



FIRST SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

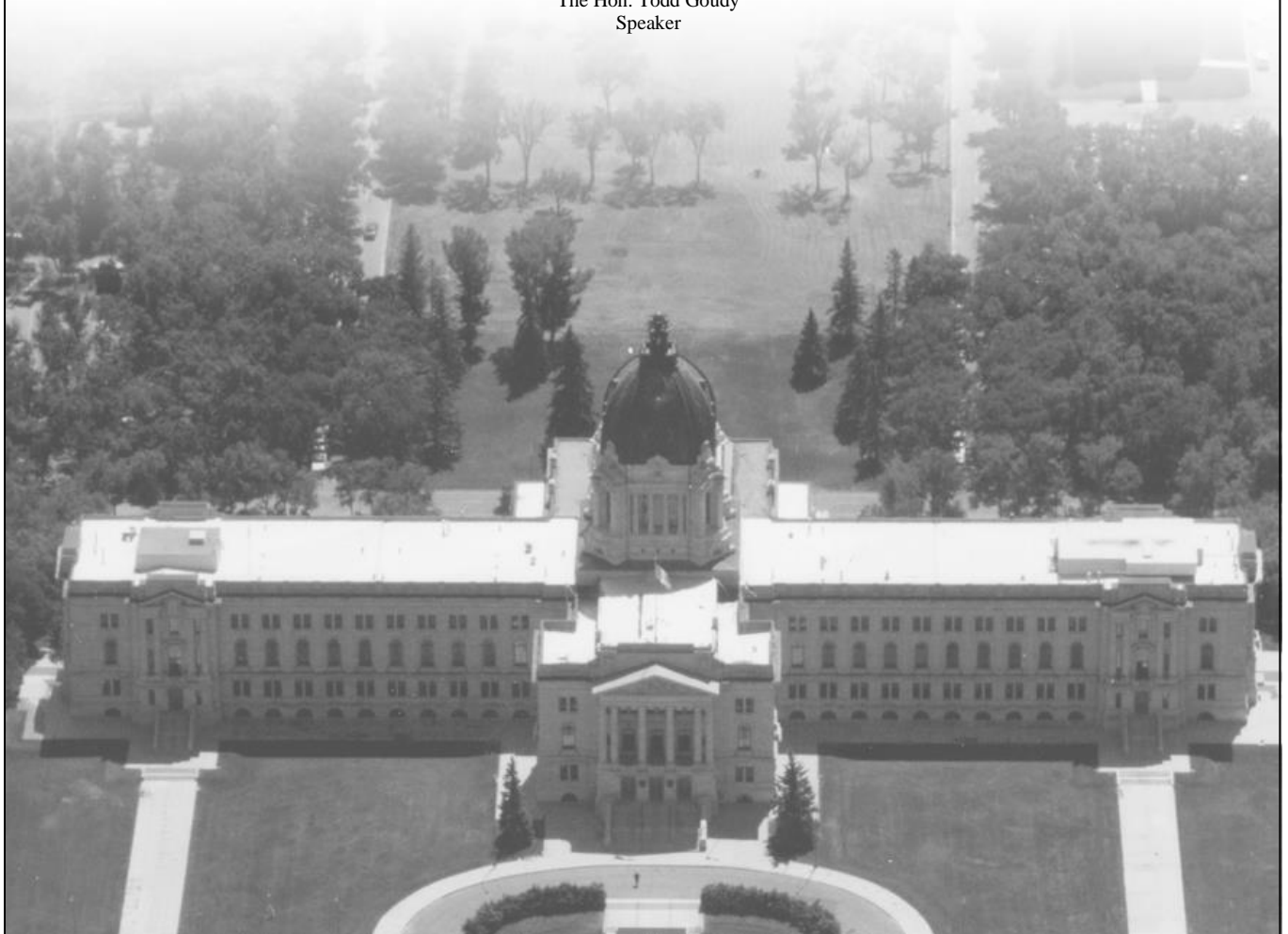
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
AND  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Todd Goudy  
Speaker



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**1st Session — 30th Legislature**

**Lieutenant Governor** — Her Honour the Honourable Bernadette McIntyre, S.O.M.

**Speaker** — Hon. Todd Goudy  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Carla Beck

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**Wilson**, Sean — Canora-Pelly (SP)  
**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Mount Royal (NDP)  
**Young**, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)  
**Young**, Hon. Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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**Standings**

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 27

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**Clerk** — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Daryl Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, request for an extended introduction, please.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Request has been asked for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Hon. Daryl Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce representatives from Sask Wheat, seated in the Speaker's gallery, your gallery, Mr. Speaker. With us today is the Chair, Jake Leguee — give a wave for us — thanks, Jake; Vice-Chair Jocelyn Velestuk; director Scott Hepworth; executive director Blair Goldade; and as well, no stranger to this building, Dale Richardson of Earnsccliffe Strategies.

Myself and the Minister of Trade and Export Development met with Sask Wheat this morning, and I thank them for taking the time to come meet with us and advocate for the province's wheat producers. Sask Wheat is a producer-led organization established to grow the province's wheat industry. Mr. Speaker, Sask Wheat supports wheat producers with funding for research and initiatives to keep wheat sustainable and profitable for future generations. Since its founding in 2013, Sask Wheat has been an important advocacy organization, and I thank them for the work they do.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in welcoming Sask Wheat to this, their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Carla Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Agriculture in welcoming Jake, Jocelyn, Scott, and Blair, along with Dale, to this, their Legislative Assembly, and also thank them for the meeting that we had with them this morning.

You know, they did a fantastic job of advocating, as they always do, on behalf of wheat producers in this province, obviously an industry that is facing many, many challenges at this time. But they also came along with solutions, things that are common-sense, future-focused solutions that they are putting forward to ensure the sustainability, profitability, and our strong and proud tradition of being leaders and innovators when it comes to their industry in this province.

And for that conversation that I was able to have, along with the member for Regina Mount Royal and the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, I want to say sincerely, thank you. I know that the producers that you represent are very, very pleased to have your

strong advocacy. And we are all here very happy to welcome you to this, your Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Alana Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

**Speaker Goudy:** — A request has been made for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Hon. Alana Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated throughout the galleries today are some very special guests who joined us here today to celebrate Rendez-vous de la Francophonie 2025. I had the privilege to attend an event with them earlier today and thank them for their dedication and their enthusiasm for the French language.

Mr. Speaker, we have with us today Diana Ntibandetse. Some of you may recognize Diana as she is a policy analyst with the Ministry of Agriculture and a visual artist when she has the free time, and she's been very involved in the francophonie community since arriving in Saskatchewan. And I've recently learned that she has painted a mural and it's a display at the francophonie community centre in Prince Albert. So I'm looking forward to seeing that.

Mr. Speaker, please also welcome President Denis Simard from ACF [l'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise], who has joined us here today. ACF is a respected partner to the government and in delivering French language services to those who require in our province.

Also with us today, Mr. Speaker, seated in the west gallery, are a number of students and teachers here from Laval school. Hi. So they were here for the event today as well.

Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I ask that all members join me in welcoming Denis, Diana, the students, teachers, and community members to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Jacqueline Roy:** — Merci, monsieur le Président. [Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.] I would like to ask leave for an extended introduction.

**Speaker Goudy:** — A request has been made for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Jacqueline Roy:** — Merci monsieur le Président. J'aimerais me joindre au membre opposée pour dire la bienvenue à toute la communauté fransaskoise qui est ici avec nous dans leur Assemblée législative aujourd'hui.

Alors bienvenue, bienvenue, bienvenue. C'est votre mois, et

j'aimerais définitivement reconnaître les gens qui sont ici — non seulement de moi, but also on behalf of the other six members of our side opposition that consider themselves either francophile or Fransaskois.

Alors, bienvenue en premier à monsieur le Président Denis Simard de l'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise. As you know, Mr. Speaker, one of our head honchos in the community. And also of course to monsieur Ronald Labrecque. J'avais le privilège à aller à l'école avec un de ses enfants, et il est le directeur général de l'ACF.

Un autre mot définitivement de bienvenue: Diana, merci d'être ici avec nous. Je sais que la nature est au cœur de ton œuvre d'art à Prince Albert, et on te remercie beaucoup pour cela.

Les élèves de l'École Monseigneur de Laval: moi, j'ai fréquenté de la pré-maternelle jusqu'à la 12e année. Courage. Merci d'être fiers de votre langue et de votre culture et d'être ici avec nous pour célébrer, to celebrate on behalf of both sides of the legislature.

[Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the entire Fransaskois community that is here with us in their Legislative Assembly today.

So welcome, welcome, welcome. It's your month, and I would definitely like to recognize the people who are here — not only from me, but also on behalf of the other six members of our side opposition that consider themselves either francophile or Fransaskois.

So welcome first to President Denis Simard of the l'Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise. As you know, Mr. Speaker, one of our head honchos in the community. And also of course to Mr. Ronald Labrecque. I had the privilege of going to school with one of his children, and he is the executive director of the ACF.

Another definitive word of welcome: Diana, thank you for being here with us. I know that nature is at the heart of your artwork in Prince Albert, and we thank you very much for that.

The students from Monseigneur de Laval school: I attended there from pre-kindergarten all the way to grade 12. Be strong. Thank you for being proud of your language and your culture and for being here with us to celebrate, to celebrate on behalf of both sides of the legislature.]

Merci. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Bengough.

**Michael Weger:** — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome four guests that are seated up in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I have my wife, Cara; my father, John Weger; my mother, Elaine Weger; and my son Bennett here today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can say that when I was a young lad about my son's age, growing up, I'm sure my parents thought the last place they'd come visit me would be in this building, Mr.

Speaker, but here we are. So I'd just ask everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Bhajan Brar:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you, through you, I would like to welcome 28 grade 4 students from Ethel Milliken Elementary School in Regina Pasqua seated in the east gallery. Mr. Speaker, this group of students from Ethel Milliken school are accompanied by their teacher Laine Goertz-Kaeding along with teacher, Ms. Goski; pre-interns Ms. Hannah and Ms. Michell.

Mr. Speaker, when I see the great personalities who have their past experience as teachers sitting both sides in the Chamber, I see my favourite teachers' faces in their faces and respect them because I am here due to my teachers' support. Not only do they teach children but also create our future. These teachers are nation builders and students are our future. Mr. Speaker, with this I will request all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in giving a warm welcome to our teachers and our future faces into the Assembly. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

**Hon. Warren Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join the member from Regina Pasqua and welcome the school, teachers, and chaperones from Ethel Milliken.

But I do want to embarrass one special person there and that's my granddaughter Brynn. So Brynn has some significant aspirational qualities to her. She wants to become a professional barrel racer, and she is currently taking training for that. But she also wants to be a veterinarian, which I think we have locations for her across the province. But as well, she is joined by her mom, Laine Kaeding, who is no stranger to the building. I believe she was even an MA [ministerial assistant] for our Premier here.

So I'd like to welcome the Ethel Milliken school, the class, the teachers, chaperones, to their Legislative Assembly.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

**Aleana Young:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise here today and add my welcome to the 16 students from École Laval as well as their accompanying teachers Madame Moussalim Samira, Madame Espérance, et Madame Stéphanie who are here with us today to watch proceedings — which will be very calm, Mr. Speaker, very dignified, very well-behaved today. It's a pleasure to have you here with us today to witness this important institution, to witness democracy in action, to see things being debated here today that might be impacting you today and certainly will impact you tomorrow.

It's always a pleasure to have students from Laval here with us today. I will say, unfortunately, I'm not sure as your MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] if I'm going to be able to step out and meet you because I'm giving my very well-behaved budget response speech immediately following question period.

But I believe Madame Roy, who added her welcome to you today, will be pleased to meet with you, answer any questions you have, and she will be able to do it in much better French than myself. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome these wonderful students and their teachers to this, their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Joan Pratchler:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would also like to welcome a guest. Allow me to introduce Cara Werner. She's the director of Dream Big Child Care in Rocanville. She's also the advocacy lead for the South East Saskatchewan Directors Association of child cares. This association represents approximately 25 child care centres in rural Saskatchewan in the southeast region of our province.

To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Ms. Werner and those she represents to this legislature today.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**April ChiefCalf:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present this petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to renew the federal-provincial child care agreement.

The signatories of this petition wish the government to . . . bring to the attention the following: that the federal government renewed its \$10-a-day child care agreement with 11 provinces and territories until 2031. Saskatchewan is one of two provinces that have not reviewed the agreement. Child care operators, parents have all voiced their concern. They know that affordable and accessible child care is critical for families, our economy, for jobs, and for our future. Without access to affordable and accessible child care, families will be forced to leave the workforce, which will have impacts on our economy and our communities.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately renew the federal-provincial child care agreement to save jobs, help families, and boost our economy.

The signatories to this petition reside in St. Louis and Yorkton. I do so present. Thank you.

[13:45]

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

**Megan Patterson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to present this petition. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that the province of Saskatchewan exported over

4.3 billion in goods to China in 2024; nearly 1 billion of these exports are in canola products; further, the devastating 100 per cent tariff on Canadian-produced canola, pork, and peas by China will have a disproportionate effect on Saskatchewan producers and our province's economy. These new tariffs are anticipated to begin on March 20th.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following actions: call upon the Government of Canada to take immediate action to remove the harmful tariffs on canola, pork, and peas that are disproportionately affecting the producers and farmers of the province of Saskatchewan; call upon the federal government to immediately engage in meaningful dialogue with the representatives of the Chinese government to eliminate tariffs that harm Saskatchewan producers.

I do so submit.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina University.

**Sally Houser:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present this petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for pay equity legislation. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, bring to your attention the following. Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender wage gaps in Canada, which is the result of systemic gender discrimination in compensation for work that must be corrected with pay equity legislation. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission has recommended proactive and comprehensive pay equity legislation, which has not been pursued by the Government of Saskatchewan; and that while pay equity advocacy primarily seeks to address gender-based wage discrimination, it must also be mindful of ability, age, identity, and race-based wage discrimination.

I will now read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce pay equity legislation.

The undersigned on this petition are residents in Saskatoon. I do so present.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

**Keith Jorgenson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to protect the Duncairn Reservoir Migratory Bird Sanctuary from the expansion of irrigation.

We, the undersigned residents of the Province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: water is a valuable resource to be used to the benefit of all the people of Saskatchewan; that the Swift Current Creek basin has a moratorium on new water allocation since 1981 due to supply constraints in the Southwest; that the reservoir was designated a

migratory bird sanctuary in 1948 covered by the migratory bird conservation Act protecting migratory birds, their nests, and the management of those areas; that the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that the Water Security Agency has not taken sufficient steps to monitor, enforce, and license water users; that the effort of monitoring of water allocations and usage is key to Saskatchewan having a sustainable supply of water available; that the proposed expansion of irrigation would pose a significant threat to fish and migratory birds.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to protect the reservoir's migratory bird sanctuary from any proposed increase in irrigation.

The undersigned residents are from Swift Current and Shaunavon.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Leroy Laliberte:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan, calling for recognition of the Timber Bay residential school as a provincially ran residential school, to release all school records, and a formal apology and compensation for the survivors.

We, the undersigned residents of Canada, wish to bring attention to the following. Survivors of Timber Bay residential school have been denied of Indian residential school settlements that other sites received on the basis that the school was run by the provincial Government of Saskatchewan rather than operated by the federal government. Timber Bay residential school is the only residential school in Canada with an open RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigation surrounding the historic crimes.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request our Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to recognize the Timber Bay School as a provincially run residential school, release the school records to the survivors, offer the students of the school a formal apology, and compensate the survivors.

The signators reside in Air Ronge and La Ronge. I do so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

#### World Down Syndrome Day

**Brittney Senger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize World Down Syndrome Day observed annually on March 21st.

This past Friday I attended the 3-2-1 Dance! hosted by the Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society. It was an honour to provide remarks on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition about the need for a more inclusive and accessible society. It was an

even greater honour to have been able to attend such an important event while also learning and recognizing the great work being done for the Down syndrome community and the work that still needs to be done.

The Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society creates opportunities for people with Down syndrome, their friends, and their families. Every person deserves the opportunity to thrive in their community.

The theme for World Down Syndrome Day 2025 is Improve Our Support Systems. People with Down syndrome face barriers to accessibility, education, and essential funding. World Down Syndrome Day advocates for the supports necessary to ensure full participation in society.

I encourage all of us not only to show our support with mismatched socks, but to take real steps to listen, to learn, and to advocate for better policies and stronger support networks. Let's stand together in building a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

#### Rendez-vous de la Francophonie

**Brad Crassweller:** — Mr. Speaker, the month of March has been proclaimed as Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. Rendez-vous de la Francophonie is a celebration of the French language, and its vital role in our culture and identity.

Mr. Speaker, French is more than just a language — it's a bridge to opportunities in Canada and the world and a connection to our history. As we celebrate francophones across the province this month, we encourage young people to continue their studies in French. Mr. Speaker, bilingualism opens doors to careers, travel, and meaningful connections. By embracing French, Mr. Speaker, we ensure a vibrant future for our culture and our shared heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all the many and varied participants in Rendez-vous de la Francophonie all the best, and I invite all the members in this House to join me in recognizing the important contributions that francophones and French makes in our communities. Thank you.

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

#### Preserving Fransaskois Culture and Heritage

**Jacqueline Roy:** — Merci, monsieur le Président. [Translation: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.] Welcome to Fransaskois month. Fransaskois month is a time that we not only celebrate our culture — my culture — but it is also a call to action for members of the government.

La communauté fransaskoise est un pilier dans cette province et du Canada. Mais célébrer ne suffit pas. Il faut passer à l'action, monsieur le Président.

Contrairement au Manitoba, nous n'investissons pas assez pour préserver nos archives ici en Saskatchewan. Notre histoire écrite



risque de disparaître. Nos aînés détiennent des récits de refus d'éducation en français. Si on ne les documente pas, notre histoire orale risque de disparaître.

J'invite le gouvernement — I invite the government — à se joindre à moi en 2025-2026 pour recueillir ces voix — to go listen to those voices.

Nos écoles francophones débordent, et certaines tombent en ruines. Les élèves risquent d'aller ailleurs, surtout si trop de cours sont à distance.

Il nous faut plus de garderies. Il nous faut plus d'espace. Il en va de même pour la santé mentale. Avec Creative Sask, il faut traduire plus de documents.

Merci, monsieur le Président.

[Translation: The Fransaskois community is a pillar of this province and of Canada. But celebrating is not enough. We must act, Mr. Speaker.

Unlike Manitoba, we do not invest enough in preserving our archives here in Saskatchewan. Our written history is at risk of disappearing. Our elders have stories of being denied education in French. If we don't document them, our oral history is at risk of disappearing.

I invite the government to join with me in 2025-2026 to go listen to those voices.

Our French schools are overflowing, and some are falling into ruins. Students are at risk of going elsewhere, especially if too many classes are remote.

We need more daycares. We need more space. The same goes for mental health. With Creative Sask, we need to translate more documents.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.]

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

### Canada's Farm Show Highlights Agriculture Industry

**James Thorsteinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week Canada's Farm Show was held here in Regina. Canada's Farm Show is an opportunity to appreciate what agriculture means to our province and to the world. The show connects Saskatchewan producers and ag equipment manufacturers as well as local and international buyers and investors.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to extend my congratulations to the organizers, sponsors, and all the exhibitors and presenters on another successful year. Combined with Canadian Western Agribition, Canada's Farm Show helps generate over \$250 million in economic impact for Saskatchewan. The show partners with organizations such as Saskatchewan's Outstanding Young Farmers and Ag in the Classroom to recognize the next generation of producers to help educate the public on the role of agriculture in their lives.

With 350 businesses on site, the show promotes the innovation and services necessary for the agriculture industry's long-term success. Mr. Speaker, the show also celebrates the contributions of crop and livestock producers as demonstrated by the farmer appreciation breakfast at which the Premier was the guest speaker.

Like Saskatchewan producers, the show has demonstrated its commitment to growth and innovation over the decades, evolving with the industry it serves. The Government of Saskatchewan is proud to support Canada's Farm Show and looks forward to seeing its continued success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Pleasant Hill Community Association Winter Carnival Brings Joy

**Kim Breckner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday, March 8th, I attended the Pleasant Hill Community Association Winter Carnival in Saskatoon. Over 400 people passed through the carnival which included free food, prizes, and many lively games for children. The event was a true reflection of the strength and vibrancy of this community.

I want to thank the Pleasant Hill Community Association and the over 60 volunteers who worked to make this event happen. I especially want to share a portion of an email I received from the organizer after the event. It reads:

One moment that was particularly poignant was meeting a little boy I knew three years ago in grade 1. In all the shuffle of schools, being the closing of Pleasant Hill and Princess Alexandra school, I don't think he's attending anymore. I pass him from time to time on the street. He is being raised by a grandma who was treated for cancer this year. He came and loaded up on food to take home. I encouraged him to at least get a couple of tickets and try to win a raffle prize. Wonder of wonders, his name was drawn, winning a Lego set. He screamed with the loudest, most joyful sound that I have ever heard.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the volunteers that made this happen.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Kindersley-Biggar.

### Key Economic Indicators Show Saskatchewan's Strength

**Kim Gartner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to share some impressive figures from Statistics Canada. Saskatchewan's retail trade sales saw a remarkable year-over-year increase of 8.8 per cent from January '24 to January 2025. In January of this year, the value of retail trade in Saskatchewan reached \$2.2 billion. Several other key economic indicators are also trending upward in our province.

Statistics Canada latest GDP [gross domestic product] numbers show that Saskatchewan's 2023 real GDP reached an all-time high of almost \$78 billion, an increase of 1.8 billion or 2.3 per

cent. This ties us for second in the nation for real GDP growth above the national average of 1.6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, private capital investment also increased last year by over 17 per cent, or nearly \$15 billion, ranking first among the provinces for growth. Capital investment is expected to reach over \$16 billion this year. That's over a 10 per cent estimated increase.

[14:00]

This growth in our province is a testament to the positive impact of our local businesses and their vital role in strengthening our economy. The support and demand for made-in-Saskatchewan products are creating more jobs and opportunities, boosting our economy, and enabling continued investments in services that benefit the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Opposition's Changing Policy Positions

**Darlene Rowden:** — Mr. Speaker, one could get whiplash trying to keep up with the NDP's [New Democratic Party] changing positions. Last week they called for pipelines and expanding export markets. Then they voted against pipelines and expanding export markets in our amendment. Then just two minutes later, they voted for pipelines and expanding export markets.

I can understand the confusion on that side of the Chamber. There is obviously internal conflict on these issues. After all, the member for Regina Mount Royal voted against the Keystone XL pipeline on May 3rd, 2012. He voted against the Northern Gateway pipeline on March 12th, 2014.

On expanding trade, the NDP listed our international trade offices as waste and mismanagement in their '24 campaign platform. On November 13th, 2013, the member for Regina Mount Royal voted against a Canada-EU [European Union] trade agreement. And then today, he's trying to convince us that he's in favour of pipelines.

Now we know he's trying to lead from within because their actual leader apparently isn't allowed to go out alone. The member for Regina Mount Royal chaperones her wherever she goes, leaning over her shoulder, making sure she doesn't say anything he doesn't want her to. While the NDP are conflicted on leadership and their positions on important issues during these uncertain times, on this side of the House . . .

**Speaker Goudy:** — I would just like to, again, welcome all of our students to the gallery and announce it's question period.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Provincial Budget and Response to Tariffs

**Carla Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's weak and meek response to the threat of Donald Trump's tariffs are leaving Saskatchewan people vulnerable. Now the budget they presented just last week contains no measures to protect Saskatchewan

people, and there's no contingency fund. How can the Premier think that it's acceptable to have nothing at all to protect Saskatchewan people staring down the threat of these tariffs?

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

**Hon. Scott Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I would say with respect to the budget that the Deputy Premier introduced on the floor of this Assembly last week that it was a balanced budget, and that most certainly is here to ensure and support the Saskatchewan people and the economy. Not only was the budget balanced, but it delivered on all of the commitments that this government had made to the Saskatchewan people over the course of the last year, up to and including last year's campaign, when it comes to ensuring our province continues to be the most affordable province in the nation of Canada.

Investments in health care, Mr. Speaker. \$485 million invested in health care. Put that alongside the opposition's commitment in the most recent campaign: \$115 million. Over 300 per cent, over 300 per cent higher, Mr. Speaker, the investment in health care by the Government of Saskatchewan in this most recent budget that was introduced last week.

Investments in education and investments in keeping our communities safe, Mr. Speaker — all there to support Saskatchewan families, support Saskatchewan communities regardless of what challenges we may face globally.

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

**Carla Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, we've seen other provinces take reality into account and step up with contingency funds in their budgets. Alberta has a contingency fund. BC [British Columbia] has a contingency fund. And we learned last week, despite what the Finance minister claimed to have heard, Manitoba also has a contingency fund. This is hundreds of millions of dollars for workers, for producers, and for businesses.

So why is this Premier the only premier in the West choosing to leave this province completely without tariff protections?

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

**Hon. Scott Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has a deficit. Quebec has a deficit. New Brunswick has a deficit. Alberta has a deficit. British Columbia has a deficit, Mr. Speaker.

Also British Columbia used the . . . Also the NDP government in British Columbia used the opportunity, I would say, of tariffs — global tariffs put on by the Americans — to not deliver on the promises that they made in their most recent campaign. That's the record of the NDP in Canada, Mr. Speaker, is using whatever leverage you can to not deliver on the commitments that you make as a government to the people that elected you.

Mr. Speaker, we see a deficit after deficit after deficit with the exception of the province of Saskatchewan where we have a balanced budget and are well poised to address any of the challenges that might come from within our nation or outside.

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

**Carla Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this government's budget has already been described as a work of fiction. The Premier and the Finance minister need to pull their heads out of the sand, and they need to be ready with supports that have the backs of Saskatchewan people. Tariffs from China, from the US [United States] are the greatest single economic threat that any of us have faced in our lifetimes. Yet there is not a single dollar in this budget to help protect Saskatchewan people.

How does the Premier defend bringing forward a budget that completely ignores the realities that Saskatchewan people are facing?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Finance minister.

**Hon. Jim Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about what's happening in the other provinces. In British Columbia they're backing up on election platform commitments. In Manitoba they released two sets of books, Mr. Speaker, the actual one without a contingency in it as I understand.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is what better place to put Saskatchewan people than in a position of strength, to make sure that our fiscal house is in order, Mr. Speaker. It's likely . . . There's still some more budgets to come, but I would suggest it's probably going to be the only balanced budget in the country amongst the provinces this year. We are going to have significant challenges, but we're ready for them.

**Speaker Goudy:** — So I'm just going to remind the Chamber that when answers are being given, we'll be listening carefully, and when questions are being given that we'll listen respectfully as well. So I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — A so-called balanced budget. I'll take that bet, Mr. Speaker, any day of the week because I know their record.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government is asleep at the wheel when it comes to tariffs: zero in new supports for our agricultural sector or producers, zero in new supports for people and workers, and millions of dollars of cuts in health care at a time when Saskatchewan people are vulnerable.

How on earth, how on earth does the Finance minister think that cuts are going to help Saskatchewan people in face of tariffs, tariffs from Trump and China?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Finance minister.

**Hon. Jim Reiter:** — Those budgets for those ministries, Mr. Speaker, that the member just read through, there aren't cuts. There's an increase. There's record-setting funding for health care. There's record-setting funding for education. There's an increase in agriculture. Very proud of this budget, Mr. Speaker, again I'll repeat, likely the only balanced budget in the country this year.

What the member's saying just simply isn't accurate. Last week he said, I believe he said that this government hadn't been able to balance any budgets. Mr. Speaker, fiscal year-end at last year, \$180 million surplus. I'll believe the Provincial Auditor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

### Impact of Tariffs on Agriculture

**Trent Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Chinese tariffs on canola and peas have already directly hit producers. Canola prices have plummeted. Ultimately these Chinese tariffs on ag products need to be scrapped, and we call on this provincial government and federal government to act to urgently make that happen, including taking the tariff off of Chinese EVs [electric vehicle] to make that happen.

Since producers are suffering losses now, they need action now. The agricultural producers of Saskatchewan have called on this provincial government today to sign on to improve AgriStability supports now. Will the minister commit to this important call?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Daryl Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the federal government made their announcement on Saturday, neither the Government of Saskatchewan nor Saskatchewan Crop Insurance were informed of these proposed changes to AgriStability. At this point we're looking into the impact of these proposed changes to our Saskatchewan producers and determining next steps.

We continue advocating to the federal government to remove its tariff on Chinese EVs and negotiate a solution with China. We've asked the Prime Minister to engage prior to the election call, and he committed but failed to do so. The only reason Saskatchewan's agriculture industry is in the line of fire is because of tariffs put on by the federal government on Chinese EVs, and it was supported by that NDP leader federally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Health Care

**Vicki Mowat:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, they have no plan for the economy and yet somehow they managed to do even worse for health care. SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] president, Tracy Zambory, called the provincial budget profoundly disappointing, and she's not the only one.

Paramedics aren't happy about this government's budget either. Jennifer Larre, president of the Paramedic Services Chiefs of Saskatchewan says:

We're disappointed. We're a very small part of the budget but a huge part of health care. We're the first call in an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, when will the Sask Party get the message and stop cutting our health care system?

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Mr. Speaker, what has been coming out of the opposition over the last week is just not the case when

it comes to our government's investment into health care in this provincial budget, a \$485 million increase to the Ministry of Health as part of this year's provincial budget. That is in comparison to the platform commitment that that party made of \$115 million increase, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to investing in health care in this province, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to represent a government that's making those investments that impact people every single day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Vicki Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister is struggling quite a bit with the math, so I'll help him out. Last year the government spent \$8.022 billion on health. This year they're spending \$8.004 billion. 8.022 is bigger than 8.004. When you spend less in the current year than the year before, that is a cut. What doesn't the minister understand about basic math?

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me be very clear with that member opposite about what those extra dollars were used in last year's funds for, Mr. Speaker, the two one-time opportunities that we've had in this last fiscal year. Funding for the Saskatoon City Hospital project, basically like adding another hospital in the city of Saskatoon where that member comes from.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, the one-time . . .

**Speaker Goudy:** — I would just ask again. It's not a hard rule, to listen.

Minister of Health, please.

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll pick up where I left off. The other piece of that funding was a \$10 million contribution to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Saskatchewan to expand their houses into Prince Albert and Regina, positively impacting families all over this province, Mr. Speaker. Those are the kinds of investments that this government makes into health care.

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

### Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I've just come from Frances Morrison library in Saskatoon, which was shut down last week because it's been overrun by the drug crisis. Staff who joined me this morning have dealt with dozens of overdoses and drug poisonings, been forced to break up illegal drug sales and been subjected to constant abuse by people under the influence of substances.

It's not the job of these library staff to save lives, but it is the job of this minister. Why does she do nothing while so many people die as the result of drug crisis?

[14:15]

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Lori Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do thank the member opposite for the question. Every loss of life due to overdose is a tragedy, and I extend my condolences to those who have felt the impact of addictions and overdoses, Mr. Speaker. You know, we need to remind ourselves that no illicit use of drugs is safe, and so there is no safe use of illicit drugs.

The current situation in Saskatoon highlights the critical need for recovery, not only in the city of Saskatoon but across the province. And that's why we are moving to a recovery-oriented system of care, Mr. Speaker. Right now we have a commitment to get to 500 treatment beds within the province. We're already at 221. We have another 100 that have been allocated. Just waiting to have those organizations stand them up and we will be at 500, Mr. Speaker. Moving towards recovery so they can live safe lives in their community.

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

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — We need to stop the tokenizing. Data received indicates more than 400 overdoses have occurred in Saskatoon over the past month, and this minister tries to downplay concerns. Shameful.

A representative for library staff told media today, "We simply are not resourced to be the front lines of the drug poisoning crisis." I agree. And yet the minister does nothing. This government's own budget last week actually cut health care funding.

How can the minister justify cuts when so many people are dying of drug overdoses?

**Speaker Goudy:** — I'm just going to again mention that we can't say what the person was intending to do, in our questions, whether a person is downplaying or not downplaying. We just need to be careful with our questions and make sure that our answers are answers.

I recognize the Minister of Remote and Rural Health.

**Hon. Lori Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I heard the member opposite say that we're cutting the health budget. Again I just want to reiterate what the Minister of Health already said. There are no cuts to this budget. Over \$400 million more, additional in this year's budget than what we budgeted last year. That's right there in the book for you to read as well if you'd like to take the time to do that.

But Mr. Speaker, when it comes to services that we're providing in Saskatoon, we've been engaging with the city of Saskatoon. We've been engaging with the Saskatchewan Health Authority. We've actually had the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency set up something called a PEOC [provincial emergency operations centre], a provincial emergency organization centre. This is a place where the province can help assist the community in the troubles that they're having, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, you highlight what's happening in that community; it's the use of illicit drugs. We want to move to a recovery-oriented system to care for these individuals, and we want to get them the help that they need in communities right across this province, and we are committed to doing that for those individuals, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Child Care Agreement with Federal Government

**Joan Pratchler:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People from across this province are calling and emailing my office in utter dismay that the Sask Party government has failed to sign onto the child care deal before the election was called.

Cara Werner with southeast Saskatchewan directors association represents 25 child care centres in rural Saskatchewan. She's here with us today. These are her questions, and she'd like an answer from the minister:

Are we going to have jobs? Are we going to have spaces?  
Or are we going to go back to paying \$1,000 a month for spaces in child care?

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

**Hon. Everett Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said last week, our government remains in a position to negotiate in good faith with the federal government on the extension of the national child care agreement, which does not lapse until March 31st of next year, of 2026, as I've said before. That conversation needs to be a fulsome conversation based on the feedback that we are hearing, government is hearing — on both sides of this Chamber — from child care operators, from families. We need to ensure that we have a long-term, sustainable, viable program that works for everyone in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's the responsible thing to do.

As I said, I've indicated our government's willingness to negotiate with the federal government on what that future extension of this particular program will look like in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Joan Pratchler:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Why is it that the child care agreement is good for 11 other provinces and territories but not good enough for our Saskatchewan families? Saskatchewan families deserve access to affordable child care, period. And they deserve access to local jobs — jobs at the local daycare, jobs at the local health centre, jobs at the potash mine. But without affordable child care, many of those jobs could be at risk.

What does the minister have to say to the countless families who could lose their jobs due to this government's inaction?

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

**Hon. Everett Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's an

example of one of the reasons why we want to make sure that we're negotiating this properly. Last week the Premier of Nova Scotia wrote a letter to the federal government indicating that the initial child care agreement back in 2021 was signed in the haste of a looming election. Once again, this is happening in 2025. And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Nova Scotia, just last week in his letter to the federal government, indicated that Nova Scotia is asking for amendments to their recently signed agreements to allow for some participation for for-profit operators, which is exactly one of the things that Saskatchewan is interested in.

So, Mr. Speaker, what that says to me is that, yes, there are other provinces who felt like they were rushed into renegotiating and signing a new agreement. And now these provinces are coming back saying, we would like to renegotiate and make some changes to that. So why wouldn't we, as the province of Saskatchewan, before entering into an agreement, make sure that we are covering off these sorts of issues and identifying what would be the best path going forward for our province, Mr. Speaker, and for our child care operators.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

### Supports for Northern Saskatchewan

**Leroy Laliberte:** — Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the incredible people of Athabasca and Saskatchewan's incredible North. But the people I represent are being ignored by this government. The North is rich with resources, and the people living there don't have access to basic services.

Take the health centre in Beauval and also the other communities that haven't had proper staff in months. I looked through this budget of theirs and found that there's no help. Why does this government continue to ignore the health and the well-being of my constituents?

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. And I'd just remind the member opposite this is a government that does invest in the North. When I look at his own constituency, I see capital investments. I see a new elementary school in La Loche. Over in La Ronge, I see a new long-term care facility being constructed. These are important investments into the North, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about Beauval. And as part of this year's provincial budget, we've got \$1.5 million in new funding for the Beauval EMS [emergency medical services] facility. We know how important this facility is to that community and that area, Mr. Speaker, and we look forward to making that investment into the North.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Leroy Laliberte:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I also want to say thanks to the minister, obviously been dodging questions here steady. This budget is a joke. Delivering for you — I don't think so. This is not happening in Athabasca. People in the North pay outrageous prices for the basic necessities, Mr. Speaker, and

now there's a trade war that's only going to make things more expensive.

I've got plenty of constituents eager to tell this government exactly how this budget delivers nothing for them. Will one of these ministers, at one time, come to the far North and let these people know first-hand that they are important, they matter, and they belong in this province.

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I've had the good fortune of spending a bit of time in the North, touring that member's constituency, touring the constituency of Cumberland. This is a government that invests in the North. I already highlighted the brand new elementary school in La Loche, the new long-term care facility that's being built in La Ronge, the new funding in this year's budget for the Beauval EMS facility, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also highlight the investments that we've already made in years past, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite — a new long-term care facility in Meadow Lake. In this year's budget, expansion of dialysis services in Meadow Lake, which directly serves the people of that member's constituency. For that member to get up and say that this government doesn't invest in the North, Mr. Speaker, that just isn't the case.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

#### Access to Breast Cancer Diagnostic Services

**Brittney Senger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a woman in this province needed a mammogram but she couldn't afford to travel to Calgary to get one. I'd like to read from the Sask Party government's response:

Some people can't participate in this initiative because they don't have funds available to pay for costs upfront or they don't have a reliable vehicle to get them to Calgary and can't afford airfare.

What does the minister say to women in Saskatchewan waiting for a mammogram with a lump in their breast, who can't get a scan because they can't afford it?

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had the ability to meet with several breast cancer survivors over the last several weeks and share about the good news, Mr. Speaker, that in this budget our government continues to make investments into women's health in this province ensuring that that breast cancer pathway is as efficient as possible.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you know, that member opposite talks about reading some emails. Let me share a story from a woman that I met here at the legislature last week who came to budget who was able to go to Calgary as part of our contract with Beam Radiology. She talked to me about how efficient it was and how she was quickly able to get surgery when she returned to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This is all about, Mr. Speaker, this is all about finding as much capacity where we can across Western Canada to make sure the women of this province get the services they need as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Southeast.

**Brittney Senger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been missing in action when it comes to the threat of tariffs, and he's been missing in action when it comes to women's health care. Women in this province who are waiting for urgent mammograms are still being flown to Calgary for care, care they should be able to get here at home.

This Premier and his Sask Party government are not focused on the future. When will we see a plan from this Premier to deliver this health care to women at home?

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

**Hon. Jeremy Cockrill:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about that plan. That plan is a part of this year's budget, *Delivering for You*, delivering for women across this province and especially in southern Saskatchewan. In this year's budget, there's money for the opening of the new breast health centre right here in Regina. We look forward to opening that up here in the coming months, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, this is our government, thanks to this Premier, that is constantly lowering the age for breast cancer screening to a lower and lower age every year. On January 1st of this year, lowered it to age 47 without a referral from a health care provider. On June 1st it's going to go down to age 45. Each time we move that age down, that positively impacts another 12,000 women in this province, Mr. Speaker. This is a government that is making these targeted investments into women's health care in Saskatchewan so those women have better access to care. Thank you.

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

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — I'm requesting leave for an extended introduction.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Request has been made for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Betty Nippi-Albright:** — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I just want to extend a warm welcome to community folks in from Saskatoon that travelled this morning after the press conference to join here and to listen to question period and also listen to the answers on addressing the drug overdoses in the community.

So to you and through you, I would like to welcome the following guests to their legislature: Patricia Whitebear and her granddaughter Xavierra, and Andréa Ledding, David Fineday, and Davin Andrie. And thank you so much for travelling and

getting here and taking the time to be here for your community. So with that, welcome to your legislature.

[14:30]

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 13 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025*

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

**Hon. Jim Reiter:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 13, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025* be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker Goudy:** — It's been moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 13, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025* be now introduced and read for the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**Speaker Goudy:** — When shall it be read the second time?

**Hon. Jim Reiter:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Next sitting.

#### Bill No. 14 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025*

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 14, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025* be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker Goudy:** — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for SaskPower that Bill No. 14, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**Speaker Goudy:** — When shall this be read a second time?

**Hon. Jeremy Harrison:** — Next sitting.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Next sitting.

#### Bill No. 15 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025/Loi modificative de 2025 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority.

**Hon. Alana Ross:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025* be now introduced and read a first time.

**Speaker Goudy:** — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority that Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Carried.

**Deputy Clerk:** — First reading of this bill.

**Speaker Goudy:** — When shall the bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Alana Ross:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**Speaker Goudy:** — Next sitting.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SPECIAL ORDER

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### BUDGET DEBATE

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

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina South Alberta.

**Aleana Young:** — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A whole new week, back again. So I'll pick up where I left off.

I think I thanked my wonderful colleagues. I'd also like to thank the incredible leader that we have in the member for Regina Lakeview, Leader of the Official Opposition. Just an absolute pleasure to work with, the hardest-working person. You get to the office, she's here, or she's out on the road. She's everywhere.

And you know, despite what members across might suggest with their incredibly thoughtful comments about needing a chaperone on the road, Mr. Speaker, we actually like each other. We like hanging out together. This is a good crew. This is a beautiful province. There's nothing better than driving around, meeting with the people who make it so great, with my colleagues. And Leader of the Opposition is top of that list.

I'd also like to thank my new CA [constituency assistant] Elie Brothen, who just started in my office after my former CA Jocelyn Adema left me to work in caucus office. Elie's great. Comes to me from a real varied background, but most recently

was supervising at Leo's OG. Anyone who can manage a busy, popular bar at 2 in the morning can certainly manage a constituency office and their MLA quite well. And she's just taken to it like a duck to water, Mr. Speaker. I'm so thankful to have her, as well as my constituents, the good people of South Alberta, and my family, Mr. Speaker.

My husband, Taylor, has recently started a new career in real estate. And my kids are growing like weeds, continually energetic — sometimes clothed — 4 and 2, and keep me so busy. And thankfully they're not here quite as much as they were last term, but they still do like coming to Mom's big work. And I'm really thankful that this is a place that they feel comfortable coming every so often on weekends to look at the art on the walls — a beautiful building, Mr. Speaker.

You know, budgets are always important in Saskatchewan, but they're critical during times like this. The member for Regina Mount Royal spoke eloquently about his grandfather and thousands of others who served Saskatchewan, served Canada, fighting along United States to victory. That was a true Team North America, Mr. Speaker. We were united. We fought against fascism, fought for national and international interests. We fought for the future. Unfortunately we're not fighting on the same side right now.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in my office hanging on the walls I have two things that I was looking at as I jotted some notes down in response to the budget. I have an MBE, Member of the Order of the British Empire, that was awarded to my great-grandfather Hugh Young, a university-trained agronomist, that he received for services to King and country for postwar agriculture, introducing fertilizer to the farmers of southwestern Scotland, and for service during the Great War where he served among other places and fought in Gallipoli.

I also have the front page of the *Estevan Mercury*, which for a girl from out east, was an odd thing to grow up with on the wall of your living room. It's from August 20th, 1942; hung in my house as a child. And this front page reports on the local regiment's participation in the Dieppe raid. It's a true artifact, and I wrote down the first line. It reads:

Pulses quickened and pride surged through Estevan today when it was announced that the South Saskatchewan Regiment took part in the united nations smash behind a tank spearhead at the Nazi-held French harbour of Dieppe Wednesday. The assault lasted for nine hours. Details have not yet been released on the operation, but it is described as the greatest operation of its kind undertaken in this war. In achieving their objectives in a strongly held enemy area, the Canadians — accompanied as they were by British, American, and fighting French troops — and engaging their first clash with the Germans in fierce fighting were said to have acquitted themselves well.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's a famous day in our history, but a dark day, for of course the death toll and the price paid at Dieppe was not low. 523 men from the SSR [South Saskatchewan Regiment] embarked on the raid. Seventy-eight were killed, three died of their wounds, and three died as prisoners of war, for a total of 84 dead. Which is about 16 per cent, nearly a fifth of the men who embarked.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, the times aren't parallel, obviously. Like a trade war is not a world war. But I looked at that as I wrote this budget speech, and I thought about that unity that we had when Canadians and Americans fought and died side by side. And it feels like sitting here in Canada, Mr. Speaker, some of that has been forgotten by our neighbours to the south. And we find ourself in this situation of uncertainty, unease, unpredictability — a time that our economy, our geopolitics, and our security hasn't seen in generations.

And look, Mr. Speaker, the only place I want to fight with Americans is on the ice, and I want to win there. And our quarrel isn't with the Americans, of course. It's with Donald Trump, and it should be for every member of this Assembly. God forbid that I agree with former premier Jason Kenney, former premier of Alberta, but after Trump said Canada was meant to be the 51st state, Jason Kenney said, and I quote, "Does anyone out there still think this is a joke?"

This is a man, Donald Trump, who must be taken seriously and literally, with threats to our country, to our sovereignty. There can be no Team North America with President Trump. He doesn't care about our industry, doesn't care about our workers, doesn't care for our citizens. He doesn't care about our leaders, and this province, this country are looking for their leaders to lead.

It's a moment for candour, for comfort, for dreaming big, and for building up this great province and this great country. Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan are looking for a little less Chamberlain and a little more Churchill. And people are going to get it from this team.

This moment, as I said, is bigger than us. It's why our leader offered collaboration as our first move. Genuine effort to work together to ensure all voices are heard. Good ideas: buying Canadian steel; having a Team Saskatchewan task force prioritizing Canadian, Saskatchewan suppliers, manufacturers. All those great ideas, Mr. Speaker, are acted on swiftly. But here we are. The government that promised change and respect continues to struggle, I'd suggest, to show that change.

And so we come to this budget, budget 2025, a budget that provides \$4 billion less in tariff contingencies than Premier Danielle Smith has provided to Albertans, 4 billion less than British Columbia, \$112 million less than New Brunswick, and so it goes on.

And while history shows that budgeting and finances haven't necessarily been a strong suit or a priority for this government, with tariffs anticipated — having the heaviest job losses; heaviest economic impacts concentrated in natural resources; natural resource-related manufacturing, transportation, retail, export-oriented industries — planning for the future for those rainy, stormy days is prudent. And this budget gives no comfort to those people who are worried about their jobs, worried about their future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we met with some operators from Saskatchewan Trucking last week. They're already living the impact of tariffs. They're already worried and looking at having to lay off their drivers because they operate on volume. The impact of tariffs on this uncertainty is already impacting business



owners and workers in Saskatchewan, and this budget, Mr. Speaker, has no plan for our economy. It pretends the last three months haven't happened. And while we hope to avoid a trade war, we hope to avoid any further chaos south of the border, planning for the future matters.

People elect governments to build and protect, I'd suggest. And this budget, first promise from this government, does neither, because we are in a trade war right now. We're in a trade war on two fronts, with the US and with China, where my colleague noted producers are already taking a hit of more than \$2 a bushel, I think he said. Ranchers, producers seeing the price of cattle drop. Steelworkers, industry, they're worried. They're out of work.

We've an opportunity before us, Mr. Speaker. We can build this country. We can build rail lines, pipelines, power lines, highways to unite this country. Mr. Speaker, polling in Quebec right now shows support for a pipeline at 60 per cent. In Quebec. That's where I grew up, Mr. Speaker. That's a significant shift in opinion.

And yet in this budget, all of that is lacking. There should be strong leadership building and protecting this province and this country. There's not. I can't find any additional spending for power generation. No dollars allocated to this government's trial balloon of a coal rebuild. No additional dollars for any capital related to SMRs [small modular reactor]. No additional generating capacity coming online beyond what has already been committed.

And Saskatchewan should be a power broker in this country. With constructive advocacy, a righting of equalization, and a federal commitment to funding we could build our capacity here in Saskatchewan. We could build our baseload, build our renewables, kick-start a boom, and sell power to our neighbours east, west, north, even south. Sell our power, sell our transmission, at a price, to those very thirsty neighbours, Mr. Speaker.

We've been saying for years we need an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to power generation. It's essential for our economy and economic growth, and we need to be measuring that economic growth and potential not just in dollars, Mr. Speaker, but in megawatts.

Attracting and retaining that investment, keeping life affordable in Saskatchewan means strong Crowns with strong fiscal positions. And remember SaskPower, Mr. Speaker, holds a third of this province's debt. It's important to keep in mind.

But not only is this budget asleep at the wheel when it comes to the economy; there's nothing new for affordability. It does nothing to deliver for those people in the last election who said they cared deeply about health care, about education, about public services. Tax cuts in this budget, Mr. Speaker, aren't going to deliver a stitch of relief to people until 2026 at the earliest. And this is after this government hiked PST [provincial sales tax] on everything from pizza to concerts, insurance, construction, pretty much anything and everything else they could think of.

We've got maybe a dollar, maybe a buck twenty-five a day — I'll look at my colleagues — for the most vulnerable, for folks on

SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability]. A government that spent part of last year defending and funding virtual beds for addiction treatment. For those folks this budget isn't good enough.

People are dying — we heard that today from my colleague from Saskatoon Centre — not just on the streets. This is happening in South Albert, Mr. Speaker. I know it's happened across the province in Humboldt, in Nutana, La Ronge, and Moosomin. We all know this, Mr. Speaker. And it's amplified in places like the North and remote parts of our province where folks are already faced with affordability concerns we cannot fathom here in the South, Mr. Speaker.

This is a serious problem. It needs serious attention. And after 18 years of what's felt like, to many folks, just lip service, it needs more than words, more words. It needs more than words and virtual beds. Mr. Speaker, this is not a budget that delivers for the people of Saskatchewan.

[14:45]

I think this might be the first budget since 1993 that sees a direct cut to health care spending budget to budget. And I've heard some members point to — what is it? — the estimated spending from last year, how much they went over their own budget, Mr. Speaker. And I'd suggest to members opposite, like you can't have it both ways, right? You can't say, look at our last year's budget. We're great financial managers. Look at this year's budget numbers. Don't ignore how much money we actually spent. We've got a \$12 million surplus.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite who might be going through their first budget, I'd encourage them take a couple peeks at some of the pages where you've got some of your estimates in the budget. Like take a peek at the price estimate that you've got for WTI [West Texas Intermediate]. Compare it to what they might have in Alberta. I don't know why ours is \$3 higher, Mr. Speaker. That's significant. I don't know why our oil is going to be \$3 more valuable a barrel than it is in Alberta.

And what is it? For every dollar that shifts, it's like \$18 million? Well that's a surplus and a half right there with a \$1 fluctuation. Mr. Speaker, I'd encourage those same members, look at the exchange rates. Compare it to Alberta. Compare it to what some of the big banks in the States are estimating for those exchange rates, that WTI. We're estimating it to be what, \$71 a barrel? Some of them — and I hope they're wrong — are projecting 55 bucks by Q4 [fourth quarter] of next year. That is significant.

So pay attention to the details in this, Mr. Speaker, because you can't overestimate on some of those things and say, "Trust us and the numbers. Believe in our surplus, but also don't look at the extra \$600 million we spent last year after we introduced a budget." It can be one of those things, but it can't be both, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've got health care workers operating like they're in field hospitals. And this is a budget, again, from a government that said they heard from people who wanted change and stability. This budget is providing neither unless you claim that cuts are the change people were looking for. I'd submit, Mr. Speaker, that that was not the change people wanted.

People pay enough in taxes in Saskatchewan to have health care where they need it, when they need it. Women should not have to drive or fly to Calgary, if they can afford it, to get basic health care to find out if they have breast cancer or not. Women should not be delivering babies on the side of the road or miscarrying in communities across the province with no close access to the medical care they need.

You know, Mr. Speaker, after the last election, the government said they were listening to parents, that their first priority would be change, not change rooms. And I'm not sure what they heard, Mr. Speaker, but again, absolutely no one was asking for less money for education. And as the member for Regina Mount Royal said, it's right there in the budget in black and white on page 27. We're already ranked in last place, Mr. Speaker. We cannot afford to go backwards.

Last place in health care, last place in education, not a single shiny loonie for a tariff contingency or for relief for those people, those industries already impacted by the US, by China. And all the while this government's managed to quadruple the debt. Hundred million dollars more in debt servicing, a 16 per cent increase in our debt payments, more than a billion dollars this year, Mr. Speaker.

And we know it's probably going to be worse, right? Last year this government missed the mark by a billion dollars, give or take, in special warrant spending, \$400 million bigger deficit than projected. Can't remember the exact number, Mr. Speaker. Or was it \$500 million more than they projected in spending during the election? These budgets have become more like communications exercises, Mr. Speaker, than fiscal plans.

And that's what these budgets should be. That's what the people of this province deserve. They deserve so, so much better. We need a government, Mr. Speaker, that is focused on the future. We need a team full of ideas, full of energy, full of integrity and hard work. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we will deliver that to the people of this province.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget, but I will be supporting the amendment moved by my friend and colleague, the member for Regina Mount Royal.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

**Brad Crassweller:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand before you today in this Assembly to second this year's budget.

I want to begin by thanking the Premier for his leadership, specifically in and throughout the last number of weeks and months in an ever-changing economic landscape. So, Mr. Premier, thank you for being a calm, steady, and stable voice for Saskatchewan. Thanks for the extra time you've spent travelling and talking with key people in the United States and Canada and internationally to fight against these tariffs, to fight hard for Saskatchewan, to do what's best for this province. So thank you for your strong, steady leadership.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance on delivering his first budget, although I think it's likely his third or fourth budget

with the recent tariff whiplash that's been taking place south of the border and around the world. So thank you to the Minister of Finance and his entire team for their countless hours of work to get this budget done and, for the most part, to still have a smile on their face.

I'd also like to thank all the other ministers who work hard and prepare their budgets and then come together as an entire cabinet to provide us our budget. Thank you all for your hard work, work that was definitely made a little more challenging over the past number of weeks trying to understand and respond to an ever-changing environment.

Action taken by other world leaders can have a direct impact on the many people of this province, the many businesses and farmers in this province. But, Mr. Speaker, in the midst of that I'm thankful that I serve with a team of leaders who have the people of Saskatchewan front and centre when making their decisions, decisions that are not made lightly.

Mr. Speaker, this goes to remind us that every decision we make, every choice we make has an impact on those around us. And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's very easy for people to talk about what's important in their life, what they prioritize in their life. And the key part in making statements like that is being sure that you're able to back it up with action. I heard it said a long time ago, an older gentleman once said to me, show me your chequebook and I'll show you your priorities.

The point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that it's easy to say that certain things are a priority in your life, but it really comes down to seeing where you spend your money that proves where your priorities are. At different stages of my life you could look at my chequebook and you'd see what my priorities were, and those priorities changed as my life stages changed.

My chequebook more recently has changed in buying more suits than I've ever owned in my entire life. I'm wearing one of my favourite ones today, and I'm happy to say that both the former and current member from Dakota-Arm River approve of my choice.

More specifically, Mr. Speaker, I spent a little bit of money on a suit I wore on Thursday. And even the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford — if you remember that plaid one I wore, Mr. Speaker — he commented in the hallway on that suit. But even the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, when he first turned around and saw my suit, he said, whoa. And I think that's cowboy for "nice suit." And I haven't had the chance to tell him yet, but I believe it comes in a size a little bigger than the one I'm wearing with a hat, a cowboy hat that matches.

My kids are just discovering this, Mr. Speaker, as they buy their own homes and they're having children. And I can take a look at their chequebook and I can see that their priorities have changed. Their priorities radically changed as three of my kids and their spouses welcomed their first child in this past year, my three grandsons Brooks, Grayson, and William.

[Applause]

**Brad Crassweller:** — Thank you. And, Mr. Speaker, I must admit I do somewhat chuckle when my kids talk about how much

money they spend on these little ones. I don't have the heart to tell them, it just gets more expensive; just wait. And, Mr. Speaker, I must admit that my bank account, my chequebook, is about to take a pretty major hit as well because my priorities are going to change. Because it's my duty as a grandfather to provide my three grandsons with a variety of motorized equipment to help them develop their fine motor skills.

But the point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, it's so true. Show me your chequebook and I will show you what is a priority in your life. Your chequebook doesn't lie. And that's why I'm so thrilled with this year's budget, because I believe this budget, our chequebook, shows what this government's priorities are. And I believe it can be summed up in one word: people.

I'll take a deeper dive in a minute, but when you take a look at this year's budget and the investment into health care, the investment into education, the investment into social services, the investment into corrections and policing and public safety, the investment to make life more affordable for the people of our province, this government is delivering for our people. Our chequebook says very clearly that people are this government's number one priority.

Mr. Speaker, when I addressed you in response to the Throne Speech, I tried to develop the idea that life is story. And I believe this budget adds a great chapter to the story of this province, and it will have an impact on many, many people's stories, and will perhaps enable some to write some great new chapters in their own lives.

We all have some very tough chapters that make up the story of our lives, and I believe this budget will help make some of those chapters a little more bearable, as I'll explain in a minute. But this government has been delivering on those chapters every year in the budget that we put forward. And this year we continue to write into those chapters some record numbers that will ultimately benefit the great people of this province, the great people in each of our constituencies.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, I believe this budget reflects this government's priorities and at the same time reflects the priorities and concerns of the people of this province. So what priorities are we talking about? How are we going to deliver for you? Well let me start with health care, one of the greatest challenges facing every province in all of Canada, and this government has made it a priority with an \$8.1 billion budget. That is no joke.

Mr. Speaker, may I first say that I had the pleasure of watching the Minister of Health and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health in action. And I think we have two great leaders working together to address the challenges and the complexities head-on. So thank you.

And make no mistake. The work that they're doing and the direction they're moving things has one main priority: people. Getting people the health care they need, with the goal of everyone in this province having access to a primary health care provider. They're continuing to build on the foundation of previous budgets, providing the funds to help the people of this province, and ultimately they're helping to write some great chapters in the lives of the people of this province.

So a huge thank you to both of them, as I believe their phone rings fairly often. And I just want to publicly thank them for their commitment to these critical ministries as they look after and care for the people of this province. They've shown us their priorities. And as they lead those ministries they brought forward budgets, their plans, and ultimately their priorities for this government for this fiscal year, which again shows people are our priority.

Again the total health budget is \$8.1 billion. Mr. Speaker, that's the equivalent to over \$22 million a day that's spent on health care in this province. Again that's no joke.

Increase for Saskatchewan Health Authority operations. An increase for primary care for seniors. A \$20 million increase for mental health and addictions that equates to almost \$55,000 per day, an incredible amount of money because there's incredible need in our communities, in our families, to help with mental health and addictions. And this government is delivering. We're working on those things. Five hundred new addiction treatment spaces. Mr. Speaker, once again I believe these numbers show that people are this government's number one priority.

And, Mr. Speaker, in my short time as an MLA for White City-Qu'Appelle — and I believe it was 142 days, the day the budget was presented — I've had the privilege of meeting some amazing people. And one such couple's name is Rick and Debbie West. Mr. Speaker, Rick and Debbie lost their 17-year-old son Lincoln on Father's Day in 2024 to mental health issues. And they've made a choice to turn their pain into purpose by starting the Lincoln's Life Mattered Foundation. It's a non-profit registered charity. It's focused on changing the mental health narrative by working with parents and teachers and coaches and youth to provide them with the education and tools to help prevent more tragedies like what they've experienced.

And, Mr. Speaker, this government has made a significant financial commitment to helping with mental health issues. And I'm so thankful and appreciative for individuals like Rick and Debbie, who are helping also to raise money and awareness for this vital cause as we work together. They have a major fundraiser coming up on April 4th, and it's going to be fantastic.

But, Rick and Debbie, I say to you, you were right in what you said in your letter: together we will make a difference. We will make a difference. And with this government's investments into mental health, we are with you, and we will make a difference together. But I want to thank you for being willing to turn your pain into purpose.

So, Mr. Speaker, this budget will continue to help so many people who are in a very challenging chapter in their lives. Thirty-million-dollar increase to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. Mr. Speaker, that's \$82,000 per day, a significant commitment from this government. Because people are a priority. Helping people in their time of need is our priority. An increase to the College of Medicine with more residency seats. An increase for glucose monitoring to expand the coverage up to age 25.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the chequebook of the Ministry of Health and Rural and Remote Health, it is crystal clear that people and meeting the health care needs of people are a top priority for this government. As you can see, we'll continue to write some great chapters in the story of what is Saskatchewan

health care for the people of this province. And we'll continue to work on and work through the complexities and challenges to fulfill our campaign commitments to meet the needs of our people. And we'll do so because we've got great leaders leading those ministries.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, education, another priority for this government. And I'd like to thank the Minister of Education and his team for all of their hard work. Their work in this budget shows that education is another key priority of this government, and ultimately our students and our teachers. People are our priority.

As we continue to add to the great chapter of education, we see yet another increase in funding for this vital ministry in our province. Mr. Speaker, \$3.5 billion, an increase of 183 million. That's \$18 million per school day, an increase for school operations. Seventeen and a half million in specialized classroom supports. Mr. Speaker, that translates to almost \$90,000 a day. We heard you. People are our priority.

Two million dollars alone for K to 3 [kindergarten to grade 3] literacy initiatives, an increase for bus renewal and preventative maintenance, and an increase for teachers' benefits and pension. And I'm happy to say that once again, with record funding this Saskatchewan Party government is showing very clearly that our teachers, our students, and our education in this province is one of our top priorities. So thank you again.

Mr. Speaker, I'll take you back to the chequebook. Education is second only to health care as to where our money is spent in this province. It's a huge commitment, and so thank you again to the Minister of Education and his team.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in my short tenure as a MLA, I've met some amazing teachers. And I want to take a minute to thank the thousands of teachers in this province that have chosen to invest their lives in the lives of our children, our teenagers, our young people — the greatest resource that we have in this province. So to the teachers I say thank you. We probably don't say it enough, but I want you to know that myself and my colleagues in this room tremendously appreciate what you do and how you do it, and we both have people as our priority.

A few days ago Ms. Marley brought her grade 11/12 law class here to the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and I had the privilege — and this might make some of our lawyers on this side a little bit worrisome — but I had the privilege of going and speaking at their law class. So we might need to help them out with a few things. But I've also had the privilege of being a part of a panel discussion on what it means to be Canadian in one of her other classes.

I was also at Emerald Ridge Elementary School as a science fair judge. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? It was a great experience, meeting teachers and students and discussing all of these different things. And we have so many incredible teachers in our province.

With regard to education, there'll always be more work to do as the complexities of education are very challenging, but our chequebook shows that education is a priority for this

government.

Mr. Speaker, another great chapter that shows this government's priorities is that of social services, and I'd like to thank the Minister of Social Services and his team for their excellent work with regards to the budget, but more than that, their commitment to helping the less fortunate and perhaps the most vulnerable people in our province. So Mr. Minister, thank you to you and your team. On a daily basis they deal with a lot of very challenging situations, and so please extend my gratitude and appreciation to all of your staff.

But, Mr. Speaker, again this budget shows this government's priorities in regard to social services. It is clearly a priority. And because of that, we'll be able to bring some hope and healing into chapters of many lives who need this assistance to help make their story a little more manageable.

Mr. Speaker, \$1.6 billion, an increase of 70 million. And I'll just point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that that's roughly \$4.3 million per day that's spent to help those in our province who have needs for so many reasons. People are a priority of this government. There's an increase to income assistance, to SIS and SAID, to child and family services, to disability services, to housing. People from all walks of life are a priority, and I'm very proud that our chequebook shows that we are seeking to help those in our province and communities.

Mr. Speaker, another area that's a priority for this government falls to the member from Moose Jaw North, the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety. And a huge thank you to him and his staff for all the work they do and for the recent announcements and efforts in combating the scourge of drugs in our communities.

And I want to quote the Justice minister when he said this: "We're taking a firm stance to disrupt the flow of fentanyl and methamphetamine while also providing options for offenders to access the resources necessary for recovery."

You see, Mr. Speaker, this minister and this government are very clear on what our priorities are. And these kind of announcements once again show that this government is about our people, protecting people in our communities as well as seeking to help those caught in devastating addictions — \$786 million, an increase of 111. That works out to \$304,000 per day to help those who need help.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again our chequebook clearly shows that this government has people as our number one priority — adding more police officers, adding the marshals service to help protect people and their property a full year ahead of schedule. People are our priority. Providing safety and a safe place for those who need help. This government and this budget is about people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm also honoured to be able to work alongside the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport as a Legislative Secretary, and once again this budget, our chequebook shows that this government is about people. I'm excited for the different announcements and events that will be forthcoming in the next few months with regards to Parks, Culture and Sport, but our parks are an incredible place for families to take a break and spend some quality time together. We have 34 provincial parks,

8 historic sites, 130 recreation sites, 24 protected areas, and 90 regional parks.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm excited, and I think you will be as well. There is \$1 million in new funding in partnerships with our regional parks so that more Saskatchewan families can go camping and spend quality time together.

We have a rich tapestry of culture to explore, and I look forward to all of the great events that will be coming in the future months. We also have some incredible sport clubs and teams in this province, and our funding is staying strong in this area as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, if I could just highlight one such team from my constituency, the Rush. They're a U14 [under 14] AA ringette team from Buffalo Plains Ringette Association. They just won provincials a few weeks back, and they're heading to BC tomorrow for the Western Canada Ringette Championships. Congratulations to that team, to the parents and the players and the coaches. And good luck representing this great province.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I begin to wrap up my thoughts, I want you to know and I want the great people of this province to be reminded of a few things. So to the people of this province: this government sees you and hears your concerns. And I believe that's reflected in this budget, and this government will continue to fight for you and stand up for you. And with budgets like this one, we'll continue to write some of the best chapters yet for the great people of this province who we serve happily, and a balanced budget that's only made possible by a strong and growing economy.

To the people of White City-Qu'Appelle: thank you again for the honour of being your MLA. I've enjoyed meeting with many of the councils and business leaders and so many of you individually in our constituency, and I look forward to continuing to build those relationships.

To my family: thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve in this government. I'm not around as much as I was over the past number of years, and so I want to thank my wife, Sandy, and my kids and their spouses for supporting me in serving in this government.

To Nicole, my constituency assistant: thank you for your support and for keeping the office running smoothly and keeping me organized and informed of all the communication that comes to the office. I believe we make a great team, so a huge thank you from myself, from my family, and our much larger constituency family for all that you do.

To my colleagues who I've had the privilege of being part of a great team that is the Government of Saskatchewan, I say thank you. Thank you for running for this party. Thank you for being the champion of everyone in your constituency whether they voted for you or not. Thank you for standing up for the people of Saskatchewan and fighting hard every day to make our constituencies a better place, our communities a better place, and ultimately this province the best place in Canada to live and work and raise a family. So thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is crystal clear that this budget, our chequebook, shows what is our greatest priority — our people.

And this government will continue to deliver for the people of this province day in and day out.

So, Mr. Speaker, I second this budget brought by our Minister of Finance, and I will be voting in favour of this budget, and I will not be voting in favour of the amendment brought forward by the opposition. So thank you for this time to address you. God bless you, and God bless Saskatchewan.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina University.

**Sally Houser:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Regina University to respond to the 2025-26 budget. Putting together a budget is complex and challenging at the best of times, let alone when the goalposts keep changing and the economic ground is shifting. So my thanks and my sympathies do go to all the people in the public service for their work developing this budget.

I would also like to thank our caucus staff, particularly Mitch Bonokoski and his team, for their quick and thorough in-depth analysis of the budget. Their expertise and hard work never ceases to amaze me, and I'm extremely grateful for all the talent we have in our increasingly growing caucus team.

I would also like to thank my constituency assistant Daisy Bowman, who experienced her very first Saskatchewan budget day and very first rotunda last week. I'd like to thank her for all her support in the lead-up to this legislative session and for all the great work she's doing helping the constituents of Regina University.

As many people have said before me, gee, we sure could do with some precedented times. That we are being menaced by our traditional closest friend and ally is not a scenario I would've believed I would see in my lifetime. Let me be clear: we want to get back to normal with the United States. We want to be able to trade and visit and work together with the country to the south, as we have done for so many generations. But the path back to normal is not through rolling over.

When dealing with this president, conciliation and capitulation is not a language that he responds to. We have to ask how much we are ready to give up to please a president that simply can't be pleased. In this circumstance, Mr. Speaker, we need leadership that is more Churchill than Chamberlain.

In addition to the threats on our own sovereignty, the about-face that the United States has made on their international commitments should be cause for concern for all Canadians. Similar threats to the sovereignty of Denmark, repeated insults towards France and other European nations, and in particular the change in policy towards Russia and Ukraine is disheartening and worrying.

Saskatchewan owes a great debt of our history and founding to Ukrainian immigrants, from the first people to clear the land and set up farming communities, to the 40,000 Ukrainian Canadians — many from Saskatchewan — who served in the Second World War, to the many, many recent immigrants who continue to arrive in our province and contribute so richly to our culture and our economy. We owe it to the Ukrainian community in

Saskatchewan to let them know that we have their backs when the chips are down.

You know, with constantly shifting goalposts, there is a need for leadership, and for that leadership to be nimble and adaptable, to recognize the need for change, and pivot when the circumstances require it. I know that this government is comfortable living in the past. They like to bring up issues, votes, and policies that occurred in Saskatchewan when several of my colleagues, including the member from Saskatoon Southeast, were still in high school. And they continue to dwell on what was, instead of what is and what should be.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I have a background in political communications. And I don't like to give free advice to the members opposite, you know, and far be it from me to suggest that this Sask Party government, that they perhaps need to adapt and get some new material. I'm more than happy to see them follow the lead of their federal counterparts and stay true to outdated messaging, and I'm happy to watch them accept the equivalent and swift drop in the polls that their federal Conservatives have seen.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to admire, from that communications background, some of the friends of the hon. member for Meadow Lake at the federal level. Their message discipline is so total, so complete. They are so committed to Jenni Byrne's message guide from 2023 that they are ready to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory at the federal level.

Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan are anxious. And it is this issue of adaptability that this budget first lets the people of Saskatchewan down on. It fails to recognize reality. It is a budget that wouldn't get the job done if it was presented sometime last year. It certainly doesn't get the job done now by not recognizing that the last three months have happened.

People are worried about their jobs and their future. I've met with many of my constituents in Regina University over the past few months: small-business owners worried about their supply chain; resource workers concerned about how to pay the bills if layoffs are coming; restaurant owners already struggling with increased prices, who don't know if they'll be able to keep the doors open if things get even more expensive while folks have less money in their pockets.

[15:15]

All of these people want to know that their government is there for them when the worst comes to pass, that there is some plan. This budget gives them no reassurances.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'll discuss today the numbers as presented by the Finance minister because that's what we've got. But, Mr. Speaker, you'll have to excuse me if I find it hard to muster confidence in what is being projected in the 2025-26 budget. Both quarterly updates and budget projections have been so wildly off the past few years that the fiscal graph has looked more like a slalom run.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the Saskatchewan NDP's fiscal record. Very proud. The NDP in Saskatchewan are excellent fiscal managers. And you don't have to take my word for it, Mr.

Speaker. Well-known NDP sympathizers, the Fraser Institute, will tell you the same thing. NDP governments have a better record of balancing provincial budgets. In 1991 NDP Premier Roy Romanow rescued the province from the brink of bankruptcy after Grant Devine had ballooned, ballooned the debt from 4 billion to 12.5 billion in just nine short years. During the NDP's tenure in government under Romanow and Calvert, with some tough decisions made, they took the mess that was left to them by the Conservatives and reduced that debt by 2.5 billion, leaving the incoming Sask Party with a debt of 10 billion.

Since taking office, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has raised that debt by an absolutely unprecedented and staggering \$28 billion. The current Premier has managed to double the debt in just over six years, taking our provincial debt to nearly \$40 billion. That is more than the entire GDP of many small countries that we owe. Everybody, but especially real fiscal conservatives, should be horrified by this.

And what do we have to show for that debt, Mr. Speaker? The GTH [Global Transportation Hub], Boundary dam, costly consultants, and some of the worst health care and education outcomes in the country. Our debt is now so high that for the first time ever Saskatchewan taxpayers will be on the hook for over a billion dollars a year just to service that debt. That is money that could be going to fixing health care, education, mental health and addiction, and crime — all areas that this budget fails to adequately address.

And now that we've finished that sad fiscal stroll down memory lane, Mr. Speaker, let's look at what we have before us today in the present. The government loves to say "record investment," and that is always arguable when we factor in inflation. This year we don't even have to point out the real dollars adjusted for inflation. The government's own documents in black and white, on page 27 for those who would like to take a look for themselves, their own documents show that they are planning on spending less on health care this year than they did last year. That's a cut.

I can't tell you how many people I spoke to over the course of campaigning with deeply unsettling personal stories of their ordeals with the health care system — people waiting years for surgeries, harrowing 12-hour waits in emergency rooms, and so, so many people that do not have a family doctor. Mr. Speaker, my sister recently survived breast cancer. And now she doesn't live in Saskatchewan, but I often have to contend with the thought that if she'd had to wait a year for a mammogram or didn't have the money to fly to Calgary, that she might not be with us here today.

But the same goes for education. After teachers were finally successful after fighting tooth and nail when they shouldn't have had to, finally successful in securing a fair contract with this government, and after a provincial election where education issues dominated much of the conversation, and after the government acknowledged that they had heard people's concerns — well, parents and educators could be forgiven, Mr. Speaker, for having some hope that we would still see real action to fix our failing education system and give our students and our province a real chance for a brighter future.

I spoke to a woman in Moose Jaw last year who had quit being a

teacher to return to managing a restaurant. She'd wanted to be a teacher since she was a kid and had studied for it, but she left the profession because she made the same amount of money in the service industry and it was way, way less stressful, and her quality of life was greatly improved. Mr. Speaker, anyone who has ever worked in the service industry will tell you that the hours are challenging and the environment is far from stress-free. But this is the state of the education system that we have teachers and EAs [educational assistant] leaving the profession in droves at a time when we need more.

But again, Mr. Speaker, on page 27 of that budget, we see in black and white that this government will be spending less on education this year than they did last year. It's as if the Sask Party government saw that we were in last place on so many of the key metrics in health care and education and asked, how much lower can we go?

The economic reality we now face as a country is not one of our making. It is not a fight we started, but it is not one that we can back down on. As a province and as a country, we need to be focused on the future. And as uncertain as our economic future may be, we must find the opportunities to grow and adapt and seize the chance to build for our future.

There is so much potential in our energy resources market, not only in oil and gas and potash and uranium, but there are really exciting things happening in geothermal and also the development of our critical minerals. Because of the unique makeup of our province's resource portfolio, we should be a leader in innovation and attracting even more of the top minds from around the world.

With all the potential we have, it is a real missed opportunity to see the limited funding for research and development initiatives in the budget. For instance the research council received 2.8 million, and while that might sound like not an insignificant chunk of change, I will remind the legislature that that number is only four payments to the Sunrise Motel. Our world-class Petroleum Technology Research Centre receives 1.5 million, a mere two Sunrises.

Mr. Speaker, there is more alignment in Canadian provinces and territories now from sea to sea to sea than there has been in decades. This government must adapt and work with the federal government and their provincial counterparts, regardless of political stripes, and get to building. We need a pipeline to tidewater in the East. We need improved rail lines and transmission lines and highways so that we can get our world-class products to market. We need to work within our own borders and diversify our markets to ensure our economic sovereignty for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, none of these things happen easily, but to get hard things done, we need to get to the table and work together. That means across party lines, across borders, and even across the aisle, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we need to focus on the future, and that is something that this Sask Party government budget simply fails to do. And for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget, and I will be supporting the amendment moved by the member from Mount Royal. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Bengough.

**Michael Weger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start, Mr. Speaker, by taking a moment to congratulate the Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance on his first budget and just extend my gratitude to the minister and all of his staff that have worked so hard to put this budget together this year.

I can understand the opposition criticizing parts of this budget. That is their job. But to state that this budget is awful is very unfair to the staff in the Ministry of Finance and could not be further from the truth.

On budget day the member from Regina Mount Royal made a hockey reference in his speech, and I cannot resist the challenge to respond, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite chose to direct a hockey chirp at our team captain, the Premier, about sitting on the bench and taping his stick. Now as a self-proclaimed fourth-line grinder, I must defend our team captain. I recognize that clearing the benches would be an unfair fight, Mr. Speaker, so I'll attempt to settle this in an alternative manner and in a way commonly seen on the ice surface. I will calmly point out that 34 beats 27 and quote my 14-year-old hockey-playing son when I say, hey buddy, look at the scoreboard.

Next I would like to take this opportunity to publicly congratulate all of the recently elected mayors, reeves, and councillors that were successful in their municipal elections back in November. I've been fortunate over the past four months to have had the opportunity to meet in person or speak to many of these elected officials in my constituency.

And I was also happy to participate in a productive meeting with Mayor Bachynski and the rest of the city of Regina councillors a few weeks ago. I'm always happy to review the amount of municipal revenue sharing allocated to each particular municipality and highlight how those funds are directly linked to the economic performance of our province. For this 2025-26 budget it is very exciting to see a record \$362 million in municipal revenue sharing, which is a 6.3 per cent increase of \$22 million.

I would also like to take a moment to thank my wife and family for the support they have shown me since being elected. The comment, "well you were the one that wanted to be an MLA," has only been thrown my way a few times, Mr. Speaker, so I think we're doing pretty good so far.

A big thank you also goes to my constituency assistants, Andrea and Krystal. These two women are very committed to helping me be the best MLA I can be, and I know the constituents of Weyburn-Bengough are very lucky when they walk into our office or make a phone call.

Last but not least I must thank Ang and the rest of the caucus staff for helping ease the steep learning curve faced by a newly elected MLA.

Now out of curiosity, Mr. Speaker, I took a look at the *Hansard* from last year following the budget address to get a feel for what members touch on during the budget debate speeches. And since I was slated to be the second speaker on this debate I had to check

and see which member spoke second a year ago. Well, Mr. Speaker, I was happy to see that it was past MLA Friesen from Saskatoon Riversdale.

I first met Mr. Friesen shortly after I received the nomination and was lucky enough to visit with him at the retirement dinner for Don McMorris. During that visit Mr. Friesen shared with me some of his acquired MLA knowledge, and he also explained his signature line that he would begin with when addressing this Chamber. And so, Mr. Speaker, I do hope that today Marv is having another great day in Riversdale. I would like to confirm that today is also another great day in Weyburn-Bengough, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it's another great day in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, as I drove back to my office this past Tuesday night at 11:00 p.m. to write this speech — I do some of my best work after midnight, Mr. Speaker — I decided that I would start this speech off with the “great day in Saskatchewan” theme because of a song that came on the radio. So imagine my surprise when I sat down at my desk and flipped back to a year ago in the *Hansard* to find further inspiration from Mr. Friesen.

The song on the radio that had inspired me, of course, is none other than the song “It’s a Great Day to Be Alive” by Travis Tritt. I’m sure many of the members are familiar with this song, and I can picture our Premier back in the day driving a tractor or riding a combine singing this song at the top of his lungs.

Okay, maybe not. But hopefully if you do hear this song, it will remind you to just take the moment to appreciate all that we have in this great province. Now the chorus of that song, Mr. Speaker — and no, I will not be singing it in public today or any day for that matter — it goes like this:

And it’s a great day to be alive.  
I know the sun’s still shining when I close my eyes.  
There’s some hard times in the neighbourhood,  
But why can’t every day be just this good?

I think that chorus really sums up where we find ourselves right now in the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is the best place to live, work, and raise a family. But there are some hard times in the neighbourhood, so to speak.

The hard times may be faced by families and seniors needing financial support to help make ends meet. The hard times may be having to wait longer than one should for a mammogram or to see an ER [emergency room] doctor. The hard times may be schools that are at capacity with classrooms that are complex. Those hard times may be in our largest cities, where fentanyl is wreaking havoc on the less fortunate and putting a major strain on our police, firefighters, and EMS. These hard times make you want to close your eyes, Mr. Speaker. But if you do, remember that the sun is shining down on us and our future is bright.

This government is committing to making sure that every day is just as good or better than the last day. This 2025-26 budget is a budget that addresses the hard times being felt in our province, and it is most definitely a budget that delivers for the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is currently in an excellent position economically with the second-best credit rating in the country. And it is this strong economic position that is allowing our government to make very significant investments into the programs and services that all Saskatchewan residents need and deserve. Our total revenue is forecast to be \$21.1 billion, which is a 6 per cent increase over the previous budget.

Our strong provincial revenue projections are allowing for the implementation of numerous affordability measures and also significant investments into health care, education, and community safety. Lastly our strong financial position provides our province with the flexibility to help residents and businesses weather the potential impacts of tariffs imposed by the United States and counter-tariffs imposed by China.

Our economy has been growing under a Sask Party government and it will continue to grow. In 2024 Saskatchewan registered the third-highest economic growth among the provinces, with real GDP growth estimated at 1.6 per cent. And for 2025, according to average private sector forecasts, Saskatchewan’s real GDP is projected to grow by 1.8 per cent.

Now our economy, it isn’t just growing on its own, Mr. Speaker. Our government has extended and created more investment incentives to keep fostering and growing the Saskatchewan economy. This budget confirms that the small-business tax rate will remain at the current rate of 1 per cent. This ensures that Saskatchewan remains one of the best places to grow a small business. And this extension of the 1 per cent tax rate will benefit over 35,000 small businesses in our province.

This budget extends the Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive for two years, and the program has had some changes to help expand the program’s uptake and expedite the application process and timelines. The oil infrastructure investment program also receives an extension in this budget, so the new application acceptance period is now extended to March 31st, 2029.

This budget introduces a new small and medium enterprise investment tax credit, which will provide a non-refundable tax credit equal to 45 per cent of the equity investment made by individuals or corporations in an eligible small or medium-sized enterprise involved in the food and beverage manufacturing sector or the machinery and transportation equipment manufacturing sector.

Furthermore this budget introduces the low productivity and reactivation oil well program. This is a program that I hope can be utilized by some of the oil producers down in the Weyburn oil field and other areas of this province to revitalize low-producing, suspended, or inactive wells by drilling new horizontal sections and therefore creating new production that would not otherwise have been pursued.

To address financial pressures faced by families and seniors, this government introduced *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act* in December 2024. This Act will implement 13 affordability commitments through this budget that will reduce the tax burden on Saskatchewan residents and businesses and provide over \$250 million in tax savings this year. By raising the exemptions and increasing the seniors’ supplement by \$500 a year for the next four years, over and above the impact of indexation, we will



see the largest personal income tax reduction in the province since 2008.

One other affordability measure that I want to highlight is the increase to the personal care home benefit. This increase will help seniors with low incomes to be able to afford the cost of living in a licensed personal care home. In addition to helping these seniors afford the cost of living, it is also important to recognize that this increase will help ensure that licensed personal care homes can remain economically viable and available to seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a concern I have heard from constituents, and our government is listening. Our seniors need to know that they will have a care home available if the time comes that they need to transition from living on their own. The increase to the personal care home benefit will give seniors further peace of mind that there will be affordable and available living accommodations for them.

Mr. Speaker, my children have made lifelong friends through their participation in hockey, gymnastics, softball, and dance. And my wife and I have made great relationships with the parents that enrol their children in these activities. I am very proud to be a part of a government that recognizes the importance of these activities and the need to support these families by doubling the active families benefit refundable tax credit, and also raising the income threshold to \$120,000 to qualify for this benefit. This investment is keeping our children active, and it will pay dividends in their future as these are the same children learning lifelong skills from these activities. They'll be set up for success as they enter adulthood in our province.

Health care spending is a very high priority for myself and my constituents. I heard a strong call for health care funding during my campaign, and our investment of \$8.1 billion continues to answer that call. I am sure that my constituents will be as happy as I am to see the commitment of \$24 million to complete the Weyburn General Hospital. And this government is committing \$156 million for the health human resources action plan that will accelerate the hiring and training of health care professionals so that when the hospital projects that are under way are completed in our province, we will have the health care professionals we need to staff those hospitals.

Health concerns make up a large volume of the contacts made with my constituency office, and naturally some of these meetings are more impactful than others. I have had one of these impactful meetings with Lisa Vick. Lisa is a cancer survivor in my constituency that I hold in very high regard. Ms. Vick has been vocal about her battle with cancer, and the two of us have discussed the need for better cancer screening and the belief that early detection is one of the best tools for prevention.

This budget allocates \$279 million towards world-class cancer care and treatments by increasing support for cancer care in many ways, including the completion and staffing of the breast health centre in Regina, the addition of a second mammography bus, and a lowering of the age for breast cancer screening eligibility to 43 years old. In my constituency, Lisa Vick has started a cancer support group called WeyStrong and continues to advocate for better cancer treatment. Lisa is definitely doing her part, and I want her to know her efforts do not go unnoticed.

Mr. Speaker, during this past hockey season, my youngest daughter managed to cut her left thigh with the blade of the skate that was on her right foot during a hockey game here in Regina. I guess when a flexible dancer takes up hockey, the potential for this type of freak accident can exist.

Following this incident, my wife and daughter accessed the Regina Urgent Care Centre, and I'm happy to report that their experience was very positive. Abigail was quickly stitched up by a doctor that took the time to joke with her about the number of stitches and then sent her back to cheer her team on in their next game. The urgent care centre model is working, Mr. Speaker, and may very well be one of the greatest improvements this government has made to our health care delivery model.

Residents of Saskatchewan will all benefit from a record provincial health capital investment of \$657 million, with a portion of these funds going towards completing construction of the Saskatoon urgent care centre and planning for future urgent care centres in the province.

Over the past couple of months I've been lucky enough to participate in meetings with the Regina Catholic School Division, Prairie Valley School Division, South East Cornerstone School Division, and the Holy Family Roman Catholic Separate School Division. In this budget \$191 million will be used on K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] infrastructure projects, which will see ongoing funding in place for 21 new or consolidated schools and three major renovations.

Also among numerous minor capital renewal projects being completed, I'm pleased to see a new roof replacement project approved for St. Olivier School in Radville, as this was a project mentioned at the board meeting that I personally attended in February with the Holy Family Roman Catholic Separate School Division.

At the meeting I attended with the Regina Catholic School Division last month, myself and many other MLAs in attendance heard about the specialized support classroom success story at St. Augustine School in Regina. This pilot project is successfully addressing the complex issues that our teachers are facing in the classrooms. In this budget funds have been allocated to implement 50 of the 200 specialized support classrooms being added in our province over the next four years.

And now, Mr. Speaker, I need to tell you about crossing off an item off my bucket list at the end of January. I went for a ride-along with the Regina Police Service, Mr. Speaker. Following the installation ceremony for our new Lieutenant Governor, I changed quickly and headed down to the new Regina Police Service headquarters to begin my ride with Sergeant Hooker at 7 p.m. on Friday evening. That night, we were able to visit the Regina complex-needs shelter and discuss the positive impact that shelter has had on the city of Regina.

I also had the opportunity to share a meal with many other RPS [Regina Police Service] officers, and that evening, I also picked Sergeant Hooker's brain on various policing issues until 4 a.m. the next morning. We solved a lot of the world's problems in that patrol car that night, Mr. Speaker. This experience left me with an even greater respect for everything our police officers do to keep our communities safe.

In my new role as Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Corrections, Policing and Public Safety, I have quickly recognized how much focus and attention this government is putting towards community safety. The 2025-26 budget affirms this commitment with a 16.2 per cent increase in spending, for a total \$784 million investment in community safety.

Are we facing some hard times in this province with respect to affordability, health care, education, and community safety, Mr. Speaker? Yes, we have some challenges in these areas due in part to the growth we are seeing in our population. But it is this growing population that will support a strong economy, which will also allow our government to implement its plan to address these challenges so that more and more residents can feel the way I do.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it's a great day to be alive here in Saskatchewan. It's a great day to support the budget as presented. And it's a great day to state that I will not be supporting the proposed amendment.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Meara Conway:** — Mr. Speaker, it's always a privilege to be on my feet to enter into budget debate here on Treaty 4. I see a budget debate as an opportunity always to speak to the strengths and opportunities of Saskatchewan people as well as point out the ways in which this government continues to be out of touch with many of their struggles, many of their realities. What's disappointing to see in this budget is that this time around, it appears they are even out of touch with a moment in time when we're facing unprecedented threats on a global scale, Mr. Speaker.

But budget debate is also hopefully an opportunity for us on this side to propose some alternatives, a road map for how to serve the people of Saskatchewan today and into the future.

Before I get into my substantive comments, I do want to just give a shout-out to my family and our staff, the people that make things tick over here.

I want to start with my constituency assistant, Avery Beaudin, who's served the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre for many years and who unfortunately has decided to move on to Saskatoon, which was always her plan and her dream and her goal. So I wish her well in that, but it is a great loss to us. And it is particularly important I think for me to recognize the contribution she's made, the heavy burden that she's carried always with lightness and humour, the compassion she's demonstrated. And I wouldn't have wanted anyone else, you know, doing that work in the constituency, building those relationships. So I want to thank her from the bottom of my heart and wish her well.

I also want to thank Dagan Viala, who came to us just over a year ago I think, although my sense of time is maybe a bit warped. But he came as a social work student and has stayed on as a casual, and he's often in our office. And he's very bright and his attention to detail is great. His capacity for care and attention and compassion for the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre is truly something to behold. So I want to thank him.

Family: I'm going to keep the family part very short today, Mr. Speaker. . . . I thought I would get further than that. Mr. Speaker, I'm expecting a little girl in June. And I also lost my dad earlier this month. It's been a mix of emotions, and I've been leaning on my family more than usual. And I want to thank them: my brothers, Liam, Aidan, Kieran; their partners, Melissa, Vicki, Val; and of course my partner Nick; my dear mom; and my two boys, Éamon and Lew.

[15:45]

And I just want to say, you know, I always feel that the role that I play here is the honour of my life. I always say that, and I believe it from the bottom of my heart. And it's been a privilege to serve the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, and it continues to be, and to raise hell on their behalf whenever I can. But nothing I do in this role, you know, compares to the time that I spend with my family and spent with my dad. And some day I hope to be able to speak more about the ways in which he impacted the work I do and who I am, but today is not that day.

The budget, Mr. Speaker. The first thing I notice about the budget is, I think, the first thing that everyone noticed about the budget, and that is that this budget contains nothing on tariffs — not one shiny loonie, not one dull dollar for tariffs.

Now the budget does speak to tariffs. On page 44 there is an analysis of the potential impact of tariffs on the economy of Saskatchewan, devastating it potentially. It could trigger a recession, according to page 44 of this budget. \$1.4 billion in revenues potentially, Mr. Speaker. Thirty per cent reduction in exports which represents \$8.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, an overall impact reducing our GDP by 8 per cent. And that is just their own internal analysis, Mr. Speaker.

Page 44, it's in the budget; but nowhere do we find those realities built into this budget. Instead what this Finance minister has done is to estimate a revenue increase of \$1.2 billion, increases across the board. We've set the price of oil — we just heard from the member from South Albert — \$3 more per barrel than Alberta's budget is predicting. Why? There's no explanation.

This is bizarre, Mr. Speaker. This is why this budget has been coined a work of fiction. It doesn't give comfort to the people of Saskatchewan who fear that their livelihoods and jobs are at risk. It doesn't have a plan for the most vulnerable. It doesn't have any sort of contingency plan for laid-off workers to help them, to retrain them. There's nothing in here to protect consumers from price gouging, Mr. Speaker. There's no plan to locally procure. Nothing of that sort, Mr. Speaker.

We see no actual plan built into this budget. And where we have failed, others have planned. BC, Alberta, Manitoba — they've all built in contingency plans for this looming tariff war with the US, Mr. Speaker.

And it's too bad. I can always count on my colleague the member from Regina South Albert to speak to the legacy of previous NDP premiers, previous Saskatchewan premiers, Mr. Speaker. There are examples that we can draw on, and I think of the late and great Premier Blakeney who himself faced threats from the US, from industries wanting our resources and wanting them cheap.

He stood up to them. Together with a collaborationist . . . Together, not with but against, he stood up against a collaborationist federal government led by Pierre Trudeau. He stood up for Saskatchewan, and it worked. He did that by imposing windfall royalties on our resources, by nationalizing portions of this industry. He did it for Saskatchewan, and it worked. There are examples that we can draw on, Mr. Speaker.

And truly this absence of a plan on tariffs is stunning, but equally stunning is the refusal of this Premier and of this Sask Party government to condemn Donald Trump in no uncertain terms, Mr. Speaker. And last week we saw this government remove the line, they struck out the line from our motion that would do just that. And we don't know why.

Donald Trump, Mr. Speaker. It is perplexing. This is a man whose moral degradation is on full display every day, Mr. Speaker. This is a man with no regard — Donald Trump — for anyone but himself. Not his business partners, not the people he is elected to serve and protect, not even really the people that voted for him, Mr. Speaker. And our Premier thinks he can negotiate with him, Mr. Speaker.

And it's not just the attacks on our sovereignty. It's not just the vile threats. These are basic attacks to our very democracy. The attack on the free press, Mr. Speaker. Mass retaliatory firings. Cruel and discriminatory treatment of migrants and immigrants, separating families. Propping up a dictator, Putin. Calling for the forced displacement and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people, Mr. Speaker. Donald Trump is a felon. He is an incorrigible liar. He thinks nothing at profiteering off his own office and aligning himself with white supremacists. Why are we not condemning this man as a group? And it's been said in here before. This is the man to whom our Premier would rather suck up than stand up, and I don't for the life of me understand it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the tag line of this year's budget is *Delivering for You*, but I am going to cross that out and write "delivering for a few," Mr. Speaker. It has been equally disturbing watching this government brag about cuts to health care and education at a time like this. A few days ago I stood in front of the Regina General Hospital with my colleague the shadow minister for Health because they had declared a code orange, Mr. Speaker — a designation reserved for mass casualty events. It felt like a war zone in the ER; that's what I was told, Mr. Speaker. Health care workers were pushed beyond anything we should be asking of them. And why? Because of a surge in influenza, which was predicted and modelled.

And we've been going back and forth. Record investments in health care. Cuts to health care. Record investments in health care. Cuts to health care. I invite the people of Saskatchewan to get themselves a copy of the budget and either go to page 27 or 79 because it's right there in black and white. They are going to spend less on education, less on health care they are predicting in this budget. They have budgeted to spend less than they did this past year, Mr. Speaker.

And I'll break it down for the members opposite. I had a budget this past year in my household for groceries. I had the amount that I was hoping I would spend on groceries. I outspent my household budget. I spent more than I thought I would, and

there's all kinds of reasons for why I did that. But that's what really matters. That's where the rubber hits the road, is actual dollars spent. And I have no reason to think I'm going to spend less this year because I'm going to have more mouths to feed, Mr. Speaker. And they brag about our population growth, but they have no actual plan to provide for the public services that people will need, Mr. Speaker.

A code orange at the Regina General, Mr. Speaker, and this is just two years after they announced the Regina capacity pressure action plan, which was an action plan that they designed to relieve some of the pressures in our acute care system, in our ERs, Mr. Speaker.

And a big part of the solve laid out in that plan from two years ago was building this urgent care centre here in Regina, an urgent care centre that they still cannot staff 24-7. An urgent care centre that cost \$18 million to build, to say nothing of what it costs to operate that centre or pay doctors emergency rates to work there, Mr. Speaker. This has not been the solve that was promised. We have not figured out this model.

So I'm going to suggest it is not helpful in the face of this crisis that your main approach to health care is to re-announce urgent care centres — you get an urgent care centre, you get an urgent care centre, you get an urgent care centre — when there's no actual money in this budget to build them. One million for this year just to look at five of them. Three million in Saskatoon when we know it cost 18 million here in Regina to build a model that we haven't gotten right, that we can't staff.

The implications of this budget, Mr. Speaker, will be especially tough for rural Saskatchewan — who are already dealing with disruptions without notice, disruptions without transparency, which is the part that really bothers me — families showing up at the ER in crisis only to find a sign on the emergency room door saying, oh sorry, you're going to have to go 50 kilometres or 100 kilometres down the highway. And the resulting tragedies from that approach have been documented. I think of families in Lloydminster for example, Mr. Speaker.

You talk to these health care workers, and there are two major themes. There are two major themes. One, they are so burnt-out. They are so bitter. They are so tired, Mr. Speaker. But the other major theme is they have ideas. They have ideas about how to improve the health care system, but they don't feel that this government is reaching out, is listening.

And I think of the nursing task force, a task force that they have been calling for for years, and this government said no. And then at the 11th hour in this past election, after they stood them up, they said, okay, we're going to do it. And now six months after said election that Minister of Health wants a gold star. He stands up in here and he wants a gold star because the invitations are going to maybe go out sometime this month. They feel disrespected and they feel like they're not being listened to. But they have ideas, Mr. Speaker.

And on the topic of announcing more capital projects but not necessarily including dollars in the budget to even make those happen, when it comes to health care, a message for the government: you have a people problem. You have a people problem.

Mr. Speaker, this government is also forecasting they'll spend less on education. And if predictions around enrolment hold, it's going to be brutal once again. Again, enrolments are up. More mouths to feed, more minds to nurture, Mr. Speaker. That is why it is important to look at what was actually spent this past year versus what they are budgeting going forward. Enrolments are up.

And the only good news story about this education budget is the \$130 million that is going to go to pay for what this government has been forced to do in the collective agreement. And when we look at how hard it was for teachers to achieve that, they had to fight tooth and nail. This time last year, 7,000 of them out there.

[16:00]

What kind of message does that send to every sector out there that is feeling burned out and fed up and taken for granted? It sends the message that you have to fight for every scrap that you get. And I'm going to suggest that is not a great message to send the people that you're elected to serve.

Child care. So many child care advocates were in this place on budget day, and they were disappointed to not hear a word in the budget on child care. They are a tenacious group and they will be back. They recognize the value and what is at stake for their sector, for children, for young children who need a good start in life, for Saskatchewan families who rely on that \$10-a-day daycare.

And this refusal to sign the agreement, I mean the Minister of Health stands up in question period and talks about all these stakeholders that are reaching out to him. I mean the elephant in the room, Mr. Speaker, is we all know what they're saying. They're all saying the same thing. They're saying, sign that agreement.

And yes, we are on the cusp of an election, on the cusp of an election where the party that many of them have announced proudly in here last week we'll be voting for has made it clear they don't necessarily support \$10-a-day daycare. They don't necessarily support the vision behind accessible, affordable early learning and child care.

And it is so disappointing that we're having this debate about the agreement itself when that's a stumbling block to even dealing with the realities in Saskatchewan today. We have respected centres who have been doing amazing work in this field, leaders in this sector who are stepping forward and saying, we are at risk of closing our centres because there is no funding model in place after almost four years.

And I know that this has been promised for that amount of time, Mr. Speaker, because I haven't been here very long, but I've been here long enough to sit across from Dustin Duncan who promised us a funding model. I sat across from the now Minister of Health who promised us a funding model. And we still don't have a funding model from that Minister of Education.

We have a system today where, if you have a historical centre that opened and delivered \$10-a-day child care, you are locked into the fees that you were offering at that time, whereas new centres could set their fees at any amount. And these centres have

made it very clear they cannot. With all of the growing costs, with all of the growing pressures on these centres, they need more flexibility, but they don't have it.

I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but I don't know very many families that can go back to spending two, three monthly mortgage amounts worth on child care. So what is the plan, and why is a plan that is good enough for every other province in Canada but two not good enough for us here in Saskatchewan?

And I think when we're looking at the big picture in terms of the future, we need to look at what is a government willing to invest in children, in them getting a good start in life? And their failure to sign this agreement is an indication that they are not future focused, Mr. Speaker.

For other signs that they are not focusing on the future, Mr. Speaker, we need only look at their lack of action in the face of other existential threats like climate change. It is very interesting to read the fine print of this budget, Mr. Speaker. As the member from South Albert alluded to earlier, no real money for SMRs in this budget. So maybe now that's out the window. This was the plan for renewable energy from this government, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation] has said he wants Saskatchewan to be the only province in Canada burning coal past 2030 and yet we see no capital investments — the millions, perhaps billions, it would take in infrastructure to make that happen.

So what exactly is their plan for power generation in Saskatchewan, for climate change in Saskatchewan? Or is this just another approach like we see to the tariffs? Close your eyes, hope it's not actually going to happen, while others make plans for the challenges that the future holds.

I want to take a moment to touch on the financial position that we find ourselves in, Mr. Speaker. This is a government, we've heard from others, responsible for quadrupling our provincial debt. We've heard that, for the first time in Saskatchewan history, we will be spending over a billion dollars annually in servicing our debt. And that is projected to only grow — what? — to \$1.6 billion by 2030? I'm getting nods from the shadow minister for Finance.

I believe government should spend on the things that matter, that can improve the lives of people. But those investments, they need to be smart. They need to be sustainable. They need to be forward focused. And if you were to look at Saskatchewan's debt, you would expect at the very least for our public services to be dependable, to be thriving, to at least be there when people need them. But they are redlining, Mr. Speaker.

And a big part of that has been the record of mismanagement of this Sask Party government. Billions on the bypass, the GTH, Boundary dam, sweetheart deals with private clinics. And I'm speaking here of Calgary, where we're spending 10 times what we'd spend locally to send women, the women who can afford it, out of province.

Over \$11 million to settle a dispute with their biggest corporate donor over Wascana Park. Money for Stephen Harper, Mr. Speaker. We've got money for Stephen Harper, but we might not

have money for \$10-a-day daycare.

The Premier still hasn't explained the \$800 a night that's on the books that he spent on a hotel during a trip where he addressed a right wing fundraiser right before the election. He still hasn't addressed that. On the public dime.

Almost a million paid out to MLA hotels, including the Sunrise Motel. Two hundred and forty million on AIMS [administrative information management system], which is still wreaking havoc on the health care system, Mr. Speaker.

The list does go on. And I know they don't want to talk about some of this stuff, but I think in question period they brought up a vote from 2012, so I think it's important. You know, this isn't really ancient history.

Millions on vacant units, paying taxes, paying utilities, forgone rents. It all adds up. The untold millions we're spending on court actions, paying out to lawyers for court actions. The millions that are spent for emergency sessions to enact legislation that targets kids with the notwithstanding clause, Mr. Speaker. Tens of millions on a new marshals service, new hats, new whips during an affordability crisis, Mr. Speaker.

It all adds up, and it's all part of an economic record that has ripple effects. That is why Saskatchewan continues to come last in the social and economic indicators that matter, that matter to the people of Saskatchewan — health care, education, domestic violence rates, child poverty rates, food bank use is surging, communicable diseases.

I mean we will continue to rank last because this government is not prioritizing the needs of Saskatchewan people. The fiscal mismanagement, the ethical distractions, they're all related, Mr. Speaker.

And I just want to close the way I always do, Mr. Speaker, which is to point out that Saskatchewan people, they are a caring people. They are a caring people. They want better for themselves and their neighbours. They believe that all people deserve a roof over their head, that old people deserve to age with dignity, that kids deserve a good start in life. They believe these things, Mr. Speaker, that we all should be able to provide for our kids, that we should be able to rely on strong public services, health care where and when we need it.

And this is why, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting this year's budget. I will be supporting the amendment put forth from the member from Mount Royal. And I will just say for the record, he can chaperone me anywhere. Can't hold a tune, but he's good for a laugh. And he always agrees to be the driver even if you feel like you have to take your life into your own hands every time you get into a car with him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Sask Rivers.

**Hon. Eric Schmalz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is both an honour and a privilege to stand before you today as we reflect on the progress our government has made delivering on its commitments to the people of Saskatchewan. Last week the Finance minister had the opportunity to present the 2025-26 provincial budget, appropriately titled *Delivering for You*. This

title is a reminder that our work here in this legislature is not for our benefit or recognition but for the benefit of those we serve — the people of Saskatchewan. Every decision, every investment, every initiative we put forth is aimed at making life better for Saskatchewan citizens, those who rely on us to build a stronger, more resilient future for all.

Today in my response to the provincial budget, I want to acknowledge both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead while also reflecting on the successes and progress we've made over the past year. The budget our government presented speaks directly to our government's ongoing commitment to investing in our communities, enhancing vital services, and fostering economic growth that benefits everyone.

We have made significant strides in key areas. Record investments in municipal revenue sharing, the reduction of the education property tax mill rates, and substantial investments in First Nations and Métis communities, to name just a few.

Additionally we are strengthening health care infrastructure, including the continued development of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital to expand critical health care services for northern Saskatchewan; the construction of a new Ronald McDonald House in Prince Albert and Regina; and the nearing completion of the new recreation facility in Prince Albert which will provide a modern facility for recreation, wellness, and community engagement across the region.

With this budget we continue to build on the achievements that are propelling Saskatchewan forward. Let me begin by addressing one of the cornerstones of our support for municipalities: municipal revenue sharing. This program is vital in ensuring that local governments have the resources they need to thrive. As a government, we understand that municipalities are the ones who interact directly with their residents, deliver critical services, and manage community development. This year's budget allocates a record \$361.8 million to municipal revenue sharing. That's a \$21.5 million increase or 6 per cent from last year's allocation.

Mr. Speaker, in talking with my friend the member from Wood River, it was related to me that he had a conversation with his local municipality, the town of Assiniboia. They conveyed to him that in order to replace what municipal revenue sharing covers, they would need to increase their mill rate by 22 per cent, 22 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Those are numbers that are relatable to people who live in these communities that understand what it costs to pay their tax bills at the end of the year.

This growth in funding is a recognition of the role that municipalities play in fostering healthy, thriving communities and creating a Saskatchewan where every resident has the opportunity to succeed. By increasing municipal revenue sharing, we are providing local governments with a means to plan, invest, and grow while they have the financial support to carry out these critical tasks, most importantly, providing stability in what are unstable times.

Moving on, I want to address an issue that impacts many families, homeowners, and businesses across the province, and that's education property tax. As we know, 2025 is a reassessment year, meaning property values have increased in

many areas of Saskatchewan. For many property owners, this can result in higher tax bills and an increased financial strain.

Our government recognizes the importance of maintaining fairness and balance in the education property tax system. That's why, in response to the increased property tax assessments, we have decided to reduce the education property tax mill rates. This decision is not taken lightly but it reflects our ongoing commitment to ease the financial burden on homeowners, small-business owners, and farmers, those who may be impacted by rising property values but are not necessarily seeing a corresponding increase in income.

[16:15]

By lowering the mill rates, we are ensuring that education property tax formula remains revenue-neutral, meaning that the education system continues to be adequately funded while property owners bear a lighter burden. Our approach is to ensure that property taxes remain fair, equitable, and responsive to the realities of the marketplace rather than placing an undue burden on taxpayers.

As part of the 2025-26 provincial budget, we are also taking bold steps to make life more affordable for Saskatchewan residents. In addition to the regular \$2 billion allocated, we are introducing \$250 million in affordability tax cuts. These measures are designed to reduce income taxes for every resident of the province, putting more money back in the pockets of Saskatchewan families and individuals. The tax cuts aim to ease financial pressures and provide significant relief to residents while fostering affordability. This commitment reflects our government's ongoing efforts to prioritize the well-being of its people and deliver a strong, more resilient economy.

Our commitment to fairness and balance extends to another vital area: our ongoing support for First Nations and Métis communities across the province. In 2025 we are allocating \$284.9 million to fund programs and services designed to support Indigenous peoples and communities. This investment demonstrates our government's unwavering commitment to reconciliation, ensuring that Indigenous communities have the resources they need to build a strong future for their citizens.

A significant portion of this funding, \$107.4 million, will go towards gaming payments, an essential source of revenue for many Indigenous communities. This increase of \$16.3 million, or over 17.7 per cent compared to last year, will directly support the well-being and prosperity of Indigenous communities, helping to fund initiatives that improve the quality of life for residents and contribute to the growth of their economies.

We are also dedicating \$28.3 million to labour market programs, which are critical for creating economic opportunities for Indigenous people. These programs provide skill training, employment opportunities, and career development, empowering individuals to secure meaningful work and contribute to the growth of their communities.

In addition \$23.7 million will be allocated to improve First Nations policing services, ensuring that Indigenous communities have the resources to maintain law and order and keep their residents safe. Furthermore \$5.5 million will be directed towards

initiatives that improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students, ensuring that they have the tools and support they need to succeed academically, giving them the skills and opportunities to build careers and contribute to their economies.

Additionally we are allocating \$3.8 million to support First Nations and Métis community-based organizations, strengthening their capacity to provide essential services. By increasing funding for these organizations, we are ensuring that they have the capacity to support individuals and families in the communities they serve.

As part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities, we are allocating \$1 million to the First Nations and Métis Consultation Participation Fund. This fund ensures that Indigenous communities are meaningfully involved in consultation on matters that affect their land, resources, and future. It is an essential step in recognizing Indigenous rights and ensuring their voices are heard in the decisions that shape the future.

As the MLA for Saskatchewan Rivers, I'm particularly excited to announce the following initiatives, which will greatly benefit the surrounding region and provide long-lasting improvements to the quality of life for its residents. As previously mentioned, our government has increased municipal revenue sharing with \$361.8 million allocated for MRS [municipal revenue sharing], a 6 per cent increase. For the city of Prince Albert this translates into a funding boost of \$9.43 million, which is an increase of \$562,725 from last year's allocation of 8.87 million. The same is true for the small towns, resort villages, rural municipalities across the region and province. Communities from Canwood to Cadillac, from Stony Rapids to Stoughton — each and every one will be eligible for more municipal revenue sharing this year.

Municipal revenue sharing provides for initiatives directed by the people who know best about what their community needs the most. This increase will help support local programs, infrastructures, and services contributing to the continued growth and development of both the community and surrounding area, which includes my own constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers.

A substantial \$8.1 billion has been allocated to the health care budget, supporting a variety of initiatives aimed at improving health care services across Saskatchewan. Among the key investments is the \$322.4 million allocated to the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital for the construction of a new acute care tower. This project, under a design-build agreement, is part of a larger \$898 million investment in that hospital. The new tower will include essential upgrades such as a heliport, expanded emergency department, larger operating rooms, and a First Nations and Métis cultural space.

Mr. Speaker, my own connection to that hospital cannot be overstated. My children took their first breaths in that maternity ward, as have many children in the region taken their first breaths in the maternity ward. Some of those children that were born in that hospital now serve that hospital as nurses and doctors.

Mr. Speaker, the conversations with my wife last night, we were talking and reminiscing about the level of care, quality of care that was provided to us and my family in that moment when my children were born. Mr. Speaker, my wife raves to this day how

professional and compassionate the people and staff were there in that facility, Mr. Speaker. And I took that moment, I seized upon that moment to suggest that perhaps we needed to have another baby, to which she responded, and I quote, “Get real, Schmalz.”

Additionally we are investing in the development of a new urgent care centre in Prince Albert — which I might need if I keep suggesting we need another baby — with \$1 million allocated for planning. Further enhancements to physician staffing at the Prince Albert NICU [neonatal intensive care unit] will ensure more specialized care for newborns and their families. Together these investments highlight our government’s ongoing efforts to improve patient care, health care access, and staffing, addressing the evolving needs of residents across the province.

We are investing \$3.5 million to build a new Ronald McDonald House in Prince Albert. This is part of a larger \$10 million commitment to Ronald McDonald House Canada, and that’s happening across the province. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to be there at the announcement in Prince Albert and hear the stories of the families that have been touched by RMHC [Ronald McDonald House Charities]. And Mr. Speaker, it’s an understatement to say that it was touching both emotionally . . . And we hope that we can continue to provide that support to those families.

This new facility will offer 12 bedrooms and essential amenities, providing a supportive, home-like environment for families with children receiving medical care. This is just one more way we are ensuring that no family faces hardship alone, while strengthening health care support across Saskatchewan.

The provincial budget includes a significant \$3.5 billion for education, reflecting our government’s commitment to enhancing learning environments across the province. This investment will support a variety of initiatives, including the renovation of St. John Community School and the construction of a new francophone pre-K to 12 [pre-kindergarten to grade 12] school in Prince Albert which will replace École Valois. This new school will provide an upgraded educational facility to better serve the francophone community and offer students a more enriched and accessible learning experience. These investments demonstrate the province’s ongoing efforts to improve education infrastructure and create supportive environments for all students.

The provincial budget also includes a \$2 billion allocation for community safety with a focus on enhancing public security across the province. This funding will support various initiatives aimed at making communities safer, including the addition of 100 new municipal police officers across Saskatchewan. This expansion of police personnel will strengthen law enforcement capabilities, improve response times, and enhance community engagement. This funding represents our government’s commitment to preventing crime, improving safety for all residents, and ensuring that local police forces have the resources they need to effectively protect their communities.

I’m also excited to share that the new recreational centre in Prince Albert is nearing completion, a project that will significantly enhance the community’s access to recreation as well as the region’s access to recreation, wellness, and sports.

The Government of Saskatchewan is proud to have contributed \$21.4 million to this facility, ensuring it meets the growing needs of the residents of the region. This collaboration between the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, and the city of Prince Albert will bring a centre that will serve as a hub for all ages, offering opportunities for physical activity and community engagement.

I want to return to the central theme of last week’s budget speech, *Delivering for You*. The investments we have outlined today reflect our government’s commitment to improve the lives of the people of this province. From record investments in municipal funding that empower local governments to enhance essential services, to the reduction of education property taxes that ease the financial burden on homeowners and businesses, our commitment to empowering First Nations and Métis communities with substantial investment in programs and services, our government is fully dedicated to delivering meaningful, positive change for everyone who calls Saskatchewan home.

Our work however does not stop here. This is just the beginning of a long-term vision, one that will continue to guide our efforts in the years to come. Together we are building a future where every individual, every family, every community has the opportunity to succeed and thrive.

We are providing the framework for our province to continue building on economic growth, educational opportunities, and social support, ensuring they are available to all. We recognize that there is still much more work to be done. The needs of Saskatchewan people will continue to evolve, and so must we. We will keep listening to the voices of the people across this province, engaging with communities, and ensuring that our decisions are shaped by the lived experiences and aspirations of those we serve.

We will remain steadfast in our commitment to making the investments that matter most in the areas that will have the greatest impact. Whether it’s improving health care, enhancing infrastructure, supporting education, or fostering economic opportunities, our government will continue to deliver on its promises. As we move forward, let us remember that the work we do here is not just about policies or budgets; it’s about the people whose lives are changing for the better. It’s about ensuring that Saskatchewan remains a place of opportunity. Fairness and prosperity are within reach for all. Together we are shaping a future that will not just benefit this generation but generations to come, and for that, we can all be proud. Together our government will continue delivering for you.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion being put forward by our Minister of Finance and seconded by the member for White City-Qu’Appelle, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Deputy Speaker B. McLeod:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Leroy Laliberte:** — Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I appreciate it. I’m going to open with some comments there. In my maiden speech in the fall, I didn’t have the opportunity to say my brothers’ names and now I got heck when I got home. So I’m

going to acknowledge my brothers today here at the beginning. I have two older brothers, a younger brother, and also a sister. A sister from Stony Rapids, actually, which is the far North. So to my brother Joey, my brother Wesley, my little brother Colin, hello. And then that's so they can see that.

[16:30]

All right, I want to acknowledge first of all, a few weeks ago, we were up in Ile-a-la-Crosse, the MLA for Cumberland and myself. And we were there for a historic moment. The residential school in Ile-a-la-Crosse was acknowledged by the federal government and they finally settled with them. And it was something that was very powerful, very emotional for a lot of the survivors, Mr. Speaker.

And we were there and I couldn't help but think of my grandparents that attended a school in Ile-a-la-Crosse. Now I noticed that with a lot of the conversations and some of the stories that were told when we spoke about reconciliation in the province of Saskatchewan, it was really important for us to recognize that school in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And this is where right now we can't move forward provincially because the province hasn't taken responsibility in that aspect, to the school at Ile-a-la-Crosse nor the school at Timber Bay.

And so you know, this is something that was really . . . It was some great conversations that we'd had with many Elders. Because right now we have less than 500 Elders that are still living that had attended that school in Ile-a-la-Crosse, you know, so it was quite a powerful moment, Mr. Speaker, for us to be over there.

This budget that was released last week, and I tell you, Mr. Speaker, I was quite excited to be able to be here to experience that. Because over the years, I've experienced by watching it over TV, and I'd be like, you know, it would be pretty amazing to be able to sit there and watch that, you know. Of course, I've seen my colleague from Regina Mount Royal a few times, because it's not his first time that he's sat in the Assembly during that speech.

But I was disappointed, Mr. Speaker, because this government, this Sask Party government, has been in government now for going on 18 years, if it's not 18 years already. And it showed me first-hand, sitting here and having to sit back and watch that, that the North again is neglected.

I know that we'd had a couple of debates here, starting from last week, and said that there was money that was allocated to the North, like Meadow Lake or North Battleford. North Battleford is not the North. That might have "north" in it, but that's not the North. There was money allocated to Prince Albert and to Saskatoon. But when it came to health in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we've been neglected for 18 years. I've seen it. I lived it. My family lived it.

And it made me really sad to sit here and see that there was no money, extra money, being allocated up there. Because a lot of people in the North . . . And we've seen first-hand, my colleague and I drove up to the far North, the real North. And it was a 15-hour drive for us to go up there, and I'm telling you these roads aren't the best. For those that ever had the experience to drive up there — I don't know if anybody here did. I know of a

few ministers that flew up for an hour and then flew back, which would probably be nice. But it's beautiful country.

But a lot of the people from Athabasca and Cumberland, the North, have to travel those roads 15 hours one way to receive services in the South, sometimes up to three days a week to receive dialysis treatment in the South, to be able to go and see their doctors. And sometimes when they have an appointment, they come and they sit in the city, and then they have to sit in there for sometimes up to five or six hours before they could make their way back home. And that's not affordable. Fifteen hours one way, Mr. Speaker, for them to have to travel to receive these services that they've been neglected with for 18 years.

In the community of Beauval, I heard the Health minister speak today about the money that was going to the community with the ambulance bay, but there's so many other communities in and around that area. Having to travel from La Loche, from Garson Lake, Turnor Lake, Michel Village, Dillon, St. George's Hill. There are so many communities just in that area — Jans Bay, Cole Bay; we have Canoe Narrows; we have Patuanak; we have Pinehouse — that have to travel on these roads to be able to receive more services in the South, Mr. Speaker.

I was upset to see this budget. And you know, we have a lot of people here that say that they've been to the North. They've been up to Meadow Lake. Meadow Lake — love the community. It's a beautiful community, but that's the brink, that's just a little piece of the North. You've still got another five, six hours to drive before you hit North.

But imagine the people that have to travel up from La Loche to Meadow Lake to receive service, sometimes the services aren't available for them. They drive to Battleford, to Saskatoon, and out of province into Lloyd, which is pretty hard for a lot of families that can't afford it.

Mr. Speaker, this past month, like I said, my colleague and I travelled to the far North, and we went up to Stony Rapids, Black Lake, Denesuline First Nation, and Fond-du-Lac. We just about made it to Uranium City, where we had to turn around because the ice was collapsing 3 kilometres just before the community.

And we travelled those roads and we seen first-hand the community members, and these are Elders, elderly, sometimes having to travel in 40-below weather. And they have to pick up a radio in La Ronge to radio every 10 kilometres that they're travelling north, and to let the big semis, that have been pulling money out of the North for years, know that they're coming, that they're heading northbound with their families. And seen that first-hand. There's been a few close calls with us travelling up there, Mr. Speaker. And this is reality for our northern people.

I was disappointed to hear that the budget did not include the building of a new school in Buffalo Narrows. And I said in my maiden speech, Mr. Speaker, in the fall sitting, Buffalo Narrows's school is 50 years old. And it's not that it hasn't been taken care of properly, but they don't have any running water on one side of the school.

It's a beautiful community, and I'm sure some of the members on the other side possibly went up to Buffalo Narrows to go and fish.



Great people. They're worth it. The kids in that community are worth it. The kids throughout the North are worth it. But this budget doesn't speak anything to it. It's in dire need for a rebuild. And this is something that I've spoken before.

And I said in my maiden speech also, yeah, we're going to be debating but it's our responsibility. It's the reason why we took this role on, was for us to be able to, one, collaborate for the betterment of all Saskatchewan residents. That's including northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Again been neglected for 18 years. And so it was disheartening for me to sit here and listen to that budget when there was nothing allocated to the North.

I have family members. I had two kohkoms, two grandmothers, like I said before, that were in the North. They lived in the North. They went to the residential school in Ile-a-la-Crosse and then worked at the one up in Beauval. I had my mosôm, my grandfather, worked in the North his whole life, lived in the North his whole life. Because we're lacking so many services in the North, as they started to age, my mosôm ended up in a home in Nipawin because they didn't have the care that he needed in the North to be home. He didn't last very long, Mr. Speaker. Same thing with my mom's mom. And then just last year, my dad's mom had to receive palliative services in Edmonton because we didn't have that service in the North.

And this is reality not only for my family, but this is the reality for so many people throughout northern Saskatchewan. So we could sit here and smirk and we could sit here and laugh every time . . . [inaudible] . . . This is not funny. This is not funny.

This government chooses to ignore the northern Saskatchewan needs of the northern residents. I got into this because I couldn't sit back and watch this anymore. And I wanted to show our northerners that they have a voice, and they have a strong voice here at the Assembly.

Northern Saskatchewan is rich when it comes to the resources, but we're lacking so many services. We drove by how many mines when we went up there, my colleague? We drove by, I think it was four mine sites when we went up to northern Saskatchewan, which are pulling out of the North seven days a week, 365 days in a year. They're pulling steady. But yet we have no services to provide for them. That makes no sense because the North provides a lot of money to this province.

And I'm upset because I've seen that first-hand. And if you have a person coming up to us, an Elder, and say, we're living poor up here, but yet they're pulling out billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. And that bothers me.

As the shadow minister for First Nations and Métis Relations, I feel deeply honoured to be able to have that opportunity. There are 74 First Nations in this province which, where it sits in either your constituency or that of any other MLA here, we have responsibility to those families as well, have responsibility to those kids, to those Elders.

And this is what we need to do moving forward. Because reconciliation, like my friend was talking about here on the opposite side, reconciliation will never happen in this province until we make it beneficial for all Saskatchewan residents. That's including the people of these 74 First Nations. Reconciliation

won't happen in this province until we make it right with the people of Ile-a-la-Crosse and Timber Bay.

And it's not about the money. People always . . . You know, every time that we'd had this conversation regarding these residential schools, saying that these people were after the money, it's not that. They want their stories to be told and to be listened to because when they . . . We'd spoke about this, truth and reconciliation. Well the people of northern Saskatchewan spoke the truth. Now it's up to this government to seek reconciliation with these people in northern Saskatchewan. This is not the way to do that, by ignoring them.

There was no equality in this budget. No equality, Mr. Speaker. It's something that I'd seen first-hand. No affordability. There was nothing towards mental health and addictions that hadn't already been put there because . . . We had my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, ever since we've been in here in October, speaking about the battles that we're having in addictions and mental health. I think it was last week that we had had 600 in Saskatoon overdose — and that's only reported in Saskatoon. There's unreported overdoses that happened all over this province, but yet we're ignoring these families that are pleading that.

There was initiatives that were put forward up north. For 18 years they've been asking this government to support the initiatives that were brought forward when it came to mental health and to addictions. They told them that they didn't have enough people that were trained for them to be able to run these programs. Well what did they do? They went out and got educated and got a doctorate in mental health and addictions. They brought it back to the table. Support our initiative. We need a facility. We need a facility to be able to work with our own. And what do they do? They end up pushing this thing called a virtual bed. They deserve real beds in the North, Mr. Speaker, real beds.

[16:45]

The homelessness in this province, you see it everywhere. I had a conversation with a constituent a couple of weeks ago from the North, 74 years old, looking to . . . He's looking for somebody to bring him some wood because he's living in a shack, Mr. Speaker. Seventy-four years old and he can't cut wood anymore. He can't feel it. He said it's just too difficult for him to go out into the bush to be able to do that.

He's been homeless for a couple years. And he says, I'd had the opportunity to get this little thing, to make that my home. And you know, he worked for a long time. He worked his entire life. And he says, it's not that I don't want to have a roof over my head. It's just this is what's been given. And it's very sad to see that. It's very sad to hear that, you know? And this is the reality for a lot of people in our province.

We had a man by the name of Gary Tinker out of Pinehouse in the '80s. Walked with his two crutches all the way to Regina. And he came here because he wanted to tell this government that we need a lot more supports when it comes to disability in northern Saskatchewan. He came over here, and it started Gary Tinker Federation, foundation out in La Ronge. Gary called me the other night and he said, what about disability in this province? He's still advocating on that front. You know, how come that

wasn't mentioned in this budget? There's so many people with disability in the North and throughout this province.

Now we talk about consultation, duty-to-consult and accommodate. This hasn't happened. If there was proper consultation — and I said this when I sat down with some of the First Nation communities and some of the northern communities — if there was proper consultation done by this government, then you would have knew exactly what was going on in your community.

There was an elderly fellow and his wife. He's been hunting on his land since he was a little boy. And he got pulled over in the middle of the bush and they said, "You can't hunt here anymore." "What are you talking about?" "We have expensive machinery over here because we're digging now." And he didn't even know anything about that, because there was no consultation done with these community members. This has to change, Mr. Speaker.

The North is rich. There's absolutely no reason why they're neglected the way that they are. Everybody here knows that the North, it provides a lot of money for this province. A lot of money. Billions of dollars in money. I just want to assure the people of northern Saskatchewan, whether it been on the east side or the west side . . . We're always having these conversations of which side's better. North is beautiful in general. I want to assure the North that the North is important, they matter, and they belong, Mr. Speaker. They belong in this province.

So with that I just want to say that there's a lot of work that needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. You know, I was quite surprised by my friend from Meadow Lake, stand up last week and very proudly say that statement about who he was going to vote for in this federal election. And you know, that's a conversation that we'll have some other time. But I could tell you there's . . . I could tell you exactly who I'm not going to vote for, but again, we could go there.

But these First Nation communities in and around Meadow Lake, you know, beg to differ with that. There's Big Island Lake, Ministikwan Lake, Makwa Sahgaiehcan, Waterhen Lake First Nation, and Flying Dust First Nation that would 100 per cent disagree with the member of Meadow Lake's comment of who he's voting for.

So in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, along with my colleagues on this side, I want to say that we're focused on the future of this province. And the province deserves to have people stand up for them that's going to show equality for all people of Saskatchewan, something that's really important, Mr. Speaker. Because we're never going to be able to move forward if there's no equality in this province.

So because this budget doesn't focus on the future of this province and its people, including northern Saskatchewan, I will not be supporting this budget, Mr. Speaker. Instead I will support the amendment moved by the member of Mount Royal, my colleague, my friend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker Goudy:** — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

**James Thorsteinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased

to rise today to give my reply to the '25-26 budget. But before I begin, I would just like to wish my son Shane a happy birthday today. I managed to be able to be timed right to be able to be on my feet and wish him a happy birthday. He works in construction in the Lloydminster area, helping build homes for hard-working Saskatchewan people. So happy birthday, Shane.

I'd like to begin by thanking the Minister of Finance and all the officials who spend countless hours putting together a budget that provides some certainty in these uncertain times. Your hard work and dedication is greatly appreciated by us all.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of this year's budget is *Delivering for You*, and that's precisely what this budget does. It delivers for every resident of Saskatchewan, whether they're urban or rural, young or old, struggling to make ends meet or financially stable. This budget delivers on what is important to Saskatchewan people and their families.

During the recent campaign and in the Speech from the Throne, this government made a number of commitments to the residents of Saskatchewan. This budget addresses those commitments while showing a strong fiscal responsibility by delivering what is likely to be the only balanced budget in the nation.

To address the rising cost of living that affects everyone in this province, this budget includes the largest tax cut seen since 2008. By increasing the basic personal exemption, dependent child exemption, and the seniors' exemption, everyone is able to make more money before having to pay one penny of provincial income tax. This puts more money in the pockets of the hard-working people who make Saskatchewan home.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do need to correct the record. Member from Regina Mount Royal claims people won't see this benefit until 2026. Fact is, anyone who receives a regular paycheque will see benefit beginning in July of this year, when the Canada Revenue Agency makes their mid-year adjustments. Our government did request that changes be made on January 1st of this year, but were denied by the CRA [Canada Revenue Agency] for reasons known only to them. Sometimes trying to figure out how the CRA makes decisions is as difficult as figuring out where the opposition gets their information.

We're also making life more affordable for families, businesses, and industry by freezing the amount of education property tax collected by lowering the mill rates across all property taxes. This will save these taxpayers over \$100 million this year alone.

When you add in the other initiatives, such as increasing the graduate retention program tax rebate, making the home renovation tax credit permanent, and the over \$2 billion in affordability measures we have in each and every budget, it's clear we're delivering on making life more affordable for more people every day.

Our government is also delivering on health care. We are committed to ensuring that every person in the province has access to a primary health care provider. This is key to creating the best outcomes when it comes to the well-being of Saskatchewan residents. We're increasing the funding to accelerate the hiring of more health care professionals through the health human resources action plan, the most ambitious plan

in the country.

On top of the urgent care centre currently operating in Regina, reducing pressures seen in emergency rooms in the area, and the one under construction in Saskatoon, this government is committing to building an additional five urgent care centres — one more in each Saskatoon and Regina, as well as facilities in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and North Battleford. These investments will insist in reducing regional pressures in emergency rooms, allowing for better patient care in a more timely manner.

We're investing \$30 million into City Hospital in Saskatoon to open an additional 100 acute care beds to help address some of the capacity pressures in that city and making it easier to get out of the emergency room and into a hospital bed once you're admitted.

We're strengthening our commitment to performing 450,000 surgeries over four years by increasing funding for the surgical wait time initiative by nearly 25 per cent, getting patients off the wait-list so they can have a better quality of life.

This is but a short list of the many investments we are making and delivering on health care for the residents of Saskatchewan, but there are so many ways in which this budget delivers for everyone, I need to move on.

Education, Mr. Speaker. During the campaign last fall we heard a lot about education. This budget shows that we are listening and making improvements so that our children can succeed in learning, so they can succeed in life. On top of fully funding the recent contract agreement with teachers, we're investing in the first 50 of the 200 specialized support classrooms to be implemented over the next four years.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of being able to tour one of the first eight specialized support classrooms that were introduced in the pilot project at St. Mary School in North Battleford. I was amazed at the progress that was being made by the students who were involved with the program there. It is truly a testament to the hard-working and dedicated staff, parents, and students themselves for making this initiative such a success, and I look forward to it being expanded in order to help so many more students succeed into the future.

We're also investing an additional \$2 million into K-3 literacy programming. It's widely known that students who are able to read at grade level when leaving grade 3 are more successful in continuing their educational journey and have higher graduation rates than those who can't. We're committed to ensuring that children learn to read so they can read to learn.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to making our communities safer — communities where you and your family can go for a walk in the evening, communities where you don't have to worry about your car being parked outside, and communities where you can let your kids play in the park without worrying about them finding a used needle in the sandbox.

To do this we're taking a multi-faceted approach. We will remove the drugs and the drug dealers from our streets by enforcing stricter laws and hiring the law enforcement

professionals to do it. We're funding an additional 100 municipal police officers across the province as well as 14 new safer communities and neighbourhoods personnel to reduce crime by targeting nuisance properties.

We are also investing in 50 new officers for the Saskatchewan marshals service, which is expected to be operational in the next few months, a full year ahead of schedule. These officers will focus on provincial priorities such as gangs, drugs, illegal weapons, and apprehension of dangerous offenders anywhere across the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can see my time is nearing a close so I'm just going to ramble on a little bit here until we get to 5 o'clock before I continue on with my speech, and I look forward to continuing it when we resume later this evening. So with that, I would like to have my seat and look forward to continuing this on here in a few hours. Thank you.

**Speaker Goudy:** — It now being 5 o'clock, this Assembly stands recessed until 7:00 p.m. Thank you.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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**Premier**  
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**Hon. Lori Carr**  
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,  
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Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation  
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Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated  
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