



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

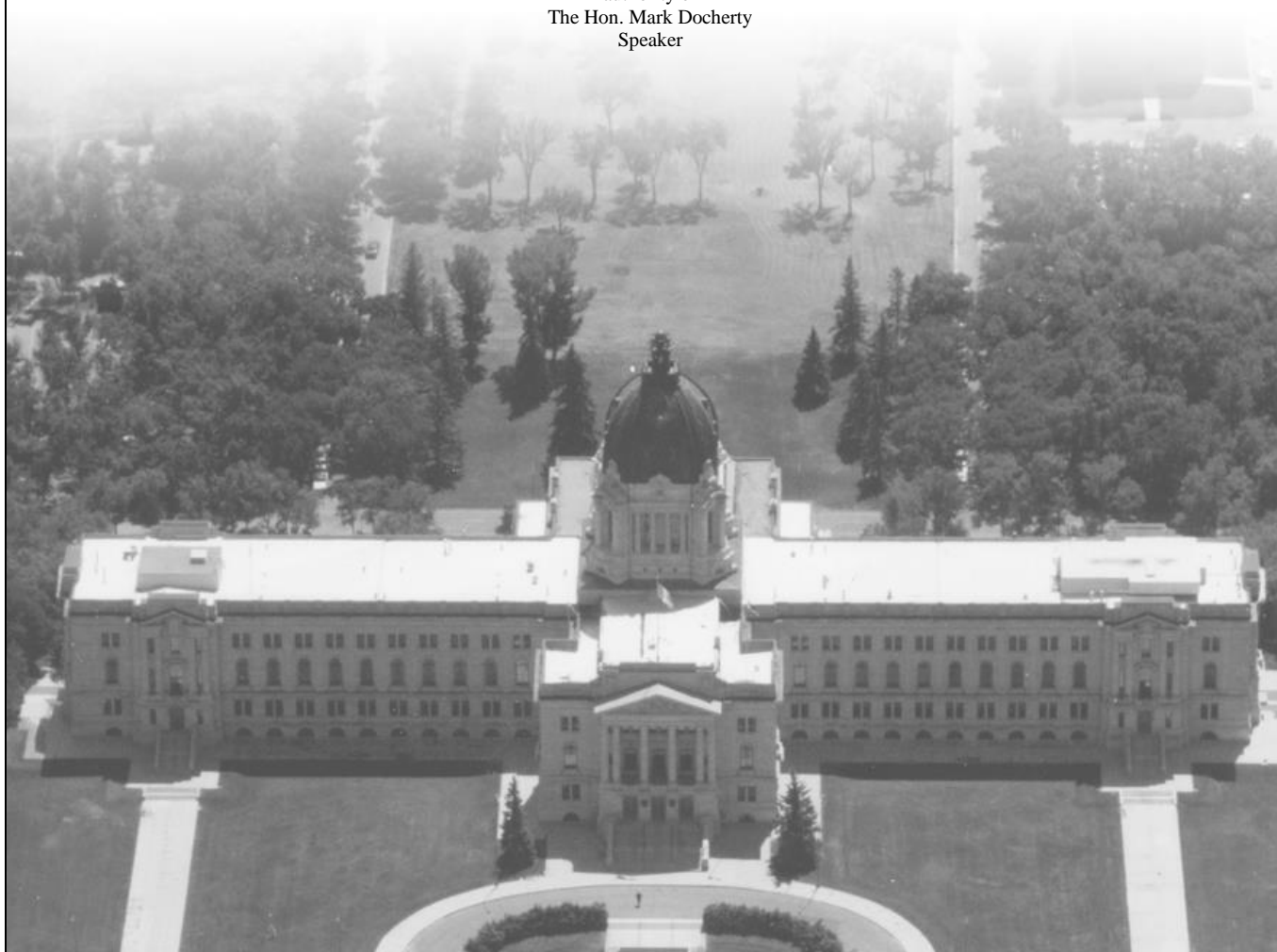
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 28th Legislature

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Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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

Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — Well hello, everyone. So before we begin today's proceedings I want to take a moment to acknowledge the extraordinary nature of this sitting of the Assembly. I think it is fair to say that we've never had a sitting like this before.

I'd like to thank both government and opposition and especially the House leaders for reaching an agreement to reconvene. Many thanks to the Clerk's office and the entire Legislative Assembly staff for their hard work that has made this sitting possible. Thank you also to the building staff and the cleaning team whose work is key in keeping us all safe and healthy in these challenging times. Thanks to the members of the press gallery who have relocated to the Speaker's gallery for the remainder of the sitting for helping ensure the safety of our Hansard team.

There are unique and challenging times. And I am proud of the way that each and every one of you pulled together to keep each other safe while ensuring the important work of this Assembly can be conducted. Thank you.

So for the purpose of the proceedings that immediately follow, I am authorizing the House leaders to speak from their seats where they are currently situated. Why is the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services on her feet?

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request leave to present a report and move a concurrence motion for the Standing Committee on House Services recommending modification to the Legislative Assembly's rules, procedures, and practices for the remainder of this sitting period.

The Speaker: — The Deputy Chair has requested leave to present a report and move a concurrence motion for the Standing Committee on House Services. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Deputy Chair may proceed.

Report of the Standing Committee on House Services

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I've been instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to present its 15th report. I move:

That the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

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

That the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To move a subsidiary motion for the implementation of the recommendations of the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader may proceed.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That the recommendation of the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted as a sessional order for the sitting period Monday, June the 15th, 2020 through Friday, July 3rd, 2020 of the fourth session of the twenty-eighth legislature.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That the recommendation of the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be adopted as a sessional order for the sitting period Monday, June 15th, 2020 through Friday, July 3rd, 2020 of the fourth session of the twenty-eighth legislature.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — To request leave to introduce and consider all stages of Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* immediately.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to introduce and consider all stages of Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Government House Leader may proceed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 208 — *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader may proceed to move second reading of the bill.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 208 — *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* be now read a second time.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved second reading of Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I designate that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* be committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills and the said bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills immediately.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills. I do now leave the Chair for the Assembly to go into Committee of the Whole on Bills.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS

Bill No. 208 — *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*

The Chair: — The item that stands before the committee is Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*. Short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I move that the committee report the bill without amendment.

The Chair: — It has been moved that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act* be reported without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Committees.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020* without amendment.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 208 — *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 208, *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment*

Act, 2020 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. I'm advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is here for Royal Assent. All please rise.

ROYAL ASSENT

[At 13:43 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following bill.]

His Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly at its present session has passed a bill which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour, and to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — Your Honour, the bill is as follows:

Bill No. 208 - *The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020*

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to this bill.

[His Honour retired from the Chamber at 13:45.]

The Speaker: — Okay, why is everybody on their feet? Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To request leave to move a motion regarding the appointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion regarding the appointment of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. The Government House Leader may proceed.

MOTIONS

Appointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move:

That pursuant to section 18 of *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act*, Mr. Maurice Herauf Q.C. be appointed to the position of Conflict of Interest Commissioner effective July 1st, 2020.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader:

That pursuant to section 18 of *The Members' Conflict of Interest Act*, Mr. Maurice Herauf Q.C. be appointed to the position of Conflict of Interest Commissioner effective July 1st, 2020.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government's Preparedness for COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see everyone here, those who are able to be with us today. Thank you for all the efforts, for those who've got us into this room, and especially the folks at the Table and all those who have put in this work.

Mr. Speaker, in March health care workers spoke up about serious concerns with shortage of access to personal protective equipment or PPE. The Premier said that there was no such problem. SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] documents, revealed through a freedom of information request, show that there was already communication with the government about existing shortages of PPE. The Premier again went public and said that there was no problem.

Will the Premier please explain the disconnect between his answers and what was really happening?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the wording that I had used on that day and used on many days, Mr. Speaker, was that I had been informed that there was no shortages of personal protection equipment within the health care system here in Saskatchewan.

That being said, I think there were strains with respect to access to personal protective equipment around the world — not only in Saskatchewan, across Canada, but most certainly around the world — as all people around the world, Mr. Speaker, all entities,

all health delivery entities were after N95 masks. They were looking to procure different kinds of gloves as well as gowns, all of the personal protection equipment that our health care system required as we provided the services that were necessary through this pandemic and continue to provide them.

Mr. Speaker, as it turns out, we did not have any shortages of personal protection equipment in the province, so we have had enough to date. We've worked closely with other provinces, worked very closely with the federal government to ensure that that has been the case to today, Mr. Speaker, and will be the case for days into the future.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, as then, the Premier's comments differ greatly from the record. The SHA made it very clear those documents were available March 2nd, and that information was communicated to the Minister of Health. If any activity for actually planning for the pandemic was going on, surely the Premier was aware that those PPE shortages were top of mind, Mr. Speaker. The quote from the SHA document: "Clinics were extremely challenged in having sufficient supplies." But the Premier went and spoke to the public and said, no there's nothing to see here; there's no problem at all.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier acknowledge that he wasn't straight with the Saskatchewan people at that time? Will he apologize for that, and will he be clear about his failures to plan for the pandemic while he was focused on planning for an election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to personal protective equipment and the access to that equipment here in Saskatchewan, we didn't run short. We haven't run short. We don't intend on running short.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to be concerned, as the world does, at procurement and accessing of this personal protection equipment. But we have worked very hard through the Minister of Health associated with Saskatchewan Builds. As well many local manufacturing companies, not just in Saskatchewan but across Canada, Mr. Speaker, have stepped up, stepped up and stepped into this space so that we do have access to some of this equipment that was maybe more challenging to get access to a number of weeks and a few months ago.

Everyone around this world, Mr. Speaker, is faced with this same challenge of procuring this equipment, procuring ventilators, ensuring that we have the equipment that we need to keep our health care officials, our health care workers safe, but also to keep the general communities safe, Mr. Speaker. And again, I would just say that we have not run out of personal protective equipment here in the province, Mr. Speaker. We don't intend on running out of personal protection equipment, but we're working very hard to ensure that that's the case.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] report showed that the government failed to start

looking for ventilators or personal protective equipment until mid-March. When we discussed this in the legislature, they laughed off the concern of the pandemic. They laughed about it. The Minister of Rural and Remote Health said, what if, what if, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier clearly had this information that there was an existing PPE shortage.

Why did the Premier choose not to plan? Why did he choose not to engage in getting ready for the pandemic? Why was he so interested in his own political fortunes and going to an election early that he completely ignored this? We've been lucky. We've been lucky that things haven't gone the way they could have gone. But that's despite this Premier, not because of him.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to what is a global pandemic, and how we are addressing the COVID-19 pandemic across Canada, Mr. Speaker, and more specifically with respect to here in Saskatchewan, I think it's important for us to not say we've been lucky, that maybe we've been fortunate here in the province, Mr. Speaker, and that is due to what individual people have done in this province over the course of the last three months.

Mr. Speaker, we have been prepared. We have been prepared when it comes to procuring and ensuring that we have personal protection equipment for our health care workers here in the province, Mr. Speaker, and that shows as we have not run out.

Mr. Speaker, we have not been lucky. Mr. Speaker, individuals have made personal sacrifices that I would say have resulted in some tremendously strong numbers here in Saskatchewan. We're 78 per cent below the Canadian infection rate, 95 per cent below the Canadian fatality rate, Mr. Speaker. And that's due to personal sacrifices that individuals have made. I think of the people that have not had the ability, the opportunity to visit their family members that are in long-term care homes. I think of the individuals, Mr. Speaker, that have sacrificed with respect to their job or their business over the course of the last number of weeks.

Our numbers bode very well in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's not luck. It's due to the personal sacrifice, Mr. Speaker. It's due to the personal decisions that people have made with respect to ensuring that the spread of this virus is not happening in this province.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's something we can agree on. The people of this province have sacrificed in incredible ways and have stepped up in ways that are absolutely beyond the pale.

The Premier's failure to plan, his failure to recognize this early and get to work made that more difficult. He made it more difficult for health care workers who had to scramble, basically redesign the health system in a matter of weeks, days. The work that went on hour after hour with no plan in place, no plan in place of any seriousness, and a premier that was focused on an election and not on planning for a pandemic, Mr. Speaker. He made that work so much harder for the front-line workers.

But something I think we can recognize and I think we can agree on, Mr. Speaker, is that those workers have stepped up. The front-line workers, the health care workers, workers in gas stations and grocery stores, the folks delivering takeout, the folks who are in care work, in child care and long-term care and home care, they've stepped up in incredible ways, Mr. Speaker. And I want to ask the Premier if he would join me in thanking those workers for the way that they've gone above and beyond the call of duty in these last weeks.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition raises a number of points that just simply haven't happened. Mr. Speaker, this government was prepared as best they could be relative to how well prepared you can be to a global pandemic hitting the communities that we represent.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is we did not run out of personal protection equipment. And yes, when you look back over the course of the last number of months, are there things that we could have done different? Are there things that other governments across Canada and around the world could have done different? Of course there is, Mr. Speaker.

But I think in Saskatchewan that we have done pretty good with respect to managing this pandemic from a health care perspective, with respect to managing this pandemic from the impact on our economy perspective, Mr. Speaker, and also with respect to how we prepare for the months ahead to ensure that we can not only address what might be coming at us with respect to COVID-19 infections, but ensuring that we're getting our health care system — the surgeries and the health care that people expect to be provided in their community — back up and running, running to whatever level we can actually get that to while we navigate through these times.

So I have taken the opportunity on many occasions over the course of the last three months to thank all of the people on the front lines, Mr. Speaker, all 87 per cent of the people that worked throughout this pandemic in this province, to thank them for what they have done, to thank them for what not only they have done to ensure the economic engine of Saskatchewan continues through this pandemic, but what they have done to stop the spread of COVID-19 over the course of this time.

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

Minimum Wage in Saskatchewan

Mr. Meili: — Thirteen cents. Thirteen cents, Mr. Speaker. The Premier thinks that workers in this province deserve his thanks, but last week minimum wage went up in this province by 13 cents. That's not a raise, Mr. Speaker; that's a slap in the face to the hard-working people whose lives have been more stressful, more difficult, more challenging in the last weeks. Thirteen cents. That's what he thinks they're worth. Why does the Premier think that those workers are worthy of our gratitude but are only worthy of the lowest minimum wage in the entire country?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the minimum wage in this

province is tied to a formula that we introduced a number of years ago that is tied to a number of factors. And that is the way the formula has went this year, Mr. Speaker.

We have never hid the fact that we continue to work to ensure that people in this province pay less tax. Mr. Speaker, we continue to work to ensure that — in particular to families paying less tax — individuals that are on the lower thresholds of income here in the province, Mr. Speaker, are treated well and treated fairly. When you take in, Mr. Speaker, the holistic view, the holistic view of income, of the cost of our utility bundle here in the province, we're among the very lowest, Mr. Speaker, in the nation.

We've worked hard to remove some of our lower income families off of the tax thresholds altogether, Mr. Speaker. And I believe the number that have been removed from paying any level of provincial income tax here, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last decade is 112,000.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thirteen cents, Mr. Speaker. A formula that's designed to keep people living in poverty is not something this government should be proud of. A formula that makes sure that at a time when people, already before COVID-19, people were stretched and stressed living paycheque to paycheque. This government had already shepherded us into a recession in this province even before COVID-19. Now things are so much worse. Things are so much more difficult for low-income workers. Why? Once again, why does the Premier think these workers deserve our thanks and deserve the lowest minimum wage in the entire country?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in 2012 the NDP [New Democratic Party] conducted a labour consultation. And, Mr. Speaker, what they agreed on at that point in time, was that we should index the minimum wage. I want to quote a recommendation that was made by the members opposite: "The Saskatchewan Party government should index the minimum wage to take the politics out of regular increases in the minimum wage."

We consulted extensively, Mr. Speaker, and we developed a formula, one where we split the difference between the consumer price index and the average hourly wage for Saskatchewan. We've got sustainability and predictability. The effect of what we've done, as with other changes, is we've taken 112,000 people off the provincial tax rolls in their entirety.

Mr. Speaker, we've worked hard to develop that program. We've made sure that it has worked strongly and effectively, and it's not a discussion to have when we're going through the pandemic. We want to make sure that the fragile economy that we have continues to grow and continues to recover, Mr. Speaker, and that's the direction we're going.

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

Reporting on Conditions in Long-Term Care Facilities

Mr. Meili: — What I just heard from the minister is that during a time when people are struggling and stressed and having a harder time paying their bills than ever, he wants them to continue to receive a poverty wage. Embarrassing, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely unacceptable in this moment and any time.

Some of those hard-working front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, are workers in long-term care. Those workers, family members, and residents in long-term care, the government's own CEO [chief executive officer] report from the SHA have raised very serious issues about short-staffing, under-resourcing, inadequate care, and crumbling homes, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier, when asked about this, he pointed at guidelines which are in effect a set of suggestions. There's no way to enforce and make sure that those guidelines are followed. This is leaving workers, and I quote, "feeling deeply troubled and outraged." Will the Premier admit that he got it wrong and will he call for an independent investigation into long-term care in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would say first of all, I beg to differ with the member opposite on the way he describes the guidelines, Mr. Speaker. Right at the very start of the *Program Guidelines for Special Care Homes* . . . and I'll read one of the sentences out of the second paragraph, Mr. Speaker. It very clearly says:

The standards set within this manual are considered minimum standards and must be adhered to in publicly funded facilities that offer long-term care services to residents in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO tours — which I might add were initiated by this government, not by the NDP when they were in government — are an opportunity for families and residents to speak their mind, to raise any concerns that they may have with long-term care facilities. Mr. Speaker, it's a very good exercise. It's one that we intend to continue as we've amalgamated the health regions across the province. Obviously with hundreds of facilities around the province, the CEO can't get to them all, so senior executives also do some of those reports, Mr. Speaker.

But it's not the only thing we do for long-term care. Accreditation Canada also weighs in periodically, Mr. Speaker, and we have a number of other avenues we use. And I'd be happy to speak to those in subsequent questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Independent investigations into long-term care in other provinces have revealed major problems. We hear directly from workers and family members that those same problems are here as well. The SHA CEO report got partway to showing us some of what's going on but we need to have the full story.

When asked if the Premier would raise this with his federal counterparts and try to address national standards and get to the

bottom of what's going on in long-term care across the country and right here in Saskatchewan, he refused. Mr. Speaker, refusing to look doesn't mean the problem isn't there. It only means it's going to get worse.

Will the Premier come around to the understanding that we need answers on what's going on in long-term care? Will he commit to an independent investigation of long-term care homes in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in the previous question, we have the CEO tours, which are a very valuable planning device that the senior officials in the SHA and the Ministry of Health use. We also have biennial surveys that are done for residents and families, Mr. Speaker. I believe the last round of surveys done showed in the neighbourhood of 83 to 85 per cent people that are satisfied with the services that are provided to either themselves or their loved ones, Mr. Speaker. That doesn't mean we can't do better. Obviously we can and we need to strive to do better, Mr. Speaker, and we'll continue to do so.

As far as the independent investigation, Mr. Speaker, I believe the members opposite, the NDP caucus, called for an investigation by the Provincial Ombudsman. Mr. Speaker, the Ombudsman is an independent officer of the legislature, certainly free to either act on complaints or act of their own volition and do investigations. We're going to continue to emphasize the CEO reports and the surveys, work on that. If the Ombudsman determines that she wishes to do an investigation, we'll co-operate with that as well, Mr. Speaker. In the mean time, we're going to support our officials to do their good work.

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

Labour Disruption at Co-op Refinery Complex

Mr. Meili: — Shovelling it off to an ombudsman who isn't resourced to do that kind of work. Pointing to guidelines with no enforcement whatsoever. You have to bring in those resources if you're going to get that independent investigation. You have to commit to it, Mr. Speaker.

It's a commitment to not get to the bottom of the problem, Mr. Speaker, a commitment to not take action and solve things, which is something this Premier knows a lot about, and he might have heard a lot about when he came to work today, might have seen dozens of people of the hundreds of people that are out of work, might have heard the horns that are going on as workers from the refinery are out of work still. They're still locked out after over six months. They're out there with their kids and their partners saying something very clear. They want to get back on the job, Mr. Speaker.

But when oil leaked into Regina's water, the Premier had nothing to say about it. Not concerned about the public safety issues at all. Nothing to say about that. And ever since the Ready report was done and this came once again to a standstill, he's done nothing.

The Premier has the power to bring this to an end. He has our

support to bring in binding arbitration and end this lockout. Mr. Speaker, when will the Premier act and end this lockout? It's gone on far too long.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that this labour dispute has had an impact on many individuals, families, and businesses. But we also know, Mr. Speaker — and it's something that all parties have pushed for when we've done consultation in the past — the best agreements are made at the bargaining table when parties work together to try and come to an agreement.

I continue to be in contact with both parties. I encourage them to get back to the table and resolve their dispute. We appointed Vince Ready and Amanda Rogers as special mediators to try and assist in that process. I think they've done good work and I think they have the parties focused on trying to develop a path forward.

Mr. Speaker, we want to continue that process. We'd like to see at the end that this becomes a negotiated settlement that was arrived at between the two parties, not negotiated on the floor of the Assembly. I know the members opposite might like to have that take place but it's not a right thing to do. It's not a good pattern to have. What we would do is continue to encourage the parties to get back to the table, finish their work. I know they're working on it now, Mr. Speaker, and let's encourage them to do that.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know the Premier didn't want to come back to the legislature, but he could at least answer a few questions that are directly for him, Mr. Speaker. We're back to work today. We're back in the legislature today. Those folks who are outside, that's all they want. They want to be back to work.

That's what Saskatchewan people want as well. They want to see an end to this lockout that's gone on far too long. It's damaging our economy. We're losing money in the provincial coffers. There's danger to the public safety. There's so many ways that this is bad for Saskatchewan. And the Premier just sits there and lets it go on and on.

Mr. Speaker, he promised a quick end when he brought in the special mediators, said this'll bring an end to it. But since that failed, there's no plan B. There's been no action, nothing at all, Mr. Speaker. Why does the Premier not use the power that's available to him, bring in an independent arbitrator, bring in binding arbitration, bring this to an end, use his power, and put those people back to work? Why is he sitting this one out?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would say this to the members opposite. It creates a dangerous precedent whenever negotiations don't go well to stand up and say we want to take the negotiations off the bargaining table and start to hear them on the floor of the legislature, to take away people's rights, people's rights that they have fought to the Supreme Court of Canada to get and to maintain, and we support that. Members opposite may

choose to want to go down a different path, Mr. Speaker. That's not where this government goes and, Mr. Speaker, that's not where the members of the opposition should go.

The member opposite raised the issue of safety concerns at the plant and I want to advise the member opposite this: that the OHS [occupational health and safety] conducted an inspection December 3rd, just before the lockout commenced. There was an inspection again January 14th, February 28th, April 1st, and May 14th. They continue to comply with all the requirements that they're expected to. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the job of the government is to ensure that safety requirements are met. They're continuing to do that and, Mr. Speaker, we want to work with those people to make sure they do that.

We understand the frustration on the part of the workers. We understand that they would like to have a resolution. I think everybody would and we encourage them to work at the table to get one.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think those workers fought for the right to be locked out of their jobs. The Premier was quick to stand up when rail workers were on strike and say they should be legislated back to work. Here you've got workers outside. They're not asking for anything special, just asking for an independent arbitrator to bring this to an end. And he's sitting this one out. He refuses to take action even though he knows it's in his power to stop this situation, which is very bad for Regina, for Saskatchewan, and for those hard-working people.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, there was no real question that was posed by the member opposite, but I would repeat again the importance of dealing at the bargaining table.

Mr. Speaker, this has been one of the longest, most protracted labour issues that we've faced in this province. We appointed, in good faith, some of the best people that exist in this nation to try and resolve that: Amanda Rogers and Vince Ready. Those people met with both parties, went back and forth, did shuttle diplomacy to try and get things moved forward.

I can tell you what they did achieve, Mr. Speaker. They did identify issues. They did identify some paths forward and, Mr. Speaker, I think the parties are a lot further down the road than they were at that point in time. We continue to make both Amanda Rogers and Vince Ready available to the parties, and hopefully they will continue to do that. We want to encourage them to do that so that the matter can move forward and that we can ultimately get a resolution that works for everybody.

I think at the end of the day when there is a settlement — and I hope there's one going to be soon — that we'll all be able to say the parties did it themselves. The parties achieved this and it's something that they should be able to work with. Mr. Speaker, we encourage that to continue.

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

Investigation Into Student's Death

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're used to non-answers in this House. I guess I gave them a non-question this time.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk about something that is very serious though. Recently we heard of the passing of a young man, Samwel Uko. And his tragic death is something that has struck us all as a province, and our thoughts and condolences are of course with his family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, he's sadly not the first person to lose his life in this province despite having pursued mental health supports, emergency supports repeatedly and still not getting the help you need. For him, for Steven Rigby, for so many others that we mourn in this province, he must be the last.

Mr. Speaker, the community is calling for a public inquest into the circumstances around the death of Samwel Uko. Will the Premier commit today to a public inquest into these events?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member opposite for the question and the words with respect to the late individual, Samwel Uko, as well as his family. And I would like to express and extend condolences on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan to the family of Samwel Uko.

As we understand, Mr. Speaker, with respect to an inquest, the coroner is doing his investigation, continues to do his investigation. He may at the conclusion of that investigation provide the opportunity to have a coroner's inquest, but we are going to allow the coroner to do that work, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to the results of that inquest.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, in closing too today, I just want to offer again our most sincere condolences to the family of this young man.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to submit the estimates and supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — Would you please rise for a message from the Lieutenant Governor. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2021, and supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2020, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly.

Honourable Russell H. Mirasty, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

Please be seated. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker and esteemed colleagues, today I have the great honour and the responsibility of delivering the 2020-21 budget, my third budget as the Saskatchewan Minister of Finance.

I want to start by thanking the people of Saskatchewan for their successful response to the pandemic emergency and for the many sacrifices that they have made over the last number of weeks. We faced the pandemic together. Now we are reopening our province together, and we will rebuild and recover together.

Mr. Speaker, the 2020-21 Saskatchewan budget meets the challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Saskatchewan is strong. Our province's fiscal foundation remains solid and our economy will recover. Saskatchewan people are resilient, and our province has what the world needs as the global economy emerges from the pandemic. Our government is helping support people through the pandemic and investing to stimulate our economy and to create jobs.

Every province, every jurisdiction in the world, has seen its economy and finances hit hard by this pandemic. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is not immune, but we are better positioned than most to provide the support people need to get through the pandemic and to see our economy recover and jobs return.

Our government is also committed to transparency and accountability in how we are addressing the pandemic, including a full accounting of the impact on our province's finances. In fact Saskatchewan is the first province to deliver a budget that accounts for the impact of the pandemic. While that impact is significant, our government is committed to supporting Saskatchewan people through this very challenging time.

The reduction in provincial revenues and additional costs related to the pandemic have resulted in a \$2.4 billion deficit forecast for 2020-21. This is a pandemic deficit, not a structural deficit. Prior to the pandemic, Saskatchewan was on track for balanced budgets last year and this year, and I am confident that as Saskatchewan's economy recovers, our revenues will also recover and we will get back to balance in the coming years without having to cut programs and services. While this deficit is significant, it is much smaller than deficits expected in many other provinces this fiscal year.

Revenue is forecast to be 13.6 billion in 2020-21, down 1.2 billion or about 8 per cent from last year, a result of the shuttering of domestic and global economies to contain the spread of COVID-19 combined with the oil price collapse.

The 2020-21 budget includes 16.1 billion in spending, up 1.1 billion or about 7 per cent compared to last year. This includes record spending on health care, which is vital during the COVID-19 pandemic. This budget also invests strongly into many needed programs and services to help stimulate

Saskatchewan's economic recovery and to create jobs. The province's capital plan in this budget includes 3.1 billion to build hospitals and schools, roads and highways, and municipal and Crown corporation infrastructure.

Over the next two years, the province will invest 7.5 billion as part of its capital plan. This includes 2 billion, announced in May, to help further stimulate the economy and to create jobs. Saskatchewan is fortunate to be in a strong fiscal position to make these kinds of important capital investments in every part of our province.

This budget also includes more than 1 billion in support to fight the pandemic — for individuals, for businesses, and for initiatives that will help the economy recover.

Total expense in this budget of 16.1 billion includes 14.2 billion outlined in the estimates for government ministries and agencies that was released on March 18th. As well 1.3 billion in expenses from across other government entities is included in the summary budget for a total of 15.5 billion at that time.

In the weeks after we presented the estimates, more than 700 million was allocated to address the challenge of the pandemic, and a 200 million health and safety contingency was also established. The pre-pandemic funding included a record investment of 6.18 billion for the health care sector, up 288 million or nearly 5 per cent from the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, the health sector has had pandemic-related costs. However so far the significant increase in health spending announced on March 18th means that we've been able to manage pressures within the existing budget. Within this record investment, 118 million has been identified in spending commitments related to hospital equipment, testing equipment, personal protection equipment, and operating costs to address the pandemic.

Since the very start of our pandemic response, our government has committed to spending what is necessary to protect the health and safety of Saskatchewan people. While to date this has been manageable within the existing budget, the 200 million health and safety contingency is there to ensure that we can meet any additional costs that are required to protect Saskatchewan people from the spread of COVID-19.

The 2020-21 budget also includes a record 435 million for mental health and addictions, which makes up 7.5 per cent of the total Ministry of Health budget.

There is also 3.36 billion for education in this budget, including pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to grade 12 and post-secondary sectors, which is up 79.4 million or 2.4 per cent from last year. A \$42 million increase in school operating funding includes 20 million to fully fund the recently ratified teachers' collective bargaining agreement.

This budget includes 1.49 billion for social services and assistance, a 58 million or 4 per cent increase over last year. This includes a \$30 million increase for child and family services to enhance the range of delivery of services that keep our children safe. It also includes 10.9 million for third party providers that deliver services to some of our province's most vulnerable,

including at-risk children, youth and families, and people with intellectual disabilities and mental health challenges.

In total, across multiple ministries, the increase is 14 million to help fund the operations of community service organizations that provide vital contributions, strengthening families and assisting those who are most vulnerable — particularly important as the province responds to the global pandemic.

In response to the pandemic, 6.4 million in social services and assistance has been dedicated to a number of measures to help the province's most vulnerable, including one-time payments of \$50 to all adults who receive income assistance.

Our government is also providing 100 monthly respite payments from June through to September to about 2,800 individuals who care for people with intellectual disabilities, at a cost of 1.1 million. And there is 171,000 for additional supports to emergency shelters and one-time \$300 payments to foster- and extended-family caregivers.

This budget provides more than 85 million to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency, which supports the province's people, municipalities, and service providers and is well positioned to address any emergency that may arise. The agency is playing a vital role in the province's response to the pandemic, particularly in the northwest region of the province, including La Loche and surrounding communities. A number of other ministries and agencies have repurposed funding within their existing budgets to address pandemic impacts, bringing the total of COVID-19 spending within existing funds to about 148 million.

Breaking down the more than 900 million in new support to fight the pandemic, this budget includes 502 million of new spending announced since March 18th for its pandemic-related support programs and economic stimulus.

The new expense includes 171 million of new capital funding for third parties, including 150 million for the municipal economic enhancement program for shovel-ready infrastructure projects.

150 million for the accelerated site closure program for the reclamation of inactive oil and gas wells and facilities.

56 million for the temporary wage supplement supporting workers who are helping some of our province's most vulnerable through the pandemic.

50 million for the Saskatchewan small-business emergency payment providing support to small and medium-sized businesses that have had to temporarily close or curtail operations because of the pandemic.

50 million in emergency pandemic support for First Nations and Métis organizations and community-based organizations to help offset an 81 million reduction in gaming grants resulting from the casino closures.

13 million for the Canada emergency commercial grant assistance providing forgivable loans to commercial property owners to assist with rent owing by small businesses experiencing hardships during the pandemic.

And 12 million of other measures, including support for livestock producers, enhancements to the corrections and justice system, and the self-isolation support program.

A further 205 million will be directed to government-owned capital assets such as schools, hospitals, and highways in addition to the original capital plan. When combined with the 171 million increase in expense for third party capital, a total of 376 million is provided for the first year of a two-year 2 billion capital stimulus package. And a 200 million health and public safety contingency has been provided to address future pandemic-related expenses.

Our government has also provided an estimated 675 million in various payment deferrals for Saskatchewan people at this challenging time. They include PST [provincial sales tax] remittance and utility payment deferrals, education property tax deferrals, the student loan repayment moratorium, among others.

Mr. Speaker, as Saskatchewan reopens and our economy recovers, our government will build. This budget builds a strong Saskatchewan by building new hospitals, schools, and highways. Saskatchewan's Crown corporations are also building: new power generation, telecommunication wireless networks, and other needed infrastructure.

Since 2008, record capital investment of 34 billion, including 3.1 billion in this budget, has helped build a strong Saskatchewan. This investment in infrastructure will drive our economic recovery and create jobs as we meet the challenge presented by the pandemic. Investment in 2020-21 represents the first year of an enhanced two-year \$7.5 billion capital plan. This includes the 2 billion in economic stimulus announced in May that is further helping our economy recover from the pandemic impacts.

The initial capital plan announced in March supports more than 17,500 jobs with an economic impact of 1.8 billion on nominal GDP [gross domestic product]. The two-year 2 billion stimulus is expected to support an additional 10,000 jobs with a \$1.2 billion impact on the province's nominal GDP. Since 2008, 1.9 billion has been invested to build 53 new schools and undertake 26 major renovation projects. This budget includes seven new school projects and three major renovation projects that have been announced to date as part of nearly 168 million in educational capital funding, which is up more than 72 million or 75 per cent compared to last year.

The investment in K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] capital includes more than 37 million in additional economic stimulus. Projects will be announced for this added investment in the coming weeks.

This year's announced projects include a joint-use elementary school in Regina's Harbour Landing; a joint-use consolidation of St. Peter, St. Michael, and Imperial elementary schools in Regina; new school projects such as St. Frances elementary in Saskatoon; the consolidation of Princess Alexandra, King George, and Pleasant Hill elementary schools in Saskatoon; and a new consolidated elementary and high school in Carrot River.

This budget builds hospitals, providing 172 million in health care capital spending, including 15 million this year to support planning, design, and procurement activities for the more than

300 million project for a renewed and expanded Prince Albert Victoria Hospital. Plans for the future Victoria Hospital include a multi-storey addition with a new acute tower, adult mental health space, and the development of culturally appropriate spaces in partnership with First Nations.

[14:30]

Over the past 13 years, nearly 1.8 billion in investment has built 14 long-term care facilities across the province, as well as the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford, and the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw.

Also in this budget, a 15.7 million investment will continue construction of a new 72-bed long-term seniors care facility in Meadow Lake. This budget provides 4 million for diagnostic imaging equipment, including 2 million to fulfill government's commitment for a new CT [computerized tomography] scanner in Melfort.

Included in this budget for health care capital is an additional 43.7 million, part of the stimulus announcement for major projects and renewal projects that are being determined.

Mr. Speaker, this budget invests 715 million in the Highways and Infrastructure budget to improve safety, increase the capacity of Saskatchewan's highways, and provide economic stimulus as communities recover from the economic impact of the pandemic. This includes 411 million for capital projects, including 54 million added through stimulus funding.

As part of this budget, more than 1000 kilometres of provincial highways will be upgraded, including multiple sets of passing lanes and various safety improvements throughout the province in the first year of our government's 10-year growth plan goal to build and upgrade 10 000 kilometres of highways.

Since 2008 and '09 more than 9.8 billion has been invested in transportation infrastructure, improving numerous highways, bridges, and culverts, as well as the construction and completion of the Regina bypass, the Estevan bypass, the Yorkton west truck route, and the interchanges in Martensville and Warman, among many others.

This budget also provides 316 million for municipal infrastructure. This includes 166 million in transfers to municipalities, including funding made available through the Gas Tax Fund, Investing in Canada infrastructure program, the New Building Canada Fund, and other programs.

It also includes 150 million of economic stimulus funding for the municipal economic enhancement program, which supports all municipalities with per capita funding for a wide range of projects. This funding will help communities remain strong through the pandemic, creating local jobs and encouraging economic development. Since 2008-09, a total of about 2 billion has been invested to support municipal infrastructure.

This budget also invests 1.7 billion over the next year in Crown corporation infrastructure to enhance services provided by SaskPower, SaskTel, and SaskEnergy. Through the Crown sector since 2008-9, our government has invested more than 19 billion in infrastructure to ensure safe, reliable, high-quality services for

the people of Saskatchewan. Our government's growth plan targets 30 billion in infrastructure spending by 2030 to support our province, help build our economy, recover from those challenging times, and grow into the future to build a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people. This year's budget contributes towards the goal with 3.1 billion in capital investment in 2020-21.

Mr. Speaker, our economic recovery requires being competitive and keeping taxes low for Saskatchewan people and businesses, while seeking new markets, growing trade and exports, and adding value to Saskatchewan products that are sold around the world. This budget contains a number of targeted tax measures to encourage new activities in areas such as pipeline development and fertilizer production.

This budget reintroduces full indexation of the personal income tax system beginning with the 2021 tax year, protecting taxpayers from the bracket creep which is automatic increases in tax caused by inflation.

Our government has also introduced a PST rebate for new residential home construction of up to 42 per cent of the PST paid on a new house contract of up to \$350,000, excluding the cost of the land, for new houses purchased after March 31, 2020 and before April 1, 2023. The new rebate will help the province's construction industry, home builders, and associated trades to create jobs, and it will help Saskatchewan families to afford a newly built house.

The oil infrastructure investment program, a Sask-first new-growth tax initiative administered by the Ministry of Energy and Resources, has been introduced to support new and expanded pipelines as well as new pipeline terminals to flow oil to market. This budget also introduces a new Saskatchewan chemical fertilizer incentive providing a 15 per cent tax credit to encourage new investment that will grow Saskatchewan's value-added sector. And this budget expands the existing manufacturing and processing exporter tax incentive for an additional three years.

To ensure growth of our export markets, 4.2 million in this budget, through the Ministry of Trade and Export Development, will establish three provincial trade and investment offices in Japan, India, and Singapore. Officials in these offices will focus on diversifying markets, connecting Saskatchewan businesses with investors and customers. They will encourage direct foreign investment and will give our exporters an advantage with people who understand the business culture, rules and regulations in key markets. And this budget also includes 5 million to identify opportunities for irrigated agriculture in Saskatchewan and to further develop land and water resources.

This budget provides a record 278 million in municipal revenue sharing, up nearly 27 million from last year, or 11 per cent. In total this budget invests more than 571.3 million in direct provincial support to Saskatchewan's municipalities, an increase of 136.5 million or 31.4 per cent over last year. This includes revenue sharing and the 150 million municipal economic enhancement program, additional infrastructure funding, and a number of grants and initiatives from various government ministries.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have worked

very hard. They have sacrificed much and followed good physical distancing practices to keep themselves and others safe from the spread of COVID-19. As a result, Saskatchewan's per capita case counts are nearly 80 per cent below the national average and our fatality rate is below the national average by over 90 per cent.

Thanks to the people of Saskatchewan, our response to the pandemic has been successful, and thanks to the people of Saskatchewan, our economic recovery will be strong. We are confident that as we move forward with our Re-Open Saskatchewan plan, that businesses can reopen and more people can return to work while at the same time controlling the spread of the virus.

We have a reason for measured optimism. Saskatchewan has the second-lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We've seen fewer business closures than any other province. And so far this year, we've had the third-highest growth in urban housing starts in the country. Mr. Speaker, this budget builds on the strength and the resilience of our people and our economy, and it provides a strong response to the pandemic.

This budget invests in the priorities of Saskatchewan people. It keeps our province competitive with low taxation and targeted economic incentives. It builds hospitals, schools, and highways. It invests in health care and education and social services and in families and communities right across the entire province. The province's finances continue to be solid, and our government will develop a plan to bring the budget back to balance over time.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to close where I started, and that's by thanking the people of Saskatchewan for all that they have done. Mr. Speaker, we've faced the pandemic together, we are reopening our province together, and we will build and recover together.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance and seconded by the member for Meadow Lake:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It truly is an honour to enter into the budget debate this afternoon with a response to the budget on Treaty 4 territory, the homeland of the Métis, here on the floor of the Saskatchewan legislature in what are extraordinary times.

We're in the middle of the greatest public health pandemic of our time. Lives and livelihoods have been placed at risk and lost. We've seen an unprecedented economic shutdown. The stress, uncertainty, and hardship is real for the people of our province. Saskatchewan people, volunteers, front-line health care workers,

and all front-line workers from grocery store workers to truck drivers and those in child care and those at gas stations deserve our greatest and deepest thanks and recognition. You're heroes.

Saskatchewan people have been stepping up and giving back in incredible ways, demonstrating our province's motto, "from many peoples, strength," and the well-earned reputation of Saskatchewan people who have always been willing to rise to the occasion and to help out their neighbour when the chips are down.

It's been a hard time with sacrifices and stress for Saskatchewan people. The loss of income, the loss of their job, or the loss of a business they spent their life building is devastating. This is what Saskatchewan people are facing: a risk to their lives. And they've stepped up to protect one another, to flatten the curve, to reduce the virus transfer, but that's come with serious hardship for people.

And that's why actions to protect livelihoods and to lead a recovery are needed now. An economic recovery that works for people and that gets people working. But instead of stepping up to lead that recovery, instead we have a status quo plan that will leave us in recession, a plan that will leave Saskatchewan people without the jobs, security, and supports they deserve.

The reality for Saskatchewan people was that the economic pressure was real long before COVID-19. Too many families living paycheque to paycheque, too many not able to pay their bills and mortgages. The rate of mortgage arrears, in fact, was four times the national average, twice Alberta, before COVID. Too many people were waiting for health care, waiting in emergency rooms or getting turned away with long delays for mental health and addiction services — delays with the most tragic of consequences.

One in four kids living in poverty, and kids in classrooms so often at a breaking point without the supports that those students so desperately need and deserve, due to cuts and chronic underfunding. That was before COVID-19. People were already stretched and struggling before the crisis hit. The virus is new but the problems in our economy are not.

The fact is the Saskatchewan economy was in trouble long before COVID-19 and made worse by so many of the choices of the Sask Party like the PST that was imposed onto construction labour that hammered that industry, shut down investment, and cost thousands of people their jobs.

RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] predicts Saskatchewan will be in second-last place for GDP growth for both last year and for this year, the second-biggest contraction in Canada for both of those years. People deserve some hope and a plan and action to back that up. We've been calling for action, making proposals, and laying forward a plan to lead a recovery that puts people first. A new vision and commitment to building the best home care in Canada and of course improving long-term care. Investments in people and classrooms. Mental health and addictions supports when they are needed to fix the broken system, at a time that overdoses are skyrocketing and far too many people are dying. We've been making this plea for years.

Renew Saskatchewan. Making power more affordable and reducing emissions while creating thousands of jobs. Sask-first procurement that builds Saskatchewan with Saskatchewan workers in companies, not shutting them out, not out-sourcing, not looking to other countries. Scrapping the PST on construction labour to get people back to work and energize and build our economy and our province. Build back a film industry. Implement a \$15-an-hour minimum wage.

And we've been calling for this government to step up and support people, communities, and local businesses in this incredible time of need. We've been calling for the government to fix its so-called emergency business support program, a program that by design has shut out so many local businesses that have been devastated by COVID-19 and that are so deserving of that needed support. These are the kinds of measures that put people first and that step up to respond to the unprecedented situation to lead a recovery.

Instead we have this government's plan that will leave us in recession, a plan that just accepts that 15,800 Saskatchewan people will lose their jobs as some sort of inevitable event that the government is powerless to do anything about. Saskatchewan people deserve so much better. They deserve a government that will put people first.

Let's remember this is a government that squandered a historic opportunity, failing to get the job done during the boom, failing to balance the books during the best days. Not saving a dime, draining the rainy day fund and piling on debt, tripling the debt long before the impacts of COVID-19. Through these actions and their financial mismanagement, their scandals, massive overruns of project after project — from the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] to the bypass, carbon capture and more — they've left Saskatchewan people vulnerable.

They've left our province without the security of a fiscal cushion that the people of our province and our economy need and deserve right now. Now is the time to act to protect the livelihoods of Saskatchewan people and get this economy back on track. And at a time of unprecedented economic challenges, Saskatchewan people deserve all of the information from their government. They deserve transparency and accountability. They deserve straight talk and a plan that gets us back on track.

Instead the Sask Party is hiding much of the budget once again. This government has chosen to scrap all of its multi-year planning and so many of the forecasts to present the shortest budget in this government's history. They scrapped page after page of budget accountability reporting, hiding information such as debt analysis, the intercity cost comparisons for taxes and utilities, and so much of the important economic and fiscal forecast information.

Last year's budget was 74 pages in length. This year, by scrapping and hiding that information, the information they've shared last year and in years previous, the budget is a mere 23 pages. You know, and that gets to the fears of Saskatchewan people, the rightful fears of Saskatchewan people. On the eve of an election, it's not just what's in the budget that's important; it's what's missing. Saskatchewan people have seen this movie before.

It's been said in this Chamber that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. And by that logic, Saskatchewan people should know that this budget just isn't worth the paper that it's written on, a cover for what this government, if given another chance, will do to Saskatchewan people with their next budget. That's where the cuts are hidden, the sell-offs of our Crown corporations, and the pain that'll be caused for Saskatchewan families.

Saskatchewan people have not forgotten what the Sask Party did following the last election, when they hid the budget and weren't straight with Saskatchewan people, when they rammed forward with sell-off schemes of our Crown corporations, scrapped STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], and pushed forward with devastating and damaging cuts to our classrooms and for people, tax hikes that took our slowing economy and that stuck it in recession.

It's been said that when someone shows you who they really are, believe them. Well Saskatchewan people have seen the Sask Party's true colours. And they know the Sask Party's playbook: hide the facts before an election, sell off the Crowns, and make deep cuts afterwards. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour.

I've been a member of this Assembly since 2007. I've been honoured to serve the people of Regina Rosemont every day since then, keeping watch on this government for its entire 13 years in office and calling for change when needed. I've seen the way the Sask Party government operates, and I know a thing or two about who they look out for when the chips are down. And so I want to say this to all Saskatchewan people, to the people we've met in communities and at rallies and sit-ins all across the province in 2017 in the face of those devastating cuts and attempts to sell off our Crown corporations. The time to rally, the time to fight to save our Crowns isn't next year. By then it will be too late. The damage will be done. The train will have left the station. There will be little we can do if the Sask Party's given another chance to bring forward another budget. The time to fight for our future, for our Crown corporations, and for people is now.

In Saskatchewan, people have a choice to make between a party that's hiding its plan once again, a plan with deep cuts and sell-offs of our Crown corporations and a plan that leaves us in recession, or another party with a plan to invest in people, secure our economic recovery, and build up our province by putting people first. And so, Mr. Speaker, I won't be supporting this budget. I'll be proposing the following amendment.

I move:

That all the words after "Assembly" be deleted and replaced with the following:

does not approve the budgetary policy of the government because it fails to make the investments needed to put people first and secure the COVID-19 recovery; and

that the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

I so move.

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

Rosemont, seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana:

That all the words after "Assembly" be deleted and replaced with the following:

does not approve the budgetary policy of the government because it fails to make the investments needed to put people first and secure the COVID-19 recovery; and

that the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the amendment, please say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the amendment, please say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — The recorded division has been requested.

[The division bells rang from 14:55 until 15:07.]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the amendment to the budget motion as moved by the member for Regina Rosemont and seconded by the member for Saskatoon Nutana. Those in favour of the amendment? I recognize the Opposition Whip.

[Yeas — 13]

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the following members are in favour of the amendment. Member:

Meili	Beck	Belanger
Chartier	Forbes	McCall
Mowat	Pedersen	Rancourt
Sarauer	Sproule	Vermette
Wotherspoon		

The number of members in favour are 13.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the amendment? I recognize the Government Whip.

[Nays — 43]

Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the following members are opposed to the amendment:

Moe	Beaudry-Mellor	Bonk	Eyre	Fiaz	Francis
Bradshaw	Buckingham	Carr	Goudy	Hargrave	Harpauer
Cheveldayoff	Cox	D'Autremont	Harrison	Hart	Heppner
Dennis	Doke	Duncan	Hindley	Kaeding	Kirsch
Eyre	Fiaz	Francis	Lambert	Lawrence	Makowsky
Goudy	Hargrave	Harpauer	Marit	McMorris	Merriman
Harrison	Hart	Heppner	Michelson	Morgan	Nerlien
Hindley	Kaeding	Kirsch	Olauson	Ottenbreit	Reiter
Lambert	Lawrence	Makowsky	Ross	Steele	Tell
Marit	McMorris	Merriman	Weekes	Wilson	Wyant
Michelson	Morgan	Nerlien	Young		
Olauson	Ottenbreit	Reiter			
Ross	Steele	Tell			
Weekes	Wilson	Wyant			
Young					

The number of members in favour of the motion are 43.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion. I recognize the Opposition Whip.

The number of members opposed to the amendments are 43.

The Speaker: — I declare the amendment lost.

The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance, seconded by the member for Meadow Lake:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Recorded division has been requested.

[The division bells rang from 15:09 until 15:16.]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Finance, seconded by the member from Meadow Lake:

That the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Those in favour of the amendment please stand now. I'll recognize the Government Whip.

[Yeas — 43]

Mr. Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to report that the following members are in favour of the motion:

Moe	Beaudry-Mellor	Bonk
Bradshaw	Buckingham	Carr
Cheveldayoff	Cox	D'Autremont
Dennis	Doke	Duncan

[Nays — 13]

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to report the following members are opposed to the motion. Members are:

Meili	Beck	Belanger
Chartier	Forbes	McCall
Mowat	Pedersen	Rancourt
Sarauer	Sproule	Vermette
Wotherspoon		

The number of members opposed are 13.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:19.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Report of the Standing Committee on House Services	
Sproule.....	6927
Harrison.....	6927
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS	
Bill No. 208 — <i>The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020</i>	
Harrison.....	6928
SECOND READINGS	
Bill No. 208 — <i>The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020</i>	
Harrison.....	6928
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS	
Bill No. 208 — <i>The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020</i>	6928
THIRD READINGS	
Bill No. 208 — <i>The Legislative Assembly (Emergency Period Quorum) Amendment Act, 2020</i>	
Harrison.....	6928
ROYAL ASSENT	6929
MOTIONS	
Appointment of Conflict of Interest Commissioner	
Harrison.....	6929
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
QUESTION PERIOD	
Government's Preparedness for COVID-19 Pandemic	
Meili	6929
Moe.....	6929
Minimum Wage in Saskatchewan	
Meili	6931
Moe.....	6931
Morgan	6931
Reporting on Conditions in Long-Term Care Facilities	
Meili	6932
Reiter	6932
Labour Disruption at Co-op Refinery Complex	
Meili	6932
Morgan	6933
Investigation Into Student's Death	
Meili	6934
Moe.....	6934
ORDERS OF THE DAY	
TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES	
Harpauer	6934
MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)	
Harpauer	6934
Wotherspoon	6937
Recorded Division (Amendment)	6939
Recorded Division (Main Motion).....	6940

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Premier

President of the Executive Council

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

Minister of Advanced Education

Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr

Minister of Government Relations

Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Central Services

Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan

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Power Corporation

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Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

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Government Insurance

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