

Mr. Speaker, today we are here to talk about the new plan for growth, a plan that sets out a road map for the future of our province. We have seen significant growth and impact since 2007, and I believe that this government has laid out a solid foundation to continue on this path of growth and success.

Even though the NDP doubted that we would ever reach a population of 1.17 million people, our government saw the

potential in our province. We knew we had to stand up and show Canada and the world exactly what we have to offer. So that's why I'm excited to see that one of the key goals in the new growth plan is to grow our province to 1.4 million people, along with 100,000 new jobs by 2030.

[11:00]

That's an attainable goal, Mr. Speaker. Within this plan we will lay the groundwork that will lead to this population growth. That's because Saskatchewan is no longer referred to as the gap like it used to be in the time of the NDP. We are no longer looked at as a fiscally confused and mismanaged province. That is because we set our goals and incentives that are tailored to the Saskatchewan advantage.

We are a trading province, and we excel in export and international relations. That's why, in this new plan for growth, we have included 30 goals by 2030 that include targets like increasing exports by 50 per cent, growing agri-food exports to 20 billion, and tripling the growth of Saskatchewan's technology sector. Now, Mr. Speaker, these are very attainable and exciting goals. I know our government sees and feels Saskatchewan's true potential, so I'm proud that we have set goals to show the world what we really have to offer.

To help us achieve these goals, Mr. Speaker, we have a plan. Again, we already know how great it is to call this place home, but we want to invite new investment and attract new ideas and innovation to come build here in Saskatchewan. Some of the announced incentives include opening new international trade investment offices in Japan, India, and Singapore; a Sask-first, new-growth tax incentive; and reinstating PST exemptions for exploratory and downhole drilling activity.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't just a road map for our future. This growth plan is a recipe for success, and I'm proud to stand behind it. We have a plan, and we are ready to take Saskatchewan to the next level.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if you heard or not in this House this week, but as always the member from Regina Northeast had a few things to say about this government and our future. Instead of fulfilling his duty and speaking to a bill, he decided to touch on our government's ability to plan for the future. Very timely. He said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote:

And, Mr. Speaker, what I see from this legislative agenda this particular session is it's just lacking. It's completely lacking. It just illustrates that this government is old and tired and out of ideas.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we really disagree on this. I think that's obvious. But what's troubling for me to understand is that this member clearly hasn't paid any attention to this session at all, Mr. Speaker.

From our Throne Speech to the growth plan, it's clear that our government has surveyed the people of this province, connected with our stakeholders, and come to a conclusion that we are fully prepared for a new decade of growth. He thinks we are tired, Mr. Speaker. But boy oh boy, we're just getting started.

For instance, we are setting out 20 actions for the 2020s that will help our province prepare for the many years of growth and innovation. Some of these targets include keeping the province's finances strong and the budget balanced, growing Indigenous participation in the economy through the growth of Saskatchewan's natural resource industries and labour market development, and building strong communities by investing in infrastructure.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to touch on that last incentive — infrastructure. This is a lesson to the members opposite. In order to deliver great education, health care, or safe roads, you need to have a strong economy, an economy that is supported by industry, business, and a fiscally responsible government because schools, roads, hospitals, hockey rinks, and all the other infrastructure that we will build come with a price tag. There's no money tree. There's no orange credit card that magically appears. We have to work hard to make our economy strong. When our province lacks infrastructure to be successful, our communities and our families feel that impact.

I challenge the members opposite that today, instead of criticizing our recipe for success, that you should embrace it. Or maybe today, present an alternative. Today is a golden opportunity for them to prove that they have spoken to their constituents and can finally unify as a team and come up with a plan to drive our province forward. Will they take that chance? I guess we'll see very soon. Over here we continue to invest in our infrastructure maintenance across the board so that we can keep our hospitals and schools open and make smart investment and incentives within our economy to make plans for more.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure everyone in this Assembly knows that I'm a proud father of four kids, four very active, smart, and supportive kids. As they were growing up, there's always the fear that we'd have to buy them the NDP graduation gift — luggage. This is because the reality used to be, for many families, there was no future in Saskatchewan for them. Why go to post-secondary education here, Mr. Speaker, when there were no jobs? As a parent I will always support my kids on whatever they decide to do with their future, but it is such a great feeling to know that my family can be successful right here in this province. They don't have to check their new bags on a one-way flight over to BC or Alberta to find education because it's right here. They can find it right here at home.

Mr. Speaker, on the topic of education in Saskatchewan, our growth plan recognizes that our work force and labour market development systems will make a huge contribution to the province and making our province a preferred destination for people to build their future. The workforce also supports businesses who can thrive here as well.

In the next growth phase, we will focus on the development, retention, and attraction of highly skilled and entrepreneurial talent as part of our plan to grow both the population and the economy. Through investing in our Saskatchewan K to 12 and post-secondary system, our government will support the foundation of education, training, and student development systems to prepare our children and youth to succeed in the economy once they graduate. This will be done by ensuring that our K to 12 systems build resiliency in students as well as build pathways to the workforce.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring that the curriculum provides students with a strong foundation in sciences, technology, math, and engineering is only setting them up for success. It is also so important that these skills are taught during their development as it will open up many more opportunities down the road on their way to finding a career they enjoy and desire. And again, Mr. Speaker, this all leads back to having a strong economy, because when we can invest in our schools, we invest in our future.

Building on that, Mr. Speaker, over the next decade employers will play an increased role in guiding the future of development and alignment of Saskatchewan's market system. We will have employers partner with governments, schools, post-secondaries, and community-based organizations to identify and meet the needs of the workforce and assist in providing training, all while making greater use of the Saskatchewan apprenticeship training system. The efficiency within the structure of having the employer be the driving force to build their team is invaluable, Mr. Speaker. Because why not learn from and be mentored by the best in the business? This initiative will only lead to strengthened communities and a successful workforce.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have opposed every position we've had on growth. They have opposed pipelines. They have opposed new hospitals and schools. Yet they've supported the carbon tax. And we can't forget they've supported a \$2.5 billion-per-year increase, unsupported, in spending by their leader. Well, Mr. Speaker, our government's not like that. See, over here we plan for growth. We plan for success, for sustainability, for opportunity. They, on the other hand, are planning for decline.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the fear of having to buy my children luggage, because there would not be an ounce of opportunity here in this province if their party had held government, provides me with a reason to get up every day and do the hard work that needs to be done. I'm thankful in 2007 this province decided to choose change, growth, and opportunity over decline, mismanagement, and shame. Mr. Speaker, the NDP don't seem to understand that when our economy is strong, our communities thrive and our families can feel safe and secure knowing that they are living the Saskatchewan advantage. But when we don't invest in our economy, our communities are left to fend for themselves and families will not feel well served.

When the NDP were in government, they made poor investment choices which hurt our economy. They nationalized our natural resources. They took away incentives for people to work harder and succeed. And the people recognized that. They recognized they couldn't get ahead, and they should just settle for what they had. The government patted them on the head and said, we know what's best for you and you should just be thankful for what you have and accept it. And the people responded, Mr. Speaker. They got their luggage for graduation and they left. Then the NDP took from the communities by closing down schools, hospitals, and long-term care services, ultimately turning their backs on families.

I know that they don't like it when we bring up their record, Mr. Speaker, but they chose to defend those who made those devastating choices. They chose to adopt the record of the NDP, and they must accept the consequences. I honestly don't know if any of the members opposite took the time to even read the growth plan because I know there's some members over there

who would truly be on board with our goals and initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on about the great initiatives in this plan. From positioning Saskatchewan as the best place in North America to test, commercialize, and scale new oil and gas technologies, to supporting the made-in-Saskatchewan technology program, we continue in the right direction.

With more investment, more incentive, and more attraction to be part of the Saskatchewan advantage, our doctors, patients, and medical staff will see the positive impact. Our school kids across this province will reap the benefits of having the best curriculums and resources to prepare themselves for their futures. Our entrepreneurs will see their once small idea rise to the ranks of excellence as they can grow their business from the ground up right here at home. Our post-secondary programs will welcome local, provincial, national, and international students from across the board so that they can learn here, on our soil, why staying in Saskatchewan is the best choice.

We have a road map, Mr. Speaker, a road map to guide us into the next decade of growth — growth that will not only boost our economy and support our communities, but growth that will keep our families strong. Because a failure to invest in our growing industries is a failure to invest in our families. We cannot build one without the other. We are planning for growth and the members opposite are planning for decline.

Just yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the folks from the Canadian Light Source were here speaking to us about the fantastic work they're doing at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan], right here at home. They talked about looking at a seed of grain and how the roots take hold in the soil in real time. They talked about creating new batteries for our cellphones, using what most of us would consider weeds but are actually an abundant source of silicon — exactly what the world needs for next-gen batteries.

Mr. Speaker, the synchrotron has been at the U of S campus for many years. Thousands of scientists have come here to do research. They have discovered new ways of doing things, new technologies, and commercialized many, many ideas. And we will continue to use that technology and those ideas into the next decade of growth. If we have to feed more people with the same amount of land, we can't keep doing the same thing. The world needs more of us, more Saskatchewan to survive.

Mr. Speaker, this plan is the next step to a great future for us all. It's the next step towards seeing technologies in our province that may not even exist in our world today. It's the next step for a new family ready to make their start. It's the next step so that our children and grandchildren can succeed and carry on the success of this province. This plan is the future for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that's why I move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports the government on the new plan for growth for the Saskatchewan people.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon University:

That this Assembly supports the government on the new plan for growth for the Saskatchewan people.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to follow the member from Saskatoon University. I feel like I come in prepared, but he gives me so much more to think of, and we've just got 10 minutes. And my first question is, did he read the plan? You know, when I listened to his thoughts, I thought this was something they may have found under Bill Boyd's desk, under the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] plan, what they would call the very, the very DNA of that party over there, the very DNA.

One thing I would say — and I don't know if the Environment minister had a hand in this — really good job of recycling. Really good job of recycling, yes. Talk about recycling ideas.

[11:15]

Some of the things that came up, you know, it looks like it's a sound bite from 2007, the Throne Speech. And I'll talk about one of those quotes specifically. But I have to say when the member from Saskatoon University stands up and talks about history, we'll take no lessons from those folks over there. When they've got people like Bill Boyd still contributing . . . I don't know whether he's sort of a ghost in the background working his magic.

But I do have to say, you know, there are laudable goals. And we all want this province to grow, and that's a good thing, an exciting thing. But the question is, will it happen? You know, we want more people in this province. We clearly want more good, decent jobs in this province. Good idea. Good idea. But is this the plan that will get it done?

In fact this plan, this reminds me more of a kitchen sink plan. You throw everything in the kitchen sink and see what doesn't go down the drain, and that's what you've got. This is a province, this government is getting to be known more and more for the ability to plan a plan, make a plan. A plan to make a plan, and this is what this is, you know.

And I worry. I worry, is this going to meet the same fate as Enterprise Saskatchewan, the plan of all plans that we had way back when, that was going to change the future of Saskatchewan and particularly in rural Saskatchewan and the smaller cities? And you know, as I've said just a few days ago, we talked about old bills that got erased and how that quickly got erased from people's memory. So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is, the member talked about what we've been saying over here. These guys are out of ideas. They're tired. They're old. All the signs of an old government, an old government that just kind of make plans to make plans to stay alive. Election's coming up, so let's get a bunch of glossy new things out there.

And I have looked at this plan, and I would challenge that member from Saskatoon University who does sit on Wanuskewin board, and they're trying to seek the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] designation. We think that's a good idea. Let's

make that happen. Let's not make a plan to have that happen. Yes, we've got to make that plan. We've got to make that real. We've got to make that something real and tangible. I know those folks are talking about that. Let's not make a plan to make a plan about that. Let's actualize it. Let's actualize it.

So I know that, Mr. Speaker, we've got lots to say about this. I just want to get it on the record. Health care is huge. We see issues. We see issues, we're raised them. And yesterday was a powerful day about suicide prevention and mental health, the opioid and crystal meth crisis. We've got to get those solved. We have to get those solved, and the wait-lists. And we've got to talk about education and how the member just skated past that — overloaded classrooms, overloaded classrooms. We know the size is really important but we also know composition is really important. Those have to work together. We have to work together on that, but both parts, both parts.

But we've also got to deal with violence in our schools. And this is clearly a very, very important issue in terms of families. Families are facing this reality when they send their kids off to school. Will they be supported? Are their classrooms safe? And this has been reported not only by CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] but also by CBC, and that's very important.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, today I asked some questions about minimum wage and who's on minimum wage, and getting to a decent liveable wage here, and who's on that. And we've got to make sure that we have those things in place. And, Mr. Speaker, when you have nearly 100,000 people who are living in poverty or near poverty and they're working, they're working, that's just not right, Mr. Speaker. When we talk about a plan for Saskatchewan, I don't see how these people are raising those people up. And they use that tired old line — and you folks over there, especially you who haven't been around for many years — that 112,000 people off the tax rolls. That line is over 10 years old. And we have asked for proof of that. We've asked for written questions on that. And what do they do? They order those questions. We don't get the answer because they can't prove it.

And you folks over there, when you get on in the election trail and you start telling off about this 112,000 people off the tax lines, you better, you better be able to prove it because we challenge you to step up and prove that fact. Because that is an old, old tired line, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, many of them are young people. Many of them have college degrees that are going . . . and they've graduated from university. And what do we have? They say they want people to stay here in this province, but what do you get? The lowest wage in Canada, the lowest wage in Canada. A hundred thousand people, what do you think they're going to say? What do you think they're going to think? If they're stuck in the lowest paying jobs in Canada, are they going to stay here or are they going to go somewhere else. So, Mr. Speaker, this is really a key piece that's missing from the so-called plan.

And then the other one that we have to raise again because this won't go away — their ill-fated decision to cut the film tax credit, where we see the film industry blossoming in Manitoba, in BC. And we could have been there alongside those people, something that's drawing young people to this province, creative people. But instead we saw that it was cut and people had to leave this province because of that, Mr. Speaker.

And we see, and I know we'll speak about this more, the PST on construction. The \$1 billion tax grab from the families of people here, the families here in Saskatchewan. No reflection in the plan that they might address that, that tax grab, but here it is and the impact that it's having on Saskatchewan. They can't deny that. They just can't say that it's just not true.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have some real problems about the credibility here around this motion. And, Mr. Speaker, and I've said this in my Throne Speech response, when they talk about accessibility, I will say it's exciting to hear that they're talking about supporting people with disabilities in the workplace. That's a good thing. That's a very good thing. But we've seen their track record. And you know what the former premier used to say, the best prediction of what will happen in the future is what's happening right now. And here we have government that is failing on supporting people with disabilities, even in the public service sector, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of things that speak to credibility here, you know. Great words but will they actually pan out? And one of the things that I said that I found so odd that all of a sudden they found this new-found affection for accessibility in how they want to make sure this province is completely accessible for those, particularly people living with disabilities. And what do they do? They cut STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. They don't say, how can we make that better? How can we fit this province of Saskatchewan? They cut it and just took it right out. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that for many people they relied on that for their means of transportation to get around this province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I could talk about the new income support program that's failing so many people. I could talk about now we see that there's some 40 per cent of kids accessing the food banks, those kind of stats. The foreclosure rate here in Saskatchewan is incredible. Not a word about that. People are facing real challenges living paycheque to paycheque. This plan is not a lot of comfort to them because it's not talking in concrete terms of actions. What are they really going to do?

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that there's so much more I could say about this. And I know my time's running short, but we have to talk about the real issues that people are facing every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise today to enter in this 75-minute debate, Mr. Speaker. Speaking about the growth in our province over the next decade, Mr. Speaker, it is not possible to explain a 10 years' plan in the next 10 minutes. Of course it's not enough time for that. I will be simply highlighting the great goal and the target we have set for this province.

This plan for growth to build a stronger Saskatchewan will cover and fulfill all the needs of the people of Saskatchewan. Our commitment for Saskatchewan is for a strong economy, strong communities, strong families. It is a plan for our quality of life here in Saskatchewan. Our government has worked hard in the last 12 years to provide a great quality of life for all, and we are

now looking to do the same in the next decade. Mr. Speaker, in this growth plan we have a road map to accomplish many goals, support new industries and new investments in our province, adding value to our products we export around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight this plan. According to Statistics Canada, the population in 2005 was 985,000 people living in the province. Today we have 1.17 million people living here in this province, Mr. Speaker, an increase over 160,000 people since 2007. Mr. Speaker, the population increased and we were still able to keep our employment rate the lowest in the country, providing health care and education and the lowest taxed pay, compared to the other provinces and jurisdictions. At the same time, we have been able to provide the best health care service with brand new hospitals, long-term care facilities, and many other health care centres. We have kept a AAA credit rating for our province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a plan for the next 10 years. The only plan that the NDP have proposed is the Leader of the Opposition's platform, which is not realistic for Saskatchewan people. It has no plan for revenue other than a tax hike, as they did 21 times in 16 years when they governed. It has no plan to generate any income, so it will be up to the taxpayer to carry that burden.

Mr. Speaker, growing Saskatchewan's population to 1.4 million people by 2030 is one of the goals, at the same time creating 100,000 jobs, Mr. Speaker, in here. And this is not a small undertaking. For growing the population we need a strong economy for young people to stay here, work here, and raise their family here in Saskatchewan. Sustainable economy, businesses, jobs, and attraction for the people around the country and from around the world to stay here.

I would like to mention here the quote from Eldon Lautermilch, the minister of Economic Development during the NDP government, on April 27, 2005, *StarPhoenix*. And I quote, on out-migration, "... we ought not to worry because when people leave there is more left for the rest of us." Mr. Speaker, what an approach. What an approach, Mr. Speaker. They are waiting for the people to leave this province so they can have more opportunities. Is this a public service or is it a self-service, Mr. Speaker? What exactly they did, Mr. Speaker, which desperately many families and many graduates left this province.

We're moving forward with the goal of a strong economy, strong Saskatchewan, and strong communities, and strong families as I said, Mr. Speaker. We're planning for growth, not for decline.

Saskatchewan will continue to undertake the most aggressive youth-retention plan in Canada, while exploring new incentives to keep Saskatchewan affordable for many young people and create more opportunity for young people to realize their future here in this province. And under this program, Mr. Speaker, post-secondary graduates are eligible for up to 20,000 in tax credits. Today nearly about 71,000 young people have claimed this tax credit, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

The goal is now to grow this province 1.4 million people and 100,000 jobs by 2030. And we all know, Mr. Speaker, more of Saskatchewan population growth has come from immigration.



Since 2007 we had up to 11,109 people per year approximately, Mr. Speaker.

We again expanded the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] by establishing and marketing a new immigration entrepreneurship category for international students who had graduated from Saskatchewan institutes.

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP government it was only 25 people per year used to come under the SINP program. Under our government more than 169,000 people came and live in Saskatchewan here under SINP, Mr. Speaker. Also, Mr. Speaker, we ensure the new Canadians are connected to language training, skills development, and work placement, while working with businesses to design language programs for specific occupations.

Celebrate Saskatchewan's multiculturalism and recognize the important contribution that new Canadians are making for Saskatchewan — our next step for SINP is to increase population from 1.17 million people to 1.4 million, which is 230,000 more people in Saskatchewan in the next 10 years, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are facing harder obstacles by the NDP, by supporting carbon tax, opposing pipelines. They do not support farmers or the energy sectors. For a sustainable economy, we are investing in transportation infrastructure, keeping utility rates as affordable as possible, while investing in utility infrastructure for our economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, by 2030 we are growing trade and exports through our government-initiated interprovincial and international markets within Canada. And this builds up the investment and supports the Government of Saskatchewan has undertaken to grow the province's export economy since 2007. And we need for Saskatchewan to be proactive in developing international markets, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a good plan for the trade and export by 2030. We are increasing the value of Saskatchewan exports by 50 per cent, working on easy access for Saskatchewan products, and expanding the number of markets for Saskatchewan exports.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have a tax incentive for manufacturers to expand access to Canadian and international markets for Saskatchewan manufacturing goods. We have introduced Sask-first new-growth tax incentives and Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP did not have any plan. They just waited for the people to leave the province so they could have more for them left. That is not how we do government, Mr. Speaker. The oil and gas processing investment incentive, Saskatchewan petroleum innovation incentive, mineral exploration incentive, and we are working on it. We have the plan for Saskatchewan agri-food export up to \$20 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as our Premier mentioned many times, that farmers and agriculture is the backbone of our province since they have a significant contribution in our economy, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately the NDP, including the member from Regina Northeast, does not stand for it.

Mr. Speaker, I support the motion and I support the growth, and I do not decline, like the NDP does. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into the debate today. And it probably comes as no surprise to the members of the Assembly, but I will not be supporting the motion. So I'll spoil my speech and let you know that at the beginning.

I have had a chance to review the plan for growth in detail, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I know that there are definitely some sound portions to it. So it's not all criticism on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, a number of industries that do mean a lot to our province that we do need to continue to develop. But there are some areas that the growth plan falls short, and I do intend to spend some time on those as well today. And that's the reason why I can't support the motion, much to the disappointment, I think, of the members opposite, based on the sounds I'm hearing from them here today.

While we're talking about growth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there is a few things that we need to keep in context here. I want to make a couple of comments on the member from Regina Pasqua's speech that we just heard. And one of them is, I am absolutely shocked to hear him talk about the fact that we have the best health care services. I am not sure where he is getting his information, but as critic for Health I certainly hear about all of the ways that our health services could be improved, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And then he's also quoting from members I have never heard of on this side of the House which, you know, I was a little bit ashamed of. But then members over here also were just laughing about the fact that, you know, if you don't know who they are, clearly it's really indicative of our current approach on these matters, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are a couple things that I want to say about growth. And so I think in principle we're talking about something that we can all agree on. We want to have a strong economy. We want to have a population base to support that strong economy where everyone will benefit. I hope that's something we can all agree on, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And a growing population would be a positive step for the government to take, but the key is making sure that the province can handle that growth. With growth comes responsibility. And we want to ensure that there is equally a plan for how that growth is going to be handled. And when we see the current approach of this government, their attempt to handle growth, we see a failing on behalf of the health care services and education that we have been raising day after day in this Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's not just about having more people in this province. It's about making sure that people's lives are good in the province. We need to make sure, that when the province grows, that we'll have places for those kids to go to school; we'll have health care services for those people to access. So we know that we also need to have a focus on people. And when we're talking about growth, that's what we should be focused on as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is putting people first in this plan.

So we know that we have this plan in front of us. One of the

issues that I take particular concern with is the sort of self-congratulatory nature of the document. Some of it is quite focused on the past and looking at what has been done in the past. So for example, there will be sections where there will be a good block of text that is just focused specifically on the past, and then about two sentences on the future, which doesn't really scream plan for growth to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And a lot of self-congratulations that we hear about the growth that has occurred and the growth that we continue to see.

And there's a CBC article, and the last time I brought it up the members opposite were very upset about it. But it talks about the fact that . . . It was from September 30th, and it talks about the fact that Saskatchewan's growing but more slowly than most other provinces. So we know that there are a number of concerns here in terms of our growth not being as large as other provinces, residents that we lost out of our province. So it talks about a net interprovincial loss of 2,719 persons, primarily to Alberta due to out-migration, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think there's still . . . When we talk about how we're looking at growth, I think we need to be responsible in the way that we're talking about it and responsible in the way that we're characterizing what has happened already.

Some of the key concerns that I've had while looking through the plan for growth were with regards to education and the fact that there isn't really an acknowledgement of increasing enrolment in schools. So they talk about the growth plan in terms of capital that they have built. They acknowledge at some point there will need to be a little bit more. But what we hear right now is that there are schools where we have an over-capacity crisis. You know, one of them is in Harbour Landing right here in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have crowded classrooms right now, parents who are reaching out who are talking about lack of supports, teachers who are reaching out saying this is unsustainable, that they've thought about leaving the profession. You know, when we talk about the fact that classrooms are more crowded and more complex, right now . . . And that these issues aren't being addressed right now. It does make me concerned for the future of the province if we're talking about growing without also having a plan for how to address education.

Per-student funding has already dropped by nearly \$400 in the last five years. There have been cuts to EAs [educational assistant] and classroom supports. English as an additional language supports is a really key one for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the fact that there were cuts to EAL [English as an additional language] teachers, yet at the same time in the plan for growth there's a lot of discussion about how we need to have immigration into our province. These folks need to be supported when they get here, Mr. Deputy Speaker; otherwise we're setting ourselves up for disaster.

It also falls short in dealing with health care, and this is the particular reason why I wanted to enter into this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In dealing with the extreme over-capacity crisis that we're seeing in our emergency rooms, in hallway medicine, there is a peripheral conversation about health and some information about health care tacked on to the end of the plan. But really we don't see a solid plan here in terms of how we're

going to address the health care needs of a growing population. And the reality is that our funding hasn't kept pace with our population pressures and increased pressures in health care right now as it stands, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So this raises some concerns.

We have a growing infrastructure deficit in health care. It's grown from \$2.2 billion to \$3.3 billion, so this is money that is needed to address our crumbling health facilities. One that's been discussed quite a bit in the news this week and over the past number of years is Pioneer Village in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to make sure that we are looking after these facilities. We've talked about hallway medicine, ER waits, and abandoned initiatives to address ER waits. We are in this current situation where workers are afraid to speak out. We put forward Bill 619, the public interest disclosure Saskatchewan Health Authority amendment Act yesterday.

We know that health CBOs [community-based organization] are underfunded. Health care workers are understaffed and overstretched and, you know, it's really disheartening when we see the government sort of hearkening back to 2007 and it doesn't mean . . . They don't want to talk about the last few years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we want to live in the present. We want to talk about the fact that there is so much more work to do, and this growth plan doesn't address the work to do right now.

And it's borne out in our health outcomes, when you look at how people are doing across our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've talked over and over again about infant mortality rates, our diabetes rates in the province, and you know, these types of health outcomes just show that there's so much more work to do.

I'd love to be able to have more to say, but I see that I'm running out of time. I can't support the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon University.

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

[Applause]

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to enter into the debate today, much to the applause of my colleagues here on this side of the House. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to enter into this debate where we're talking about the motion on the floor here today about supporting the government on the new plan for growth for the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:45]

We've heard a bit from some of the members on this side of the House already, and some of the members opposite, about varying opinions of the growth plan. But I'm here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to talk about why this plan is important and why it is significant and why this is something that is needed for the province of Saskatchewan. And as you look at the growth plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a couple of major overarching themes to the growth plan supported by a number of goals and targets within that 60-plus page document.

Mr. Speaker, the plan includes a population target of 1.4 million

people by 2030, and another 100,000 people employed in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you might ask, why is that important? Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is it important to set those targets and to set those goals, perhaps lofty goals but goals that are worth mentioning and trying to achieve? Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason for that is because in order to provide the programs and services and the infrastructure that the people of this province deserve and require and that the members opposite often ask for, you have to have an economy, a strong economy that can help pay for some of these much-needed programs, services, and infrastructure. And that's why you need to have a plan for growth. You need to have a plan for a strong economy and to do these things within a balanced budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So part of the growth plan includes 30 goals to get us to the year 2030. One of those, for example, is increasing our exports by 50 per cent. That is a significant goal there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The reason that's important is because we all know that Saskatchewan is an export-based province. We export anywhere from 70 per cent, give or take a few percentage. It fluctuates every year, obviously, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We export 70 per cent of the things that we produce in this province, which is quite substantial, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you think about the population we have in this province and the amounts of products and services, agri-food exports for example, that we are able to export out of this province given a population that is not even quite 1.2 million people yet, Mr. Speaker.

I've had the chance on a couple of the trade missions, whether it's in China or India or Japan or South Korea or Hong Kong, to talk to folks, to talk to government officials in those countries, to talk to companies. And they are quite interested, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a lot of these countries are some of our top trading partners. We're there as a province to help strengthen those relationships but also to find new trading relationships.

I had the opportunity in September to go Toronto to meet with the Minister of Commerce for Bangladesh. And countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam and Thailand, everything in the ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] region, the southeast Asian region is quite interested in what we have to offer in Saskatchewan. In the case of Bangladesh, very interested in Saskatchewan canola seed. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this goes back to the growth plan and wanting to increase our exports but also growing our agri-food exports to \$20 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

When we talk about the products that we're able to export out of this province, we have world-renowned attention from countries around the world about the sustainable manner that we grow and raise these products, whether it's livestock or agri-food products or in the manufacturing sector or in the mining sector or the oil and gas sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And people take note of that. They take note of the practices that we employ in this province, the practices that the people of Saskatchewan involved in those industries, that they are proud of, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are coming through a bit of a challenging year, I think, to say the least, when it comes to the harvest in this province because of weather conditions. And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, despite that, we are on track to have the second-largest crop ever in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is a result of the

resilience of our agriculture. It's a result of the investment that has been made into research and development into new cropping practices, into a number of things that have helped to grow the production in the ag sector. And it's one of the pillars of our economy, and that's why it's a part of the growth plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're also going to be looking at increasing oil production by 25 per cent — 600,000 barrels per day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I don't think I need to say, but I will, that that is important to so many areas of this province. It's important to the people that I represent in Swift Current. It's important to the people in Cypress Hills, to the people in Kindersley, to the folks in Weyburn, to the folks in Lloydminster, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want to have a government that supports their industry as opposed to the members opposite who we know full well do not support the oil and gas sector. We know that they're anti-pipeline, and we know that they stand with their federal leader in that particular topic there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But on this side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've committed to an increase in oil production capacity within that particular sector because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because that particular sector creates jobs in my home town in Swift Current. It creates jobs in Shaunavon and in Eastend. It helps pay for projects in those communities — rinks, schools, playgrounds — and it contributes property tax revenue to local municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So the oil and gas sector is a key part of the growth plan to 2030, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Additionally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've talked about some support for the mining sector, reinstating PST exemptions for exploratory and downhole drilling activity in the mining sector. And that is an important signal to the mining sector that we're serious about what it is that they provide to this province, whether it's potash, whether it's uranium. You've heard us talk about that too, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to take a serious, hard look at small modular reactor technology in Saskatchewan and the role that it can play in the future of our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you know, we've heard from the members opposite. They're obviously quite negative towards this. They don't like the plan. You know, there's been some question as to whether they've read the plan or not. I don't they have, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But we've had some very positive responses to the growth plan and there's quite a list of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, this is a quote, “. . . applauds the release of Saskatchewan's new Growth Plan,” Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Saskatchewan Mining Association talks about being a primary energy or engine of growth of the Saskatchewan economy. They're pleased to see this plan. By the way, Mr. Speaker, I had a chance to meet with a mining company just last week, last Thursday, and they talked about how encouraged they were by some of goals and targets and things that are in this growth plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, this is a quote, “Couldn't be happier.” They said, couldn't be happier. “We're a trading nation, we're a trading province, we are more reliant in Saskatchewan on overseas trade than any other jurisdiction.” So they see this as a positive plan.

How about some companies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. TA Foods in Yorkton says, and I quote, “It’s fantastic news.” That’s pretty good, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And the list goes on and on. CN rail, the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], Purepoint Uranium Group, Mosaic Canada, Western Canadian Wheat Growers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they also support that.

But you know who doesn’t support it? And well we know who doesn’t support it. It’s the members opposite. And why is that, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Because they themselves don’t have a plan. They’ve never had a plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They haven’t had a plan for how many years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know the one plan that they did have came from the Leader of the Opposition. His leadership plan which he didn’t even cost out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We ended up having to cost that out for them and hand it over to them because they didn’t know what it would cost, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The members opposite, we hear them day after day after day, they say you’re not spending enough. And we say how much should we spend? They say, what do they say — more, spend more. That’s what they want. Spend more. But there’s no actual figure there, Mr. Speaker. And then you have to go further; you have to ask well how are you going to pay for that?

The members opposite . . . This is like high school, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they just write down . . . First of all, they won’t even write down an answer on the sheet but even if they did . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Exactly. They wouldn’t show their work, so you can’t tell if they’re cheating off the person sitting in front of them. They never do the homework, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They don’t have a plan.

And you know what? We’ll finish up with a quote here from the member for Regina Northeast who said on November 20th, he said, he was quoting, he said, you know, he’s referring to the people of Saskatchewan, he said, “No wonder people are ready for a change, Mr. Deputy Speaker.”

I don’t think he could be further from the truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don’t think the people of this province are ready for a change. They’re ready for a plan for growth. They were ready for a change in 2007, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were ready for change in 2011 when they changed the leadership of the NDP. They were ready for a change in 2016 when they changed the Leader of the NDP. And I might . . . You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 2020, the people of Saskatchewan might be ready to change the Leader of the NDP once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I see my time is nearly elapsed. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a good plan for growth for the next decade for this province. People are looking forward to it. People are applauding this plan for growth, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I am proud to stand in the Assembly today to say that I will be supporting this motion and our plan for growth in the province of Saskatchewan leading to 2030. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to enter into the discussion here. I might disappoint some here today. I’m going to enter in a very even-handed way. I hear these torqued, sort of back-patting, you know, responses that are in sort of the partisan interests of the current government. I think most Saskatchewan people find them to be so off-putting. The sort of, the effort to go to such lengths in this Assembly to congratulate themselves, Mr. Speaker, I suspect is just a little bit offside with the average person, certainly businesses, and those across the province.

This plan for growth has a lot of good stuff in it, Mr. Speaker. It has a lot of good commitments. It has a lot of good words. It’s certainly short on the substantive plans or the policy or the mechanism of how we’re going to get to the goals that are laid out, Mr. Speaker, and that’s sort of, I guess, the devil will be in the detail. But there’s a lot of good things in this plan that both sides will be able to support, Mr. Speaker, and there should be no real debate about those matters, Mr. Speaker.

I see things like the, you know, some of the value-add ag mentions. This is stuff that we’re passionate about, Mr. Speaker. I see the idea that canola crushing in the province would be increased to 75 per cent, Mr. Speaker. I think that’s a really good, ambitious target. And I think what we need to now work towards is the substantive plans and mechanisms to, you know, to get us there, and I have questions on that front.

But without a doubt for me, this is more of a reflection of a lot of the good that exists within this province — the world-class entrepreneurs, the world-class producers, the incredible workers, the different organizations and people who build the province they love and the economy that they love, Mr. Speaker. And on so many fronts there’s a lot of good statements within this.

But it’s sort of this strange entry again at a critical juncture in this debate that has a lot of people sort of questioning what really motivates that Sask Party government this many years on with that sort of a majority, Mr. Speaker. And I think that that’s where folks will be awfully disappointed who would be observing this debate. This is the last debate that could be brought forward, the motion by the Sask Party government, of this legislative session. And it’s a time where our economy is facing real challenges. And those are being experienced by people and businesses all across our province. And I suspect, Mr. Speaker, they’d have a lot more interest in an honest, transparent discussion of the factors that are causing our economy to be so hamstrung, so hurt, Mr. Speaker, to have a real conversation about the real challenges that households are facing, Mr. Speaker.

Of course we know that we’re by far leading the nation in things like mortgage foreclosures and delinquency in payments on mortgages. That’s a serious message around the affordability pressures that families are under. We know that things like the PST that’s hit families so hard — the average family now to the tune of \$800 more per year, Mr. Speaker — we know that’s hurting households.

We see it again today in the mid-year financial report where it shows that retail sales are actually down, Mr. Speaker. And of course we’ve come through a period of complete flat retail sales, stagnation, Mr. Speaker. But worse than that, we have a growing population, which is so important, and when you have flat retail

sales, now declining retail sales, that means that your average household is really taking a hit, Mr. Speaker. And we know that because of the cost-of-living pressures and the choices of this government to jack up the cost of living. And we know that as well by the job pressures that folks are facing, so many that are in more precarious employment, far too many that have lost employment.

We know for sure, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to things like building infrastructure, the procurement of that government has failed Saskatchewan taxpayers and it's certainly failed Saskatchewan businesses and workers, who have been shut out time and time again. A government who spent billions of dollars and mismanaged projects adding up to a record debt that's now coming due for the people of the province, Mr. Speaker, and coming at a cost to the people of the province.

But when they were building infrastructure and having those projects go sideways, they were contracting with large out-of-province — usually out-of-country — operations, Mr. Speaker. We see that to be the case with things like the Chinook power station in Swift Current where the general contractor is from Kansas City, if you can imagine, while we've got world-class companies sitting here ready to do that work, and actually right there in Swift Current and the workers themselves. We saw that of course with the bypass and the biggest overrun in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, with the big dollars all flowing to an outfit from France, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

And we see it as well with our construction industry just hit so hard, Mr. Speaker. In this case, the Sask Party saw a slowing economy and they chose to slam on the brakes, Mr. Speaker. They imposed the PST onto construction labour and it's devastated this industry. Again on top of the decline over the last couple years, we see big drops again this year in construction permits and investment. We see jobs down all across Saskatchewan. And I've seen the reality of that in my own constituency, Mr. Speaker, and I've heard of it from many others across the province when I've been holding meetings.

Local businesses have been devastated. They've been gutted, Mr. Speaker. They've gone from building out skilled labour and teams that are like family. One company I was sitting with recently, who had built out a company of 30 people, who were down to two, Mr. Speaker, and they're doing everything they can to keep the lights on. And I see it with the workers, Mr. Speaker, in the construction industry, skilled labour that's needed to build the future of Saskatchewan that we all desire, who have lost their jobs, who can't find employment then in other industries even, Mr. Speaker, because of the weak economy that the Sask Party is presiding over. They've been forced to leave the province.

I was sitting down with two constituents again just last week, Mr. Speaker, on this front who have gone through this reality. Actually they're moving tomorrow. And I think members opposite know some of these folks as well. They're driving out to British Columbia tomorrow with the moving vans, Mr. Speaker, directly because of the hurt in the construction industry, Mr. Speaker. And there's many like that.

Now that's a loss. It's a loss for them and their family who came

here with so much hope. It's a loss for us as well as a province. These are folks of course that were here to build Saskatchewan, but what this is now is another for sale sign in front of a house in an already challenged housing market, Mr. Speaker, the loss of the income taxes that they pay each and every year, the loss of the property taxes they pay each and every year, the loss of their dollars back into the community, the loss of who they are in the community.

And of course, the same cascading effect is happening within businesses, Mr. Speaker, as they lay off staff and spend less. There's a real cascading effect on our finances, on our economy, and on those people, both the entrepreneurs and the businesses and the workers who are committed to this province.

We've seen it with the solar industry as well, Mr. Speaker, where the Sask Party just chose to dismantle and shut down a viable, sustainable, affordable industry that was growing jobs, Mr. Speaker. Affordable power, Mr. Speaker . . . You know, and I hear the minister heckling. This is a government that had \$1.5 billion for a measly hundred megawatts of power in their costly coal project, the most expensive power you could put into the grid, Mr. Speaker, so much more expensive than options by way of natural gas and renewable power and solar, Mr. Speaker. And then we question why we're at our record debt, Mr. Speaker.

You know, as I say . . . I see my time is coming to an end here. We don't see the investments in people that will sustain the growth that we all should care about, including the population growth. And there's a lot of good words and good commitments within this plan that we can all support. The substance is going to matter.

But when it comes to including people in that plan for growth and in the future of Saskatchewan, this plan falls far short. And from mental health and addictions crises that are facing so many in this province, through to the breaking point our classrooms are at, this plan falls far short, as this government's fallen far short for far too long, Mr. Speaker. So we'll look forward to the questions that are about to occur.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm looking through this plan and they have "20 Actions for 2020." Many of them sound very laudable and good. But the first one is "Growing our population by keeping more young people here in Saskatchewan and increasing immigration to the province." But yet we have the lowest minimum wage in Canada, the lowest minimum wage and nearly 100,000 people are making less than \$15 an hour.

To the member from Saskatoon University: what does he tell the people on the doorstep who are just barely getting by on \$15 an hour? Does he tell them that tired and old line — 112,000 people off the tax rolls — or does he tell them that he's going to do something about it and get a decent wage here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr.

Speaker, and the direct answer is yes. I do say that because it's the truth. And we have taken 112,000 people, the lowest income people, off the tax rolls here in Saskatchewan.

Now when we're talking about the 20 actions for growth, Mr. Speaker, we talk about keeping the province's finances strong and a budget that's balanced, something they know nothing about. Growing the population by keeping more young people in Saskatchewan and increasing immigration to our province, once again something they know nothing about. Maintaining a competitive tax environment — they know nothing about that — and undertaking SaskFirst new growth incentives.

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear. This is a plan for growth. We had our last 10 years of growth. We're going to continue for 10 more years, at least 10 more years, Mr. Speaker. We have a plan for growth and we're going to continue down that path.

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

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Kindersley's in the heart of oil and gas country, and we all know oil and gas is one of our largest industries. And our government's growth plan includes a goal of growing oil production to 600,000 barrels a day. But the Leader of the Opposition has attended anti-oil rallies, supported a federal leader who opposes pipelines. And NDP members have voted against pipelines right here in this Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

To the member from Saskatoon Fairview: what is the NDP's plan to grow this province's oil and gas industry, or is your plan to leave it in the ground?

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I do want to thank the member for the opportunity to answer the question, but I will implore them to listen to the answer as well, because I feel like we keep answering this question over and over again. And we keep getting the same question. It would be really nice, it would be novel, if we could answer the question and have them listen a little bit.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been very clear on our support. We know that oil and gas is incredibly important to this province. Safest way to transport oil is through a pipeline. We've talked about the concerns with rail. We know at the same time we need to be investing in renewables, and that is a huge part of our plan for the future. We have our Renew Saskatchewan plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is also a big part of our plan for the future. We've answered this question a number of times, so I would appreciate it if we could stop answering it as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, a lot of construction workers live in the member for Regina Pasqua's riding. So do some of the people that own solar businesses, and in fact a lot of the projects that were to go forward but that have now been

shelved exist directly in places like Harbour Landing and Albert Park.

What does the member for Regina Pasqua have to say to the workers, to the businesses, and to the homeowners who were looking to that solar industry as such a viable way of providing affordable power? What does he say to them when he tells them that instead he chose to shut it down?

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this 2020 action plan, increasing the population, Mr. Speaker, keeping our finances balanced, Mr. Speaker, spending \$30 billion on infrastructure over one decade as we did in the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker. This \$30 million will be spent on health, education, First Nations, agriculture, and seniors, and controlling emissions, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through our government's growth plan we will invest over \$30 billion in Saskatchewan infrastructure like schools, hospitals, and highways. Compare this to when the NDP were in power, when Saskatchewan's infrastructure was crumbling to bits. In fact in 2003 the P.A. [Prince Albert] bridge needed repairs. The NDP Highways minister said that the government wouldn't spend one thin dime on the bridge.

To the member for Regina Rosemont: how much will that member commit to spending on Saskatchewan infrastructure over the next 10 years?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. The infrastructure this province needs and the people this province needs is significant, and we see the areas, like in health that have grown with a deficit from \$2 billion to over \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker. So we will invest. This is exactly the kind of space that we can be investing now to fire up our economy, to be firing up job creation.

And what we will do that is very different than members opposite is that we'll work with Saskatchewan companies. We'll make sure a fair, level playing field for Saskatchewan companies and workers. What we won't do is spend billions of dollars that flow out of country, out of province that shut out the hard-working people and the world-class companies across the province, Mr. Speaker. We'll fix procurement, level the playing field, and get value for taxpayers.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One of the most devastating things that we hear about is the child poverty rates that continue to grow in our province. We have one of the highest child poverty rates in the country. My question is to the

member from Regina Pasqua: how can you stand and brag when we have some of the highest child poverty rates in Canada?

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The purpose of this growth is to build better quality of life in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And we are working in every sector, Mr. Speaker, for the strong community and the strong family to grow the stronger Saskatchewan now. And I ask them to help us in building a pipeline and all those energy sectors as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Industries like agriculture, mining, manufacturing, oil and gas all rely on exporting their resources to market. And our government has committed to opening trade offices in Japan, India, and Singapore. These initiatives from the Saskatchewan growth plan will help secure markets for Saskatchewan industries. And our support of pipelines will ensure that the infrastructure exists to get those resources to market.

To the member for Saskatoon Centre: since your party opposes pipelines and wants to impose a carbon tax on Saskatchewan, how do you plan to help the resource market?

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would just urge the other side, with their resources, to get better research. You know, I mean, like I'm looking at the CBC article here. The title is, "Meili agrees with international trade offices . . ."

I don't know where she's getting information from, Mr. Speaker, but I urge those folks to read the plan. Read the plan before they get up and speak. Really think about their research. Research is good, is very important for you folks. That's why you have no credibility on delivering on this plan.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. During the debate, I was quite shocked to hear the member from Regina Pasqua's comments about how we provide the best health care here. And I would like to ask him, you know, how does he reconcile this comment with the fact that just in Regina, we had a patient waiting for almost a week in a hallway. Pioneer Village is in your riding. How do you reconcile that statement with these facts that people are bringing forward to us every day?

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have record investment in the health sector, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan, we built the children's hospital in Saskatoon, North Battleford hospital, Mr. Speaker, and Moose Jaw hospital,

Mr. Speaker.

And we are planning to build hospitals in Prince Albert and in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker. And we know the record of the NDP when they closed 52 hospitals when they were in government, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 618

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Mr. Vermette that **Bill No. 618 — *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Often when I rise in the Assembly, I say that it is a pleasure to rise. I was thinking about my opening comments here today, and while it feels important to stand and speak to this priority motion today, Mr. Speaker, it certainly is not a pleasure, and it is something that I wish we didn't have to do.

Of course, as a mother, as a community member, I share with many in this Assembly too many stories and too many concerns about those who have taken their own lives by suicide and those concerns that we continue to see in the community.

[12:15]

But as much as this is an issue that has touched many communities and many families, I don't know anyone more than the members from Athabasca and Cumberland who have attended more . . . suicides, for people who have completed suicide. And, Mr. Speaker, I wish that everyone in the province would hear the member from Cumberland. I know that he's been on his feet many times in this Assembly speaking with such passion about this issue.

This is one of those issues, Mr. Speaker, we can get caught up in the day-to-day around partisan issues and, you know, we just went through one of those exercises here, I'm afraid. But this is one that really should transcend the partisan politics of this place and of any place.

We just saw recently in the House of Commons, maybe an Assembly even more divided than this one, we saw that Assembly be able to unanimously . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well it's very interesting that the minister would enter into this debate with heckling about suicide, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Maybe it says a lot, Mr. Speaker. I think this is honestly one of those issues where I wish we could just set that aside.

There was a recent motion put forth in the House of Commons that was unanimously passed to call on a national suicide strategy, something that we really ought to be looking at here. And this is exactly what is being asked with this private member's bill. Of course this isn't the first time that we've seen this private member's bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member for Cumberland introduced this bill last session, but it died on the order paper. I admire his persistence and his passion because he's brought it forward again.

And we have had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, the heartbreaking opportunity to hear from several parents this session. I think of Marilyn Irwin, who was here calling on the province to adopt a suicide strategy, someone who lost her son by suicide. We had two mothers that came and spoke so eloquently and so passionately on November 6th, including Sally Ratt, who lost her 12-year-old daughter, Ariana, by suicide, Mr. Speaker. They don't care what happened in 2005 or 2007. They don't care about, you know, a strategy that came out in 2014, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They know that when they looked for supports for their children, they found them lacking. And they are here because they want to do everything that they can to ensure that no other parent has to go through what they went through: looking for help, being so concerned about their loved one. And we've heard this described so many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Families who know that their loved one is in trouble, who know that perhaps they've had self-harm behaviour or prior attempts, and they've looked for that support and they found it lacking.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an opportunity to point fingers and say, well you did it first, or you did this in 2005. We know that with a well thought-out suicide strategy we can prevent deaths and save lives, and that seems a worthwhile venture for any Assembly. Honestly, it would seem to be if we can, by passing a bill like this and enacting it, can save lives, it would seem very worthwhile for all members here.

We've seen it on worthwhile bills before, Mr. Speaker, that have saved lives. I think of the domestic violence bill that was passed with support from both sides of this Assembly. I think of some of the drinking and driving measures that we have seen passed in this Assembly, expedited passage of that bill. Even one around putting blue lights on emergency vehicles in service of saving lives. These were all bills that were able to be passed by consent in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Surely this is something that requires that same level of co-operation and effort.

Mr. Speaker, I know that there was a plan that was put forth, a mental health and addictions plan in 2014. That was an important report that came out. I believe Fern Stockdale provided that report. A couple of things I want to say about that. First of all, there have been so many suicides since then. The number is rising. The trend is rising as well. So that is one point. The other point is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that while many who complete suicide do suffer from mental health and addictions, that is not . . . It increases risk. Not all who die by suicide have mental health or addictions issues.

There are a number of factors that need to be addressed, such as happened in Quebec, where they were able to enact such important measures as the member for Cumberland has asked for in this bill. They were able to reduce overall suicides by 30 per cent in that province — I'll repeat that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 30

per cent — and were able to decrease death by suicide by young people by half.

Of course the optimum number is zero, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but imagine if we could have prevented half of the deaths by suicide in this province of young children 30 per cent of overall suicides. I think we would think that a very worthwhile venture and something that would be worthy of us working co-operatively across the floor in this Assembly.

One of things that the minister noted in his speech was that he was doing a scan at this point of other jurisdictions. One of the things about a suicide plan, it really does require the knowledge of the local context. We have experts working here in this province who are experts, who know the measures that need to be put in place, Mr. Speaker. What we need is not more planning, not more jurisdictional scans; we need the implementation of this bill. If the members opposite have another bill that they think would be better but they're willing to work with us to expedite passage, I think that we would be very happy to do that.

But what needs to happen is now. Because every day that goes by without those measures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a fact that more people complete suicide in this province. And the numbers, we can't justify the numbers where they're at for any demographic in this province. But when you realize the fact that Indigenous girls in this province are 20 times . . . per cent more likely to die by suicide than their non-Indigenous peers, Mr. Speaker, I just don't know how you can justify that and not give it attention.

One of things that the minister noted in his comments was that they are looking around for best practices and want to focus on schools and counselling. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that is funded and that's part of the strategy, I guess that is something that is important. But if this is just something more put onto schools, I don't think that we are going to be able to realize the impact that we ought to with regard to saving lives.

Strategies that are effective also aren't solely health initiatives. They include education, justice, employment, and social supports, strengthening communities. There are specific remedies for specific communities, Mr. Speaker. Of course the more isolated a community, often the higher the risk. The same for domestic violence. Domestic violence is a risk factor. Addictions and poverty, again as we have mentioned before, are also risk factors.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, much of this conversation happened before the latest and very disturbing spate of suicides that we saw up in Makwa Sahgaiehan. Circumstances, including the death of a 10-year-old girl, led the chief of that community to call a state of emergency, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something that I know that was not taken lightly. But when you're seeing young people in your community die by suicide, and attempts at the rate that the chief and council there in that community is seeing . . . They made their way down here to this Assembly, beseeching us to take action, Mr. Deputy Speaker, action that is readily in front of us with this bill that the member for Cumberland has put forward.

Again I think that is a very well-thought-out bill. It's measured. It is thoughtful. It has been researched. It could be readily taken up by members on both sides next week and passed, Mr. Speaker,



measures that need to be in place while we're preparing the provincial budget to make sure that these measures are taken.

If at the end of the day the work that we do here doesn't contribute to the well-being of people in our province — you know, the very lives of people in our province and young people — I'm not sure exactly what it is that we're doing here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So as fun as it is to yell at each other across the Assembly and take potshots and, you know, make partisan comments, sometimes you have to put that aside because there are things that are more important than that. And if children dying by suicide isn't one of those things then, Mr. Speaker, I've lost my whole moral compass.

So again I just want to state as emphatically as I can, this is a good bill. It's a thoughtful bill. It's one that should have been taken up last time. It wasn't. It can be taken up by members on both sides of this House now. It will save lives. We don't need more jurisdictional scans. We need it to be implemented . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I have read the bill. I'm getting heckled by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, again in keeping but very disappointing. This is something that should be at her table. I hope she's putting resources aside to ensure that this bill can be implemented.

And I'll call them out every time when I hear them heckling the member for Cumberland about this bill or making comments across the floor of this Assembly. I don't think there are a lot of people in this province who have any time for that given the urgency of this issue. It needs our support. We need to pass this bill. I'm happy to stand on my feet and lend my support to it. But I am prepared at this point to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 618. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved that this House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:29.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker .....	6599
Beck .....	6599
Carr .....	6599
Wotherspoon .....	6599
Beaudry-Mellor .....	6599
McCall .....	6599
Morgan .....	6599
Ottobreit .....	6600
Michelson .....	6600
Steele .....	6600
Fiaz .....	6600

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Vermette .....	6600
Bonk .....	6600
Wotherspoon .....	6601
Forbes .....	6601
Beck .....	6601
Mowat .....	6601

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Eatonia Spartans Beat the Odds to Become 1A 6-Man Champions

Francis .....	6602
---------------	------

##### World AIDS Day

Mowat .....	6602
-------------	------

##### Remembering Gord Staseson

Makowsky .....	6602
----------------	------

##### Treaty 6 Adhesion Plaque Unveiled

Vermette .....	6602
----------------	------

##### Canada Heroes Campaign

Fiaz .....	6603
------------	------

##### Innovative Technology Firm Benefits Oil and Gas Industry

Bonk .....	6603
------------	------

##### Opposition's Position on Pipelines

Heppner .....	6603
---------------	------

#### QUESTION PERIOD

##### Management of Provincial Economy

Wotherspoon .....	6604
-------------------	------

Harpauer .....	6604
----------------	------

##### Solar Power Net Metering Program

Wotherspoon .....	6604
-------------------	------

Duncan .....	6604
--------------	------

Mowat .....	6605
-------------	------

##### Staffing of Health Care Facilities

Mowat .....	6606
-------------	------

Reiter .....	6606
--------------	------

##### Supports in Classrooms

Beck .....	6607
------------	------

Wyant .....	6607
-------------	------

##### Minimum Wage in Saskatchewan

Forbes .....	6608
--------------	------

Morgan .....	6608
--------------	------

#### STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

##### Question of Privilege

##### Deferral of Ruling

The Speaker .....	6608
-------------------	------

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Hindley .....	6608
---------------	------

#### SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

##### Saskatchewan's Growth Plan

Olauson .....	6608, 6617
---------------	------------

Forbes .....	6611, 6617
--------------	------------

<b>Fiaz</b> .....	6612, 6618
<b>Mowat</b> .....	6613, 6618
<b>Hindley</b> .....	6614
<b>Wotherspoon</b> .....	6616, 6618
<b>Francis</b> .....	6618
<b>Weekes</b> .....	6618
<b>Young</b> .....	6619

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS**

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 618 — *The Saskatchewan Strategy for Suicide Prevention Act, 2019***

<b>Beck</b> .....	6619
-------------------	------

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