



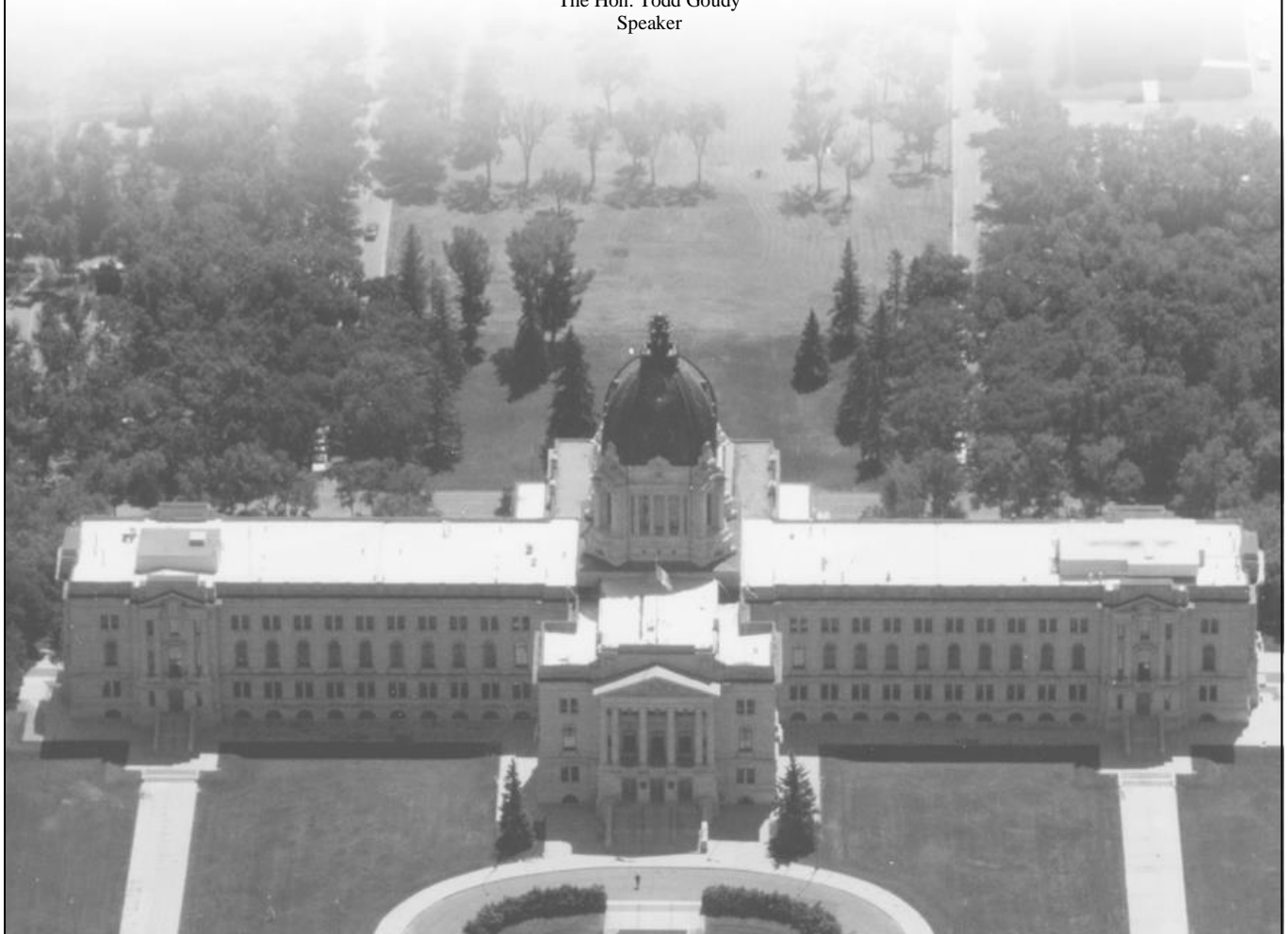
FIRST SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(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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McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
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Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
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Pratchler, Joan — Regina Rochdale (NDP)
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Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
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Weger, Michael — Weyburn-Bengough (SP)
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Young, Hon. Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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Clerks-at-the-Table

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Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise here today and recognize two outstanding young professionals and contributors to Saskatchewan who are seated in your gallery. Joining us today we have Ayo Abiola and Aman Mogos, both representatives of Black Engineers of Canada.

I'm proud to represent Ayo as his MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and I'm thankful for the relationship that we've built and his willingness to always take his MLA for coffee and let her know when she's on the right track, or sometimes on the wrong track.

But he's a Regina-based mechanical engineer who's co-founder of Black Engineers of Canada, which I'm going to talk about a little while later in a member's statement. He served on the board for four years, building the organization from the ground up alongside dedicated volunteers from right here in Saskatchewan and across Canada's provinces.

He's currently an advisor to BEC [Black Engineers of Canada], and here in Saskatchewan he's leading the BuildGreen Saskatchewan conference which brings together architects, contractors, engineers, policy-makers, and the community focused on how to deliver efficient, sustainable economy-friendly buildings for our province.

Joining him is Mr. Aman Mogos, who's made the trip from Saskatoon. He's a Saskatoon-based electrical infrastructure and power systems engineer who, I learned, did his Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] at SaskPower. And he's a mentor for the Black Engineers of Canada here in Saskatchewan, a year-long mentorship program for engineering professionals and graduates. And he mentors up to six individuals every year, providing them with the tool kits and guidance to excel in their chosen engineering professions. Aman's efforts, along with the others in BEC, are crucial to enhancing Canada as well as our province's technical advantage in an increasingly competitive world.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members in this Assembly to join me in welcoming these two gentlemen to this their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina

Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, I would like to welcome 18 students of grade 8 from Harvest City school academy from Regina Coronation Park sitting in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, this group of students are accompanied by Harvest City schoolteachers Ms. Yemba and Mr. Allan. Thank you, Ms. Yemba and Mr. Allan, for bringing this class to their legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I have a great memory with that school. I completed my practicum as a driver educator from that school back in 2008, and I got a lot of respect, a lot of love from that school. And that was my first year in this province.

I will meet with the students. Especially with grade 8 students, I'm really nervous when they're asking questions; their questions are very hard than high school students. I will meet with them in the Qu'Appelle Gallery for their questions.

And with that, I will request all members to join me to welcome our future faces into their Legislative Assembly.

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

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the gallery across from me today, we have another school group here from my constituency. I have the privilege of representing these kids from Henry Braun Elementary School, 28 in total. I think 27 with us here today. They are from Ms. Jenn Leach's class, Mr. Speaker, who I have had the privilege of working with as a colleague before. Her service to education is exemplary, especially in the years of early education. She's very, very well-read, has many years of teaching experience, and when it comes to pre-K [pre-kindergarten] and grade 3 education often informs a lot of the decisions that either myself or my colleagues would make.

Today accompanying that group, we have chaperones Ms. Gabel and Ms. Leach. And I look forward to getting a picture with them and meeting with them later on.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Matt Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise and present a petition calling for the utilization of nurse practitioners in Saskatchewan.

Those who have signed the petition today are residents of our province and wish to bring to our attention that the education and practical experience of nurse practitioners enables them to offer care in a variety of health care environments from primary care to emergency care; that nurse practitioners are autonomous health care providers. They provide high-quality, cost-effective care for people of all ages across the health spectrum.

This is especially important, Mr. Speaker. We know in our province the incredible numbers of people who aren't able to

access primary care. We know that there's a very important role that nurse practitioners can play and do play in finding a solution to that. Nurse practitioners, if properly utilized, can help fill the gaps in care and staffing currently experienced by so many Saskatchewan communities.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately work with the Saskatchewan Association of Nurse Practitioners to develop a plan to properly utilize nurse practitioners in our communities.

Today's petition is signed by residents of Macklin. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Darlene Rowden: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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, that the devastating 100 per cent tariff on Canadian-produced canola, pork, and peas by China will have a disproportionate effect on Saskatchewan producers and the 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 action: that the Government of Canada 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; that the federal government immediately engage in meaningful dialogue with representatives of the Chinese government to eliminate tariffs that harm Saskatchewan producers.

This petition is signed by residents of the RM [rural municipality] of Prince Albert.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan calling for duty-to-consult legislation.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to our attention the following: that the current duty-to-consult policy in Saskatchewan is not effective; that the Sask Party government did not follow its own guidelines on consulting with the inherent and treaty rights holders while drafting the current duty-to-consult policy; and that the Saskatchewan Party government continues to move forward on duty-to-consult processes without fulfilling constitutional obligations set through many court cases that have shaped how duty-to-consult should be observed in present day, including multiple Supreme Court rulings.

I'll 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 enshrine duty-to-consult into law by enacting meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

The people that have signed this petition reside in Porcupine Plain and Yellow Quill. I do so present.

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

Betty Nippi-Albright: — I'm pleased to stand and present the following petition calling on the government to address the mental health and addictions crisis in this province.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan continues to break its own records in overdose deaths; we have the highest suicide rates in Canada; and that Indigenous people die by suicide at a rate 4.3 times higher than non-Indigenous people in Saskatchewan; and that one in four youth in Saskatchewan have reported having engaged in self-harm at some point; and that one in four youth reported having considered suicide in the past year, with 9.7 per cent having attempted.

So I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as following, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with experts and community leaders on evidence-based solutions to the mental health and addictions crisis in Saskatchewan.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling for addressing the affordability crisis. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan would like to bring to the attention that the inflation is the highest it's been for more than three decades; that half Saskatchewan residents are living paycheque to paycheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; and that the Sask Party government's 32 new tax and fee hikes makes life more expensive all while harming struggling industries like tourism, culture, and fitness. While other provinces acted, the Sask Party government ignored the opposition's call for a gas price relief plan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the signatures today reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Humboldt-Watrous.

Local Businesses Give Back to Community

Racquel Hilbert: — Local businesses are the backbone to our great province. Supporting local businesses helps promote and maintain the diversity that makes our communities special.

Golden Eden Produce is a local family farm that grows pesticide-free, non-GMO [genetically modified organism] produce. Last season they yielded over 104 tonnes of tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers which were bought and sold from local grocery stores across the province. This season's crop is well on its way.

Mr. Speaker, homegrown food reduces carbon emissions, reduces pesticides, fertilizer use, and often provides better nutrition for our communities. The service of small mom-and-pop shops is second to none, and it feels good when someone knows your name and they know your usual order.

The Danish Oven, Misty Gardens, Schenn's Farm Supply, Cedar Ridge Greenhouses, Gene's Memorials, Pure Pasture Farms, Farm to Fork, Prairie Sky Meadows, Melron Service, J.D. Weber Tree Services are all owned by entrepreneurs. These are just a small portion of the local Saskatchewan businesses.

Local businesses give back to their communities; they also make the community a better place. It's reciprocal in nature. I'm proud to be part of this stable and responsible, reliable government, working to deliver a strong economy and a bright future.

[13:45]

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

Black Engineers of Canada Empowers Members

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to welcome the Black Engineers of Canada to the Saskatchewan legislature today. Today they're represented by Ayo Abiola and Aman Mogos seated in your gallery, two exceptional professionals, entrepreneurs, and leaders here in Saskatchewan.

As a community dedicated to fostering excellence, equity, and empowerment, BEC is paving the way for Black engineers and aspiring engineers to thrive in a field where innovation and leadership are paramount. Through mentorship, networking, and educational initiatives, BEC is not only creating pathways for success, but also championing the growth and well-being of its members, ensuring a future where Black engineers excel without limitations.

The work being done by BEC in advocating for Black engineers is a testament to the importance of representation, empowerment, and opportunity in the engineering profession, Mr. Speaker. And I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize that this year is the 100-year anniversary of the Iron Ring here in Canada, which symbolizes the ethical obligations to public safety for Canada's engineers.

We celebrate BEC's dedication to its mission of uplifting Black talent and fostering economic empowerment. To our guests today: your work is vital to shaping the future of engineering in Canada, and we look forward to celebrating your efforts as you continue to inspire excellence here and across the nation.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming Black Engineers of Canada to this their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Kamsack Business Distributes Innovative Nitrogen Machine

Sean Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Nykolaishen family and their company Nytro Ag Corp, a Kamsack operation which is the licensed distributor of the Green Lightning equipment. Green Lightning is a mechanism created to replicate a naturally occurring process that leads to nitrogen.

Chris Nykolaishen represented the Nytro Ag Corp at the Western Canadian Crop Production Show held in Saskatoon January 14th to 16th when the company was named one of the three finalists for the show's Innovation Award for its Green Lightning nitrogen machine. This award recognizes the exhibitors who provide solutions that address both new and ongoing needs in farming.

Chris quoted:

We have been selling the machines, which are being manufactured in Kentucky, and collecting data. We are still in a soft release, but in another year we will be able to do a full launch after only three years of research and development, rather than the usual five to seven years.

This equipment makes nitrogen at one-fifteenth the cost of synthetic nitrogen. Synthetic nitrogen production costs anywhere from 65 cents to a dollar per pound. Green Lightning is proud to say it produces nitrogen for 4 to 6 cents per pound.

Nykolaishen added that plans are to construct a plant in either Kamsack or Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, I again want to congratulate the Nykolaishen family for this amazing development benefiting our communities.

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

Chin National Day Celebration

Bhajan Brar: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, February 15th it was my honour to attend the Chin National Day celebration along with the member for Coronation Park at the Argyle North community hall in Regina. This day was recognizing the 77th anniversary of Chin National Day, which takes place on February 20th. We took time to honour the resilience and rich cultural history of the Chin people through music, dance, and food.

This celebration had an added importance to me as I had the

opportunity to speak at the event about my father-in-law, Subedar Surjit Singh Gill. He fought to protect the Chin people's land during the Second World War and endured over two years as a prisoner of war.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all the members of this Assembly join me in acknowledging Chin National Day and congratulate the Chin community of Regina on its successful event. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton.

Call for Federal and Interprovincial Co-operation on Energy Projects

Kevin Kasun: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government has always advocated for stronger interprovincial trade. In times like these it goes to show how important it is, especially in our energy sector.

Last week 14 CEOs [chief executive officer] representing the four largest pipeline companies and 10 largest oil and gas companies in the country sent an open letter to the four federal party leaders. They stated that the federal government has a real opportunity right now to remove the barriers they have imposed on ourselves in this sector and proposed the following: simplify regulations on our industries, commit to firm approval deadlines for projects, grow production of oil and gas industries, attract investment into our industries, incentivize Indigenous co-investment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, these asks should not be so hard to accomplish, and this government agrees with every one of them.

As we all know, Saskatchewan has what the world needs, and it shouldn't be our own federal government that is blocking or delaying such important projects. This is why the Premier last month posted that all pipeline permits in Saskatchewan be considered pre-approved going forward.

Mr. Speaker, we all need to fully support our energy industry and that includes the federal government. That is what I would call a Team Canada approach. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Conflict-of-Interest Complaint

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I call on the Finance minister to get back to the drawing board, fix this budget, and build a real plan for tariffs. Hard work, but I know he's more than capable. And I know this because of the quality of his work on a recent conflict-of-interest complaint he filed, alleging my colleague from Regina South Albert was in breach for her use of social media.

It was thoroughly argued — 80 pages of submissions, 42 photo exhibits. The attention to detail was stunning. Photos of the member and her kids going back to 2021. No stone left unturned. Now I was glad to see the finding that my colleague did not in fact breach the Act, and we certainly welcome the guidance of the commissioner on social media use going forward.

But I can't help but ask myself, is the minister's silence on tariffs in this budget a result of his divided attention? Budgets we always say are about priorities, but was building a first-rate budget enough of one for that minister? This was his first provincial budget, perhaps the most important of our lifetime, and the effort he appears to have put into it is in stark contrast to the effort he put into launching CheeseGate. Just a four-page analysis on tariffs, no photos, and quiet as a mouse in a cheese shop on a plan for tariffs.

Our message to the minister is clear: quit with the doomscrolling, get off social media, and get to work. Because while the conflict-of-interest complaint was also a swing and a miss, this botched budget has grave implications for the entire province.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

Opposition's Position on Private Industry

Kevin Weedmark: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP [New Democratic Party] like to use the slogan "elbows up." It's clear that their plan is to elbow out private industry.

Yesterday the mask slipped. The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre was praising the NDP record and Premier Blakeney, and I quote:

He stood up for Saskatchewan . . . He did that by imposing windfall royalties on our resources, by nationalizing portions of this industry . . . and it worked.

And there you have it. If the NDP was government, they'd be using this current tariff crisis to nationalize our industries. An NDP government would take over our potash industry. They would take over our oil and gas industries. They would take over our uranium industry. It's what they truly believe our government's role is, for government to own and control the resource sector. And you want proof? Up until their very last day in government, their very last day, they kept legislation in place to make it happen. The result: investment and jobs leaving the province, an industry that feared the NDP would use their power to take over.

One of our government's very first acts was to repeal that legislation. The result: the BHP Jansen mine, which will be the largest potash mine in the world.

Every now and then, the NDP mask slips. The cracks open and their true intentions are revealed. While the NDP would elbow out private industry, we've elbowed out bad policy, bad legislation, bad ideas, and that works for Saskatchewan.

Speaker Goudy: — Just want to remind members that true intentions can't be discussed. We can't put intentions into the other people's lives.

We've got some wonderful students here today. Glad to have you here. And you're about to witness question period.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Impact of Russian Access to Agricultural Markets

Carla Beck: — This morning news broke that Donald Trump has signed a deal with Vladimir Putin to allow Russian shipments of agricultural products and potash through the Black Sea. I quote from Reuters: “Under this agreement with Moscow, Washington promised to help restore Russian access to markets for agricultural and fertilizer exports.”

Let’s be clear: Donald Trump is helping Russian potash and ag producers while tariffing the same products from Canada, all while he continues to allow Russia to illegally occupy Ukraine. Mr. Speaker, to say this is an outrage would be putting it mildly.

Aligning with a dictator against our democracy. Will the Premier finally condemn the actions of Donald Trump?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Certainly, Mr. Speaker, as last week not only condemning the words of the president but these particular actions of the president as well. Mr. Speaker, no one, no one in the Western world or in the world proper should be normalizing economic relationships with Russia. The sanctions that are in place are so that the world is not supporting the illegal invasion of Ukraine, Mr. Speaker. That’s why those sanctions are in place.

And the fact that these discussions are happening between the president of the United States and Russia without Ukraine at the table is incredibly disturbing, not only to us in Saskatchewan but to, I think, any global citizen, Mr. Speaker. The sanctions are in place so that Russia is not being funded through the sale of their goods to other areas of the world, including the United States, Mr. Speaker. And this is the most disturbing action that I think we’ve seen from the president of the United States since his election.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with the Premier on that.

This latest announcement from Donald Trump isn’t just a betrayal of Ukraine, where people will continue to be killed and occupied under Putin’s illegal invasion. But of course, Mr. Speaker, this latest action leaves so much at stake for Saskatchewan.

A flood of Russian potash, which has rightly been under sanction for years, could completely destabilize the Canadian potash market. It’s hard to believe, but here we are: Donald Trump helping Putin sell his potash while tariffing Saskatchewan’s.

Can we expect continued strong statements from that Premier naming Donald Trump as he continues to attack the people and producers here in this province?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, and you will continue to hear more than just statements from the Premier and the government proper in Saskatchewan, but you’ll see action. As we debated on the floor of this Assembly last week, Mr. Speaker,

action, economic action that has really been in place promoting all economic investment in this province since we had the honour of forming government in 2007.

More recent action, Mr. Speaker, with respect to procurement limits that are in place by the Minister of SaskBuilds on public funding, encouraging municipalities, school divisions, post-secondary institutes to follow in the government’s space there, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, very real action, Mr. Speaker, which we had to adjust somewhat, trying to maximize the impact on an American-owned company, Mr. Speaker, that is selling American brands of beer into the province. And if people want to take action, Mr. Speaker, from an economic perspective, you need to buy as locally as possible, whatever the products are, Mr. Speaker.

But what is happening most recently today with the president of the United States aligning economically . . . In its essence, if he follows through with his commitments today of creating access for Russian products to the Western world, Mr. Speaker, it most certainly is disturbing to the province of Saskatchewan. Not only by the indirect impact, Mr. Speaker, but by the impact from a humanity perspective. Because in essence, what he is doing is funding Vladimir Putin’s regime, Mr. Speaker, and funding the death of Ukrainians.

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

Supports for Western Canadian Farmers

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I’m glad. I’m glad to hear strong words from that Premier about these actions because up until now the response of that Premier has been weak and meek. And I agree that we need action.

He has a chance today to improve on the Ag minister’s response yesterday to the call from the Ag Producers of Saskatchewan for improved AgriStability supports. We need action, and the best outcome for producers of course is to have the Chinese tariffs scrapped altogether. And if it takes scrapping the EV [electric vehicle] tariff, then we need to do that.

[14:00]

But right now, Mr. Speaker, pea and canola farmers need support, and we need this government to commit to signing on to those improvements today. Will the Premier commit to signing on to these AgStability changes to protect Saskatchewan farmers who are looking at another hit again today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as you know, we in Canada are in the midst of a federal election. We reached out, Mr. Speaker, at the officials level to find out the details of what was announced very briefly by the candidate — who was the Ag minister at the time, but is a candidate now in the federal election — to find out if there is something that we could sign on to and commit to on behalf of Western Canadian farmers, Mr. Speaker.

As it turns out, and we were concerned with the announcement because there was no consultation with provincial Ag ministers when the announcement was made, it turns out at the officials

level, Mr. Speaker, that there are no details to this program that the officials have. There's no funding that's been made available, and there's no direction for the officials to work on a program to support Western Canadian farms. This is at the federal government level, Mr. Speaker.

And so what we have in place today is for the Western Canadian canola and ag industry more general from the federal Liberal government that is supported by the NDP — both of which are running for and asking for Canadians' vote today — what we have in the way of support for Western Canadian agriculture is zero, Mr. Speaker. Zero from the Liberal and NDP parties that are running, Mr. Speaker.

What we do have from those parties is support for a non-existent Canadian EV market, which consequently is at the expense of the canola and pea markets here in Western Canada.

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

Access to Breast Cancer Diagnostic Services

Carla Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I agree again. It's galling to be entering this period in this country without having any plan to support producers and industries, Mr. Speaker.

Speaking of weak responses, yesterday we raised the issue of urgent mammograms in this Assembly. Women who should be able to get this care right here at home in Saskatchewan are flying to Calgary at 10 times the cost. How did the minister describe this scheme? I quote, "efficient." In fact he said it twice.

Will the Premier tell that Health minister to apologize to women staring down a cancer diagnosis for saying this mess is somehow efficient? If he won't, Mr. Speaker, what does that say about his leadership?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I would say that both our Health ministers have not only the full confidence of myself but the full confidence of the entirety of the Government of Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible].

An example of that is their commitment to ensure that we are using all of the tools, all of the access points that we have, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that when women need mammograms, when women need diagnostics, when Saskatchewan families need diagnostics, they have access not only in Saskatchewan communities, but we've added additional access by procuring these tests in Calgary, Mr. Speaker.

Why we did that was a bridge to ensure that we could get to the Regina breast health centre opening, Mr. Speaker, which I am pleased to announce is going to be opened on April the 14th. And the first patients, first women through the door to receive diagnostics at that Regina breast health centre, Mr. Speaker, will be on April the 23rd.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, it's a slap in the face to women

all across this province for the minister to describe his fiasco of a system as efficient. And it's embarrassing to hear the Premier agree with that sentiment, Mr. Speaker.

The government's own emails show that women are going without the care they need because they don't have the funds. That's not efficient. That's a travesty. This simply should not be happening in Saskatchewan. This is the birthplace of medicare.

Will the Health minister apologize for saying that this mess is efficient?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the Health minister's actions are actions to support women in this province. The Health minister's actions of ensuring that we can expand the access using all the tools that might be available to us with respect to that availability of diagnostics for women, Mr. Speaker, most certainly are in support of women's health in this province.

The Health minister's actions — and I would say these particular two Health ministers' support and advocacy to ensure that not only are we moving forward with the Regina breast health centre, but we are advancing the opening so that it is accessible to Saskatchewan women and Saskatchewan families more generally, Mr. Speaker — is in support of women's health in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And so not only would I like to thank both the Health ministers, Mr. Speaker, for the role they play, but I would like to thank the many women that throughout the campaign and over the course of the last year that have advocated with candidates and with government members here, Mr. Speaker, and with myself more directly and with the Health ministers — present and past Health ministers — to encourage and support the government in the investment in the Regina breast health centre, Mr. Speaker, which as I said will have its grand opening on April the 14th and is going to accept its first patient on April the 23rd.

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

Vicki Mowat: — There's no advancing the opening, Mr. Speaker. It's late. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government promised a new breast cancer clinic would be open in Regina by now, but it's still closed. Another broken promise from the same old Sask Party government.

Before the last election, the Sask Party told the public this clinic would be open by the end of this fiscal year. Instead the Sask Party government has failed to deliver, forcing patients to seek mammograms and diagnostic services at private clinics owned by Sask Party donors in Calgary. Why isn't the breast health centre open today as promised?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned the other day, I had the opportunity to tour the breast health centre here in Regina. In the recent weeks, Mr. Speaker, work is being under way right now to set up the machinery, get the rooms ready to go. As the Premier mentioned,

we'll be opening the breast health centre in just a few short weeks, Mr. Speaker.

Again we thank the many women in this province, many of whom reached directly out to MLAs, to previous ministers, to myself, to my counterpart minister as well, Mr. Speaker, again to ensure that women have as best access as possible here in southern Saskatchewan.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this issue has been ongoing for over a year and a half now. Let's be clear: health care should be available when and where you need it. No woman should have to leave her home, her family, and her province to get a breast cancer screening. And this isn't just inconvenient, it's dangerous. Delayed diagnosis costs lives.

The Sask Party's failure to follow through on their province is putting women at risk. Why isn't this breast cancer centre open today as promised?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said, we'll be opening the breast health centre in just a few short weeks. And this is all again part of our government's plan in this budget to deliver for the women in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note as well in this year's budget the addition of a second mobile mammography bus, again ensuring that women in rural Saskatchewan who are used to travelling into Regina or Saskatoon or another regional centre for different services, Mr. Speaker, these services can now come to them. We'll have two buses on the road, Mr. Speaker. Again this is all part of delivering for women in Regina, delivering for women in Maple Creek, and delivering for women all across this great province.

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

Child Care Agreement with Federal Government

Joan Pratchler: — Mr. Speaker, this government is failing women and failing their families by not re-signing that child care agreement. Every operator and parent that I've spoken to is in absolute disbelief and the anger is mounting.

Why would this government allow such an amazing thing for families and for the economy to go to waste? Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister finally said the quiet part out loud yesterday. They are purposely dragging their feet on the renewal of the child care agreement because they want to allow for for-profit centres to receive government funding.

To the minister: what does he have to say to the thousands of families whose jobs and livelihoods are being put at risk for a few for-profit centres?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, again I'll repeat for the member opposite, as I've said multiple times, we have not said that we are not signing this agreement, Mr. Speaker. We're working very closely with our federal officials and counterparts at the officials level, at the elected level, to try to arrive at the best possible agreement for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What I said yesterday was an example of one of the other provinces that is looking to renegotiate the terms of their particular agreement, Mr. Speaker. In this case it was the province of Nova Scotia. That's not the only province, Mr. Speaker. Every province has a little bit different terms in their agreement. As an example, in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, the government there has this program in place for children under the age of seven.

One of the things that we've identified here in Saskatchewan is an issue involving children turning six while they're in kindergarten. That's something that we've identified as for a future agreement we'd like to have addressed.

So at the officials level and at the federal level we'd like to negotiate this, Mr. Speaker. These are one of the things we want to get done before we sign this new five-year agreement with the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To risk the livelihoods of thousands of families, thousands of jobs, all for a select few for-profit centres, that's a ludicrous excuse, Mr. Speaker, and frankly it's unacceptable. I'm not sure why I'm so surprised. This is a government that has been undermining public services for the last 17 years, but to put \$1.6 million all at risk for a select few, exactly how many for-profit centres has the minister heard from that want access to this funding?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the member's benefit, again this agreement does not expire until March 31st of 2026. Not this week. Not at the end of this week. Not at the end of this month, Mr. Speaker. I know that can be difficult for members opposite to understand.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, a couple of the members were talking about 11 provinces who had signed on to this agreement. To the members opposite's knowledge, there's only 10 provinces in this country, Mr. Speaker.

I have had the chance to talk, Mr. Speaker, to the previous . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Answers need to be heard, and so let's keep quiet in the Chamber when questions are being asked and answers are being given. Thank you.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have had the opportunity to speak in a virtual meeting with the previous minister for Jobs and Families federally to advocate a

Saskatchewan position on the future of this agreement, Mr. Speaker.

And secondly I've also recently — prior to the drop of the federal election writ — sent a letter to the new Minister of Jobs and Families as well, again talking about Saskatchewan's willingness to negotiate, Mr. Speaker, on the new child care agreement.

We want to be able to support child care operators across this province, Mr. Speaker, and families right across Saskatchewan. And we're going to continue to do that with our federal counterparts in good faith as we renegotiate a new agreement for child care, Mr. Speaker.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you I've received hundreds of calls and emails and letters from families and communities and operators, all urging this government to renew this agreement. I haven't heard from one — not one — for-profit centre. I'm honestly baffled that this is even a real argument for dragging their feet, Mr. Speaker.

Sue Delaney with Child Care Now said it well, and I quote, "They've been purposely dragging their feet on this renewal, all because they believe there isn't enough money in it for their friends."

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. Will the minister walk back his comments in . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Okay. The accusation's from a quote. You're the member quoting accusations. I think you can ask a question. If you're going to have a question, don't use accusations, please.

Joan Pratchler: — Will the minister walk back his comments and commit to renewing the child care deal today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the members opposite, I think, seem to forget that this is about kids and families, Mr. Speaker, about child care. Mr. Speaker, while they're talking about hearing from people, I wonder if the critic opposite, if she would ask, talk to her seatmate there about his thoughts on child care, on \$10-a-day child care.

August 10th, 2021 the member for Saskatoon Stonebridge on Twitter or X — whatever it's called now — said, Mr. Speaker, and I quote, "My wife and I make a combined \$180,000 a year as teachers. We don't need \$10-a-day day care." He went on to say, Mr. Speaker, "Could this be provided for households who make less than \$100,000 a year? I'd like to see a more reasonably scaled version of this," Mr. Speaker.

That's what the member for Saskatoon Stonebridge said. I hope that the member opposite is consulting with her own members of her very own caucus, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge.

Support for the Film Industry

Darcy Warrington: — Mr. Speaker, it's important that you can change. And obviously I've changed.

This Saskatchewan Party government is failing the film industry again. Creative Saskatchewan saw a cut of \$2 million this year. This is an 11 per cent cut to their budget. The Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association said the reduction to this grant is disappointing. It's more than just disappointing; it's an existential threat to jobs in Saskatchewan.

Does the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport acknowledge that this cut will cost Saskatchewan jobs?

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

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This year our government is investing \$10 million into Creative Saskatchewan feature film and television production grant. This is a 400 per cent increase since 2021. That's just a mere four years ago.

Saskatchewan remains attractive to the film industry and will continue to be a place where producers and investors choose to film. In fact they're anticipating they'll be busier than ever this year.

Since the establishment of the feature film and television grant, our government has awarded over \$60 million to fund Saskatchewan-made productions. Just to note, the opposition in their budget for this year had zero dollars for their election platform for the film industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Stonebridge.

Darcy Warrington: — Mr. Speaker, this Sask Party government is failing the . . . My apologies; everyone makes mistakes.

Mr. Speaker, this Sask Party government's decision to slash \$2 million in funding to Creative Saskatchewan is deeply concerning. The Sask Arts Alliance released data to show each dollar spent on the arts returns over 13. That \$2 million cut could generate 26 million in economic activity.

Mr. Speaker, that minister stated this decision was linked to a threat of tariffs, but I don't recall seeing any money allocated in tariff protection, let alone \$2 million. How does that minister justify this cut to Creative Saskatchewan that will impact jobs in this economy?

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

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, our government is investing \$10 million into the Creative Saskatchewan feature film and television production grant this year. Our government will continue to support the local film industry, and we look forward to the release of many upcoming

projects.

The last time the members opposite had a plan for the film industry, they wanted to bring back the film tax credit that would allow funds to leave the province of Saskatchewan. With our film grant, 100 per cent of all of those funds stay within the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Betty Nippi-Albright: — Mr. Speaker, the drug crisis is ripping through communities large and small across our province. In Saskatoon the libraries have been forced to close to the public because of drugs. Now we've seen hundreds of overdoses with more to come. There's going to be more to come now that the places that they go to for support are closed.

What is the plan? What's the minister's plan to save lives and stop the overdose crisis that is rampant in Saskatoon? Lives, Mr. Speaker, are at stake and the government needs to act now.

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. We are also very concerned about the recent increase in overdoses in Saskatoon and all across the province, for that fact. This is why we acted quickly by providing additional naloxone kits and establishing our provincial emergency operations centre in Saskatoon to assist, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that the provincial emergency operations centre will be providing an update today with the city of Saskatoon, first responders, and various community supports. I spoke with Mayor Block this morning and committed to providing funding and support for additional first responders for Saskatoon Fire until the end of April. At that time, we will re-evaluate what the situation is and go from there.

In the meantime we encourage people to look at a path to recovery through the recovery-oriented system of care, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 16 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 16, *The Provincial Sales 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. 16, *The Provincial Sales Tax 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? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

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 Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to pick up where I left off last night at 10:30. Yesterday I spoke about the importance of keeping Saskatchewan in a position of strength. We know we'll be facing some headwinds with the threat of tariffs from the US [United States], but fortunately this government had the foresight to understand the importance of diversification.

This government has opened nine new trade offices and has grown our exports from \$17 billion to almost \$50 billion. It was the party opposite, Mr. Speaker, who criticized this government's efforts to open new trade offices. It was the party opposite whose federal counterparts stood in the way of every single major pipeline project in Canada and who supported the costly and ineffective carbon tax. Thankfully we are the governing party.

The theme of this year's budget is *Delivering for You*. This means strengthening our economy, growing our province, and advocating for Saskatchewan's best interests so that we remain the best province to live, work, and raise a family.

This budget prioritizes affordability and fiscal responsibility while delivering more in health care, education, and community safety — the programs and services Saskatchewan people need and deserve. This government delivered a balanced budget with a surplus of \$12 million. Importantly we have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio in Canada and the second-highest credit rating, Mr. Speaker. These ratings give us the ability to quickly pivot to weather the impact of potential tariffs.

Helping make life affordable for the people of this province is a primary focus. Saskatchewan has one of the highest tax-free thresholds in Canada. We are delivering the most significant

personal income tax reduction in the province since 2008. There is something for everyone in this budget. This budget makes life more affordable for seniors, families with children, persons with disabilities, caregivers, new graduates, first-time homebuyers, and people renovating their homes. Even property owners will save more than \$100 million annually due to a reduction in the education property tax mill rate.

This budget also delivers for students, with a 20 per cent increase to the graduate retention program. For homeowners, a 50 per cent increase to the first-time homebuyers tax credit and the continuation of the home renovation tax credit.

For families with young children, this budget doubles the active families benefit and makes more families eligible. We know that active children are healthier and happier and are more likely to succeed in life.

For seniors living in a personal care home, this budget provides a \$1,000-a-month increase to the personal care home benefit. This budget also includes ongoing affordability measures to help with the cost-of-living pressures we're all facing, including the senior and children's drug plan, ambulance coverage for seniors, the Saskatchewan housing benefit, and the secondary suite incentive. In total the taxation introduced in this '25-26 budget will provide more than \$250 million in tax savings this year. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to affordability measures, this budget benefits everyone in our province.

This '25-26 budget also includes a record investment of 8.1 billion in health care. Health care is a priority for this government because we care about the people in this province. This budget delivers better patient access, safer and more responsive care. It includes better access to acute care programs and services to deliver better outcomes, including a plan to reduce wait times and execute 450,000 procedures in the next four years. It includes plans to increase capacity at Saskatoon City Hospital. This budget includes a commitment to connect all residents in the province with a primary health care provider. It includes funds to support the recruitment, hiring, and retention of health care professionals through the health care human resources action plan.

This budget also includes a \$140 million increase in health capital funding to over \$650 million, the highest health care infrastructure budget ever. This budget includes completing and staffing the new breast health centre. As we heard from the Premier, it will be opening in April.

It includes dollars to enhance kidney health programs and the dialysis services by adding more full-time positions, including in my community of Moose Jaw. This budget also includes funding for an additional 170 paramedics. These aren't just numbers and words, Mr. Speaker. These are investments that will improve the lives of people in this province.

This budget also delivers 279 million to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. This funding gives patients access to more current and effective oncology drugs, therapies, and treatments, including a new provincial lung cancer screening program and the lowering of the breast cancer screening eligibility to 43 years. This budget also includes dollars to fund a second mobile bus to increase mammogram screening for women across this province.

[14:30]

Through this budget, our government will also strengthen continuing care to help residents remain at home and in their communities for as long as possible. Thank you to all the health care workers for your dedication, compassion, and hard work in keeping our communities safe and healthy.

This budget invests an additional 16 million in addiction services to further our government's commitment to creating 500 new addiction spaces in the province. Once complete, this will double the capacity of spaces available. This year's budget also adds supports for the existing opioid treatment program and will implement new virtual access to the addiction medical program.

Mr. Speaker, we are providing multiple treatment options to support individualized paths to recovery. This year's budget supports the development of a central intake and navigation system that patients can contact for treatment. It facilitates a transition to a recovery-oriented system-of-care model because there is no safe use of illicit drugs. Keeping individuals in active addiction is a disservice to them, their families, and their communities. The recovery-oriented system-of-care model promotes holistic growth in individuals, fostering overall well-being and supporting lasting recovery.

These investments are critical, but we also want to ensure that we have the right resources to provide these services. This '25-26 budget also delivers on our commitment to execute the health human resources action plan. This includes adding 150 more training seats to the province for family medicine, anesthesia, plastic surgery, and other specialties. This budget includes support for enhanced permanent full-time nursing positions in rural and northern locations. It supports investments for our overall efforts to recruit and retain doctors.

Now due to the positive response to the Regina Urgent Care Centre, I'm happy to report planning is under way to add additional urgent care centres in Prince Albert, North Battleford, and in my home community of Moose Jaw. This government is expanding complex-needs emergency shelters into new communities. This budget provides the capital funding to support this plan. These shelters provide individuals in crisis a safe place to stabilize while being monitored for the adverse effects of substances.

Now in terms of education, another key priority for this government, the continued investment in our children's future is critical. Strong education is important for building a prosperous, skilled, and resilient society for the future of this province. The '25-26 budget delivers increased opportunities and supports for kindergarten to grade 12 students, parents, and teachers across this province. This budget includes \$3.5 billion, an investment to the Ministry of Education. And it includes 2.4 billion in operating funds for school divisions. It includes 130 million to fund the new teacher collective agreement and address the pressures of growing student enrolment, as well as the challenges facing today's classrooms. There is funding for an additional 50 specialized support classrooms to reduce interruptions by providing additional supports where needed.

This budget also includes dedicated funding to improve kindergarten to grade 3 learning levels, specifically reading

levels, because we know how important reading is. Reading skills set the foundation for future success.

It includes increased funding to address the challenges of student enrolment growth by investing in new schools with 191 million school capital budget. I am pleased to report that in Moose Jaw the joint-use school is on track to open in the fall of 2025. This government has also invested in completing the renovations at Ecole St. Margaret.

Mr. Speaker, our government's commitment to education doesn't end there. This budget supports students as they advance their education and move into the workforce. It gives students the opportunities to pursue post-secondary education close to home while offering programs that meet the needs of our labour force and our economy.

In my role as an instructor at Sask Polytech, I witness first-hand the close interactions and relationships Sask Polytech has with industry, which helps them to identify the skills needed and future opportunities within the workforce. And this actually guides their curriculum. The Ministry of Advanced Education will receive \$788 million in this year's budget.

Health care training is a priority in this year's budget. New and expanded programs along with additional training seats will help build a stronger health care workforce to meet the needs of our residents.

New training positions for nurse practitioners, registered psychiatric nurses, and medical radiologic technicians will be added. New programs, including physician assistants, occupational therapy, respiratory therapy, and speech language pathology will also be added — therapies I personally know the importance of, and I probably still need a little bit of. Thank you to all of those who work in education for your dedication and patience in shaping the minds and futures of our students.

Community safety, another key priority for this government. Everyone in Saskatchewan should feel safe in their community. This budget delivers safer communities across the province by investing in the presence of law enforcement in Saskatchewan. This budget reaffirms our commitment to public safety.

Since '23-24 over 2 billion has been invested to deliver a larger police presence in this province. There is funding in this budget for approximately 100 new municipal police officers, 14 safer communities and neighbourhood personnel, and funding to train more officers. In Moose Jaw this will mean funding for four of the six new provincially funded police officers this year to increase police presence in public spaces. We are also taking steps to provide officers with the right tools and resources to respond effectively and keep our communities safe.

This budget allows us to enhance the security and safety of the southern border with the United States. It also includes enhanced funding to improve safety and increase capacity in correctional facilities. This budget includes funding to create a more accessible court system for municipal bylaw officers to move cases through the system more quickly. It also includes investments in interpersonal violence programs and services, including second-stage housing. In addition to these resources, this budget is funding the new Saskatchewan marshals service,

which is expected to be operational in the coming months, a full year ahead of schedule.

The '25-26 budget delivers strong financial management for the people of this province, prioritizing affordability and delivering the necessary programs and services. However it also delivers much more, including 362 million in municipal revenue sharing, an increase of 6 per cent. This equates to annual revenue sharing of \$8.4 million for my community of Moose Jaw, an increase of over a half a million dollars versus a year ago.

The Ministry of Social Services will also receive an increase of \$70 million, or 4.5 per cent. This budget includes 9 million for the renovation of Sask Housing Corporation-owned properties, and a \$20 million increase in funding for community-based organizations across the government.

Over the past two years, funding for the Ministry of Social Services has created over 100 new emergency shelter spaces and over 150 new supportive housing spaces. They have created new street outreach services and a mobile workforce, servicing clients in more than 30 community-based organizations.

It doesn't end there, even if you wish it did. The budget continues to deliver. This budget includes further investment in capital projects that will enhance our provincial transportation system, such as twinning highways, upgrading passing lanes, improving corridors, and implementing additional enhancements to over 1000 kilometres of highways.

This budget also provides funding to support private sector initiatives and support future growth, including a new Young Entrepreneur Bursary to support youth entrepreneurship in the province, the creation of a new small- and medium-enterprise investment tax credit, and the introduction of the low productivity and reactivation oil well program.

In summary, this budget delivers for the people of Saskatchewan on affordability, on health care, education, and community safety.

Saskatchewan's strong financial management is reflected by our second-lowest net-to-GDP ratio and the second-highest credit rating in the country. These ratings impact our ability to borrow funds and the cost of borrowing money and serve as an important indicator of our financial strength. These measures position us to respond to global pressures with agility as needed. These rankings are based on the ratings by three independent credit rating agencies, certainly a more credible source of information regarding our financial position than the members opposite.

Saskatchewan's population has just topped one and a quarter million for the first time ever. Saskatchewan also had record employment levels, the third-highest value of goods exported in our history, the second-lowest inflation rate, and the second-lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Our government and our economy is poised to continue to grow. Our real GDP is projected to grow by 1.6 per cent, the third-highest growth in the country. As the Hon. Minister of Finance said last week, since 2007 our government has been guided by growth — growing our population, growing our communities, growing our exports, growing job opportunities, growing our

industries, and growing our economy.

[14:45]

We do not seek growth simply for the sake of growth, but for what it means to our province and its people. Growth increases revenue, which pays for the things that matter and on which we depend — health care, education, community safety, and more. A growing economy and a growing province mean a better quality of life for the one-and-a-quarter-million-and-counting people who now call Saskatchewan home. That's what this province delivers.

There will be challenges, but the creativity, perseverance, and resilience of our people combined with the dedication and expertise of this government, strengthened by our solid financial standing, will enable us to meet the challenges ahead and continue to deliver for you. That's what this province is about and that's what this budget is doing: delivering for you and everyone in this province. It's a great day to be alive in the province of Saskatchewan.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm my support for this budget and affirm I will not be supporting the amendment.

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

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's definitely quite the speech to follow. Lots of accusations levelled at our side here, but that's okay. That's sometimes the way we play the game in this House, I suppose, Mr. Speaker. But if misplacing priorities were a sport, Mr. Speaker, that government on that side would definitely medal.

I'd first like to start by thanking the good folks of Regina Northeast for their trust in me representing them. I know it's an honour to have this voice. And I know that they had a choice, and I will never forget that each and every day that I serve here in this building. As you said, Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of the sitting of this legislature, that our job is to be one of service and to be a servant. And I would definitely agree with that remark, and I thank you for that.

I'm often asked by people across this province, where exactly is Regina Northeast? And it's true; that term is pretty broad. And I do love to brag about our riding, Mr. Speaker, because it is pretty darn great, so I am going to give us a little tour here. Most people are familiar with Regina Northeast by the way they head into the city from east to west.

So as you head into the city going west, on your left you see one giant Costco, you see some awesome, awesome local businesses, and you see the riding of Regina Wascana Plains. Well on your right you start to see the early signs of Regina Northeast, beginning with houses, the Ahmadiyya mosque, amazing local restaurants, amazing local businesses, the hotels, and the steady rise of new homes and small businesses.

These are the growing communities like Eastside Estates, Eastgate, Creekside, Parkridge. These are places built by people who believe in this province and who believe in a better future, Mr. Speaker. And if you keep heading west, you pass through

Glencairn, Glencairn Village, Glen Elm, hit a little bit of Rothwell Place. These are neighbourhoods that have been shaped by resilience, that have been there for quite a long time, and where generations of families continue to thrive.

Indeed, Regina Northeast is diverse. It is determined, and it is deeply connected. This is the Regina Northeast that I know. Community groups, church and faith-based groups, volunteerism, a lot of activity on school community councils, and the Dewdney East Community Association, which does a lot of amazing, amazing work.

I'd also like to thank at this time, Mr. Speaker, my wonderful constituency assistant, Alex Lipp. I didn't have the time to introduce her to the House or to speak about her during the Throne Speech because I had not yet hired her, but she definitely keeps me on point. I am very disorganized without her. And as I'm sure many members can agree on both sides of this House, without our constituency assistants there helping us, our job becomes incredibly, incredibly difficult to meet the needs of everybody in the community.

And so while the job of an MLA might be difficult, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that the job of a constituency assistant and the breadth of talent that it requires is equally as difficult too. So I thank all the constituency assistants in this House today that serve both sides.

Mr. Speaker, I also represent a massive, massive industrial area of Saskatchewan that is the Ross Industrial area in my riding. Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of companies whose headquarters or whose offices are in our riding. Lots of people that are stationed there. Lots of public employers, lots of private employers, union members, people concerned about their employees.

Coles Notes, Mr. Speaker: I know a lot of people in the industry sector across a variety of industries and a lot of folks that are concerned. It's been a lot easier this time to represent my constituency as a whole because I am receiving the same concerned message from a lot of them. And that is that we have no contingency plan built into this budget. And I do believe, I do believe that that is a very valid concern. I do believe that it is the job of the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, to be providing a contingency plan against these tariffs. It is quite concerning for everybody that has their industry in my riding and for everybody that owns a business that we have no planned answers here.

And I know sometimes this seems like rhetoric from our side because you're hearing the same message again and again and again, but one of the reasons I wanted to describe my riding here today was to point out that we do kind of know what we're talking about. We do talk to a variety of people and yes, this is a major, major concern for them.

We have also sent a letter. My leader has sent a letter to the four possible future prime ministers of this country, holding them to account, asking them what they will do for industries here in Saskatchewan. And I thank her for doing that, Mr. Premier, since there are so many industries that I represent in the Ross Industrial area.

On to health and education, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my background, as you well know, I'm a teacher and so I know a lot

about teaching when I make my remarks. And today I'd like to specifically talk about where the areas of health and school and education and mental health sort of intersect, where they come together, because I sure as heck am lucky to have 26 colleagues on this side that have already pointed out some fabulous remarks so that I can move on with some additional information.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of a 17-year career, I have been threatened with a utility knife held 2 feet away from me, after expressing concerns about a student numerous times that were documented. But we were short on psychologists. I've had a kid lock himself in a community bathroom, threaten to take off his belt and hang himself, and refuse to open that door for minutes that seemed like hours. And there was no one to debrief me afterwards or my colleagues to make sure that we weren't traumatized by that incident, because apparently psychologists just don't exist in this budget for teachers either.

I'm 42 and I have students who have overdosed or committed suicide. That's not something that I ever want for other teachers, and that is why I'm speaking so strongly today. I've had to act like the psychologist because there's no psychologist in the school. Because I have a bachelor's degree in psychology that doesn't make me a clinical psychologist, Mr. Speaker. That's not my job.

So while it may have prevented me from facing some of the scars that some of my colleagues got — vicarious trauma, having to go on sick leave because of that — I still didn't like having to call parents to take their kids to the ER [emergency room] because they were self-harming at school or because I was worried about their life.

We need more school counsellors. We need more school psychologists. We need more help for schools in general because teachers aren't psychologists, and teachers should not be victims of vicarious trauma, and we don't need more teachers going on sick leave.

So no, Mr. Speaker, when the Sask Party government says that they are delivering for you, when it comes to mental health, when it comes to schools, when it comes to education, and when it comes to the needs of that community, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly I don't know what the heck they're talking about, and I'm tired of staying silent about it. Thank you.

Something else happened here in the legislature the other day, Mr. Speaker, that also greatly disturbed me. And I documented it here, so please pardon me, Mr. Speaker. I have changed my speech a lot over the past 24 hours just to make sure that we are bringing up what's relevant.

Mr. Speaker, something the government said made me lose a lot of respect for them yesterday. I've always respected an MLA's right to strongly attack ideas, even in loud format, even in heckling format. Of course I prefer that it's short and witty, but even major heckling attacks, I never really minded those so much.

Yesterday in fact I was explaining the difference to a group of school children when they asked why some members were being mean. Of course I defended both sides and I said, it's like a hockey game.

But yesterday the member from Regina Lakeview, the Leader of the Opposition, was told by the member from Batoche that she always needs to be chaperoned by the member of Regina Mount Royal. And while he's a great guy, Mr. Speaker, that comment is not only offensive to the women on this side of the House, it's offensive to the women on the other side of the House as well.

Is this what the Sask Party government really wants Saskatchewan residents to think, that male MLA chaperones should accompany female chaperones? Mr. Speaker, those remarks belong in some terrible movie from the 1940s that I don't want my niece to see.

No women in 2025 should ever be told such a remark that they are being babysat, that they need babysitting. I don't care whether they're a politician or not. And that remark really lowered the decorum of debate yesterday. It's something that I won't be forgetting. That remark was disgraceful and it was infantilizing and I wish it didn't happen. I wish it did not happen.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, I am from a workforce, a workforce that's 80 per cent women. When I was a teacher here in Saskatchewan, 75 to 80 per cent of the population that teaches are women. And I felt extremely dismissed by the Minister of Education at that time and by the Sask Party government in general when they said they understood education.

I'm equally disappointed here when I see the Sask Party government and the former minister of Education, the current Minister of Health, say that they understand women's health better than I do at times. And I'll explain. I know that's a pretty heavy remark, but I'll explain why, Mr. Speaker.

As you know, I like going door to door in my riding quite a bit. And every time I go, the most common thing that's brought up is problems with breast health, problems with biopsies. And while I applaud the government for making the effort to solve this situation, all the stakeholders have not been consulted and we haven't found solutions quickly enough, and that is my concern. My concern here is that we're not moving fast enough.

And I'd like to bring up a case in point. Glen Elm is one of the communities that I represent, one of the poorest areas of our city, Mr. Speaker. And one of the members there was given a letter. She is a breast cancer survivor, more than once, and something came up. She needed to get diagnosed. She needed to get on a plane to go to Calgary.

And yes, I know we've all heard this story before. But specifically, sending someone who can barely provide bread for breakfast in their riding, you know, sending that person on a plane to stay at a hotel, that wasn't an affordable or viable option for her. And that's a real problem because this wasn't just some small case. And I'm not bringing up something that happened eons ago; I'm bringing up something that happened recently.

My concern here . . . my concern is when I hear the Minister of Health thanking the women for reaching out and making this happen — thanking the women for reaching out and making this happen. We should never be thanking our patients . . . Sorry, I see the member waving across the way. I'm wondering if I did

something wrong there. Oh, you're waving up. Okay, thank you.

We should never be thanking people that are our patients for letting us know that they are suffering, Mr. Speaker. I don't want more constituents crying on the doorstep.

And when we see that there is now service — it was just brought up today — going from Regina to Maple Creek. Mr. Speaker, the member in front of me, the member from Athabasca yesterday gave a speech full of passion, talking about how his people were not getting their needs met in the North. I thought he made some very valid arguments. He had some very valid concerns, and I'm disappointed to see that they didn't make it into the responses that were issued here today. We didn't talk about how those health care problems were going to get addressed in the North, here today specifically when we were talking about breast care. We talked about going from Regina to Maple Creek.

Mr. Speaker, it's been said before. And I'm not going to rehash it, but on page 27 of the budget there is a cut to health care. But I do want to follow up on what the Deputy Leader of the House did say. When I say this government's budget surprised me, I'm not being facetious. This government's budget actually caught me off guard when it comes to health care. Education, I've been in that profession long enough I guess I wasn't surprised by the results, but when it comes to health care I was not expecting that.

We're delivering for who; we are delivering for few. And while my hon. members opposite have continued to say to teachers, to nurses, to paramedics, to doctors, to porters, to EAs [educational assistant], to everybody in the health care sector, and to everybody in the educational industry, "thank you for your dedication, thank you for your dedication, thank you for your dedication," I would love that to be followed up with some type of supports. Because instead we get into this thing of thoughts and prayers without us actually offering some kind of help, Mr. Speaker. And they do need help; they do.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleagues for their remarks in a variety of areas because that means that I can now talk about my critic roles. When it comes to francophone affairs, Mr. Speaker, this is the 13th year in a row that the word "Fransaskois" has been left out of the budget. This year the words "French" and "francophone" were not in the budget either.

And while it's nice to say that we care about the culture of a community, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, Creative Sask gave a lot of money to the francophone community for those endeavours. And when we cut 2 million from that budget, that makes me scared, especially when the francophone community was just asking for some of those documents to be translated and for a judging panel that understood exactly the needs of the francophone community.

I find that in general the area of francophone affairs is sometimes misunderstood. I don't know if it's just because people think it's about just language and culture, but I do find a lot of responses missing the mark. And I think that is why one of the major recommendations from that community was for all ministries to please work together going forward.

I'll name some of the ministries, Mr. Speaker, that are either federally funded — and that funding is then funnelled through

the provincial government — or provincially funded or that have asks that are non-fiscal in nature that relate to the Fransaskois portfolio. To date we have the Ministry of Advanced Education; the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety where language laws are concerned; the Ministry Responsible for the Status of Women; the Ministry of Education definitely; the Ministry of Health, as per article 23 of the Canadian Charter; the Ministry of Immigration and of Career Training; the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport; the Ministry of Trade and Export Development; the Ministry of Government Relations; and the Ministry Responsible for the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I mention these ministries is because that responsibility often gets placed on the person responsible for francophone affairs to meet the needs of the entire community. And I think that would be an unfair assessment and an unfair burden to put on the member opposite who has that portfolio.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to speak in French here today, but yesterday I was told, can I please revise my remarks to English? Not by anybody in this House, but by people from the French community because the message just wasn't getting across when it came to certain things. So while I'm a little bit less animated in English, and I apologize for that, I will definitely take that into account when I go through this.

Let's start by the archives. In Manitoba they have a special way to invest so that the French archives don't disappear. Here in Saskatchewan we don't have that funding, and I really need the ministries responsible to deal with that, because our written history is slowly disappearing because we're not preserving it in the right types of buildings.

Our elders that talk about the period of the lost generations, which is between 1920 and 1960, or 1968, when the KKK [Ku Klux Klan] came after the Ukrainian community, the francophone community, and several other minority communities in 161 small communities as per Bill Waiser's textbook, *Keeping Canada British*. Mr. Speaker, that point in time, that era needs to be looked at.

I have asked the member opposite if she could please consult with me and gather some of these voices before they disappear altogether. Because the lasting legacy from that time period is that an estimated 60 to 80 per cent of the population is going around with French heritage, but because of those couple of lost generations, they can't speak their language because it was forbidden at school.

And even with the schools that we have now, the populations are huge and some are falling into ruin. And, Mr. Speaker, in small communities where you have the English school or the French immersion school that is brand and shiny and new, but you don't have the equivalent on the French side, when you have services there that aren't in line with what is being asked, well then sometimes parents or students make the choice to go to the other school. This is especially the case when we're looking at long-distance class offerings.

So when long-distance classrooms came online, they were quickly added to a number of the small francophone schools around the province. The problem is that's not necessarily good

for the mental health of students in grades 7 to 12, to be in front of computers all the time learning. I don't know about you, Mr. Speaker, but when I was a student it would be very tempting if I didn't have a live person in front of me to not do my work. I mean it's hard enough as an adult to take online classes, so I think that one's obvious.

The Collège Mathieu and La Cité, I would like to actually acknowledge and thank the government for building up spaces in Regina and coming up in Prince Albert to meet the needs. But without strategic financing those institutions can't grow. And for those in this House that don't know, we do have sort of a French equivalent of SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] here in Saskatchewan. It's a brilliant program.

I know one of the asks has been that we consider things like ag programs so that people that come from small towns who are francophone, if we had those agricultural programs, you know, they don't have to leave the province and risk never coming back. So when I hear the government talk about programming and post-secondary programming, I would really, really appreciate it if the Minister Responsible for Advanced Ed took that into consideration as well.

When it comes to daycare spaces, a lot of our kids are losing their cultural identity because we don't have enough spaces to accommodate them, both physically and both in terms of personnel to meet those needs. There is difficulty getting health care in French. And yes, unfortunately there are still some people that need that health care in French. More specifically and to that point, Mr. Speaker, this is often in the area of mental health.

[15:15]

The best way I can explain that is this. If your primary language is English, you obviously don't want to go to court for something in French where you don't understand what's happening. Well when you are dealing with very difficult, very traumatizing emotional situations, if you don't have somebody there who can speak that language and you have a tremendous amount of difficulty speaking English, it doesn't go over very well.

And that is one of my concerns also with the move towards virtual health care, Mr. Speaker, because we haven't necessarily gone and consulted all the psychologists, at least in the francophone community, that could come and help out these people. And so if I see lack of consultation in that sector, then I do have concerns about the process as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, while the Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health yesterday said that when she was going through the budget, she was going to talk about one-third of the entire budget because that was the area under her jurisdiction. My concern with that, Mr. Speaker, is that that is a tremendous amount of work to be putting on one person. And with somebody that does have a background in psychology and with two parents that are clinical psychologists, I know that we are missing some of the stakeholders.

I do appreciate some of the comments that the minister made yesterday explaining when and why we use certain programs. But, Mr. Speaker, I've also seen my parents comment on terrible situations where virtual care did fail people because, Mr.

Speaker, when people are at their worst, the last thing they want is care, and then one of the best ways to avoid care is to fake it. And unless you're a professional, that can be pretty easy to miss.

I have had to call mobile crisis on a few of my friends before because they have said that they were just fine. And they hated me for it in the moment, but it was because I knew they were not. And so I have concerns about the referral process and the intake when it comes to those care beds. Because it is very hard unless the person is right there in front of you to determine what appropriate care is needed. Because often, in the most critical of cases where they don't necessarily want help, it's very easy to say, "No, I'm okay. It's not that bad," and to not get that help.

The last thing I would ask is, I would ask when it comes to the francophone portfolio that the ministry responsible for parks, culture, youth and recreation please look at putting French plaques at monuments that are important for French Canadian history. I know there's been a lot of meetings around this and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this is a very big ask. It doesn't cost a lot of money. It's important to the culture. There are some fairly tragic things that happened at certain times, and to me that one's at least a no-brainer.

Moving on, Mr. Speaker, the other portfolio of course that I represent is human rights with a focus on Pride. Now I just got back from a visit up in P.A., and I've been visiting some other organizations, speaking to their members about how they feel about things. And unfortunately talks have not gone that great. Many members express a concern that they feel ghosted once again by the people that are supposed to represent them.

And some of the institutions that I invited here to listen to the budget actually said that they would prefer not to come, and that concerns me. That concerns me. Why? Because this House is supposed to represent all people. This is supposed to be their House. I'm their servant, not the other way around. But they don't want to be here for the budget because they don't want to have anything to do with us.

Another person who did come here, I was grateful. They were from the community. I said, I don't see you in the budget; I'm sorry. They said, don't worry; we're never included in the budget. We're never included in the budget. That's a pretty sad statement.

And just recently the city of Saskatoon declared itself a safe space for people of all gender identities. I think that was a really good step for Saskatoon to take. And yet I hear from other Pride communities that calling Saskatchewan a safe place would unfortunately be misleading because it doesn't feel safe to them, not with government's recent legislation and some of the stated priorities.

I think everybody needs to feel safe. And I guess if there were a common theme to my remarks today, Mr. Speaker, it would be that. There's a lot of witty replies and witty retorts I could do about the budget and about how it doesn't address health care, it doesn't address education, doesn't address affordability. But at the end of the day, we all want to feel safe in one way or another.

And I think there's a lot of people in this province not feeling safe right now, whether that's because we don't have something

to help with tariffs, whether that's because we don't have something to make them secure in their own communities, whether that's because they are afraid that health care won't be there when they're aging or when they're women or in any situation, or whether they're afraid that their kids are not getting a proper education.

I don't want the people of Saskatchewan to constantly live in fear. I want them to feel safe, and I think we need to do more here as legislators to provide that feeling of safety. Because at the end of the day, isn't that what we're elected to do? As servants, aren't we supposed to be keeping people safe? And, Mr. Speaker, I think that needs to be one of our goals, because the mental load on families right now is absolutely tremendous. And I don't think they can take any more feelings of uncertainty.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget put forward. I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member of Regina Mount Royal — who is definitely not, Mr. Speaker, somebody who needs to babysit me.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Blaine McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour to be able to stand in this House, and it's an honour every day to walk up the stairs that lead to this place. And I hope I never ever lose that. It will be something that I continue to look forward to each day as I enter.

I want to start by just giving a thanks to colleagues, both new and returning. I see energy and enthusiasm to build and protect our great province, and it's contagious. Thank you very much. And a word of thanks to our caucus staff as well for the support and encouragement. Ang, you've got a great team. It's a pleasure to walk down the halls and notice the vitality and the enthusiasm and the genuine camaraderie that exists there. It's wonderful.

And I want to thank my constituency staff as well, Brandy and Kelly, keeping me on time, on track, and not forgetting too many things. That's a bit of a challenge for me. And thank you especially, Brandy, for some of your research that you did for me in putting this speech together.

And last of all I want to thank my family. My beautiful wife of 43 and a half years, with me every step of the way and so supportive. Thank you. And lastly, my family, it's the reason that my feet hit the floor every day, making sure that I seek to leave this province in a better position than I found it. So I commit to doing that, making sure that this place will be sustainable for many generations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, most know me as a dairy farmer, a dairy farmer in Saskatchewan for over 43 years. And my world has been rather consumed by the industry of agriculture, specifically dairy agriculture. When you drive to town for a supper out, you think about picking up parts. When a piece of land comes for sale, you evaluate its worth. When new technology, new vaccinations, new equipment come on the market, your thoughts and your actions are all about your business.

How will it fit? Would it work? How can I improve it? How can I grow it? How can I make a business the next generation wants

to take over and be successful? How can I do all this for the lowest cost and maintaining profitability, all while providing excellent care for the animals, for the infrastructure, for the environment, and honouring the valuable employees that call our farm home?

It occurs to me, Mr. Speaker, that our government is really quite similar. How can our government improve Saskatchewan, grow Saskatchewan, diversify our economy so that we can continue to provide the necessary revenue to deliver for you, the people of Saskatchewan? Delivering affordability, health care, education, safer communities, and strong financial management. This budget does all this and so much more. It continues the guarantee of Saskatchewan being the best place in Canada to live, work, and to raise a family.

Now the people of Saskatchewan entrusted our government with the historic win on October 28th, 2024 — a fifth straight mandate to serve the people of Saskatchewan. 52.3 per cent of those who voted supported and entrusted our party to guide this province.

Now members from across the aisle like to somehow refer to our win as our first loss. Granted we have been asked to be better by the people of Saskatchewan, and we will deliver. However 52 to 40, however you slice it, is a win. And so we commit to delivering for you, the people of Saskatchewan. We will never stop advocating for Saskatchewan's economic interests to ensure that we remain the greatest place to live in Canada.

As always, our government is committed to maintaining a solid fiscal balance sheet. The government is accountable for the transparent, effective, and efficient use of public resources and we will do that. We will deliver.

Now members opposite have other ideas on how to grow our economy. Well they voted against pipelines that take Saskatchewan oil to tidewater. They voted against removing tariff on Saskatchewan goods to Europe. They voted against the Keystone XL pipeline, which was to be made with Saskatchewan steel. And they voted against the Northern Gateway pipelines. They called the fight against carbon tax a pointless crusade, repeatedly telling us to stop advertising in Dubai and to shutter and close trade offices.

Our government will support Saskatchewan oil being moved across our country by building pipelines. Our government will support Evraz steel and making the steel for those pipelines. Our government will continue to fight the carbon tax, both the consumer carbon tax and the shadow carbon tax, which has potential to be even scarier than what we've just gotten rid of.

And our government will continue to work with countries like Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and China, and so many more so that Saskatchewan products can continue to be sold across the world and we continue the push to diversify our export market.

Now our first trade office was opened in 2010 with a partnership between BC [British Columbia], Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and we have continued to add to that number and never look back.

[15:30]

Now it is obvious when you look at the record, His Majesty's Loyal Opposition have done everything they could to denigrate and completely call into question the mere existence of these trade offices. Until very recently, that is. Mr. Speaker, I'd like the members opposite to listen to these quotes. April 7th, 2001, the member from Regina South Albert, formerly Regina University . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You'll like this quote:

. . . the government is spending nine and a half million dollars more to establish four international trade offices, cushy foreign patronage postings with little to show for the shrouded work.

And another, Mr. Speaker. November 8th, 2023 from the same member:

The minister is already spending millions of dollars on the trade offices in Dubai, and now he wants to spend a million dollars more on the most expensive junket in the history of Saskatchewan. Talk about tired and out of touch . . .

Now, Mr. Speaker, since I came into this Legislative Assembly, I learned very quickly that the most used phrase in this Legislative Assembly was the phrase "tired and out of touch." And I started to take a recording of how many times that phrase was used. And I'm here to report that approximately 400 times that phrase was used since I was elected in August 10th of '23. We're going to bring that back in just a moment.

Let's talk about Dubai, Mr. Speaker. What is just one of the outcomes of COP28 [Conference of the Parties 28] held in Dubai? More than 20 countries signed a declaration to triple nuclear energy capacity globally by 2050. Fuel for the world is what Saskatchewan has. The world's highest grade uranium reserves are located in the Athabasca Basin in northern Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would submit to you that the only people who have been tired and out of touch are the members opposite, who only recently grasped the fact that we must continue to diversify our economy by finding more outlets for all of our exports. The food, fuel, and fertilizer export that the world needs can only increase in volume and quantity if we get out and tell our story.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm here today to say that I'm happy that the blinders have been removed from the eyes of the members opposite. Terrific sayings in the English language that those who try to learn and understand our language have the most difficulty grasping, and oftentimes we use those sayings to get to the obvious truth. But sometimes the history of the saying is misunderstood.

Now many here would know that blinders are simply pieces of leather put on the bridles of horses, especially on teams of horses. And the purpose is to restrict peripheral vision and force the team of horses to focus only on what is directly in front of them. So a person having blinders on is limited in their outlook. They can't look at an issue from all sides. They are looking from one limited direction. Looking only at the cost ignores the reality that you must, Mr. Speaker, sow to reap.

I can't help but mention what a neighbouring constituent mentioned about six months ago. His words to me were, if the

NDP would come alongside the Sask Party, so much more could get done in our province.

I'm happy to report that this, maybe, maybe this is finally happening, as the Leader of the Opposition just today said on several occasions that she agreed with the Premier. But I'll say another saying, Mr. Speaker: the proof will be in the pudding. And also, can a leopard really change its spots? I don't think so. Every now and then the true colour comes out.

So back to sowing and reaping. Now farmers understand the concept that Jesus used to teach his disciples. Despite what seems at times to be impossible odds, the seed must be planted. Trade offices around the world put that concept into practice. When I mention sowing, Mr. Speaker, I'm conscious of the fact that very soon an enormous economic driver will soon be under way in our province, seeding up 40 per cent of Canada's cultivated acres right here in our province of Saskatchewan — 40 million acres will be sown in a very short time frame. And I trust that the women and men that are putting the seed into the ground and working the long hours will experience safety in all they do and the blessing of rain.

And fertilizers are only one of the required inputs into this vast undertaking. And fertilizer, especially potash, is one of our richest natural resources. I want to take a look at the potash industry in Saskatchewan. Potash in our province was discovered near Radville in 1942 by a company conducting petroleum exploration. Potash, often known as pink gold, a critical mineral that drives our Saskatchewan economy. Saskatchewan is the world's number one and the most sustainable producer of potash, annually producing almost one-third of global production. Sustainably produced half of the usual emissions that are found around the world.

Now I'm not sure if all members are aware, but potash for agricultural use — fertilizer — isn't needed as much in Saskatchewan as it is around the world. We have enough naturally occurring in our soils so that most fertilizer recommendations in Saskatchewan contain only small levels of potash. Increasingly more, but small amounts.

So what does that mean? It means we must export it. We must, and we do to over 40 countries, with the largest being the United States, Brazil, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia. There are 11 potash mines in our province exporting more than 22 million tonnes of potash annually.

In 2023, \$3.5 billion was invested in capital and \$2.4 billion in taxes paid to provincial, federal, and municipal governments. And on top of that, 6,300 employees and another 7,500 contractors work for the potash industry, all paying income taxes on the good wages they are paid.

And I'd also note, Mr. Speaker, that for every direct job in the potash industries, there are another two jobs in supporting industries for every direct job. Saskatchewan potash companies pay over 10 different taxes to provincial and federal and municipal governments. Some of these taxes are based on the amount of potash mined and the price that potash is sold for, so the higher the potash price, the higher the taxes paid.

And according to StatsCan data, Saskatchewan mining

companies pay more in royalties. And this is really important. I want everyone to hear this. Saskatchewan mining companies pay more in royalties and taxes to the federal and provincial governments than all the other jurisdictions in Canada combined. That's a testament to the abundance of the natural resources we have in our province. And again, what the world needs and what our trade offices are helping to promote and sell is the resources of Saskatchewan and the manufacturing that goes along with that.

This past February, I along with many of my colleagues, we were given a tour of the Mosaic Belle Plaine potash mine, the first and the largest successful solution mine in the world, processing a very unique white product. Normally think of potash as pink, but in their case white because of the solution mining. In 1964 Kalium Chemicals first began production at that site. That's 60-plus years of production. Now Saskatchewan has the largest and richest deposits in the world, and we have the ability to supply the needs for farmers for hundreds of years to come.

Just last week, the member from Regina South Albert was boasting of past leaders and premiers that she listed. Quite a list. And I'm quite sure it was an oversight, but she forgot to mention that two out of two Sask Party premiers will be seen as remarkable leaders themselves that ushered in an age of "watch what we can do," instead of the doom and gloom that existed for far too long.

For example, in 2017 Brad Wall was at the opening ceremony for a new potash mine in Saskatchewan, K+S. This \$4.1 billion investment took approximately five years to build and was the first greenfield potash mine in 40 years. This project was the largest job creator in the province during those construction years. Now K+S had choices in other countries, yet they chose Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. May I submit that stability and predictability under a Sask Party government brought them back.

Mr. Speaker, that really speaks for itself. If you attempt to nationalize and quite literally steal from the investment others have made, then you can expect investment to dry up, in this case for 40 years.

In fact, a quote from Norbert Steiner, K+S Group CEO, I quote:

The Legacy project is of the utmost importance for us. This is why we are investing massive amounts of effort, energy, and capital into this project. We believe that the Legacy project is an investment in the future of our company, an investment in the people of Saskatchewan, and most importantly an investment in a sustainable future.

The minister of Energy and Resources at the time, Tim McMillan:

For the first time in 40 years, a brand new potash mine will be built in our province. The jobs and economic development from this project will continue to grow our economy and keep the Saskatchewan advantage.

And so it has. Now let's go back to those questions. How can our government improve Saskatchewan, grow Saskatchewan, and continue to deliver for you? It's because of our strong and growing economy that allows this to happen.

Now the member from Regina Mount Royal said recently that this budget isn't worth the paper it was written on. With that one single statement, the work of a dedicated group of Finance officials was completely disparaged. I have no problem taking that hit myself as a member and us on this side, but our Finance officials worked very diligently to bring the vital information to bear, often in a short period of time, delivering what we had asked for in terms of various scenarios. And I want to express my gratitude for the excellent effort given in such a compressed period of time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, to speak to the contents of that budget based on that foundation of knowing where revenue needs to come from to support it, we want to ensure the revenue is growing and strong. And that allows for the themes of this budget, *Delivering for You*, and affordability being the first one. And affordability comes from having a balanced budget based on the revenue that we've been given to make sure that conditions exist for people to live and have success in this province.

I want to talk a little bit in regards to the affordability and what the municipal revenue sharing has done. It's a fairly recent program actually when you consider the length of time of the province. It's only in 2007 and '08 that that was envisioned. And in that time period, \$4.6 billion has been put in the coffers of municipalities, towns, and villages and cities across our province.

Now during the election campaign I often heard that cities, urban communities, are being asked to do so much more with so much less. I don't see where the "less" part comes in that equation. There's more been given. Yes, more needs to be done, but the affordability side of it is being provided with the municipal revenue sharing, up to 20 per cent of some budgets across the province.

Affordability. Bringing the largest personal income tax reduction in the province since 2008, which means that an additional 54,000 Saskatchewan residents will no longer be paying provincial income tax — an additional 54,000 added to those that are already on that list.

[15:45]

Continuous and flash glucose monitors. It's a health initiative and also an affordability issue. You see, monitors are going to be fully covered for eligible children and adults up to 24 years old and seniors age 65 and over. And I had several constituents ask for this, and we delivered. Here's a quote from Joan King, director of government affairs for Diabetes Canada. And here's the quote:

Diabetes Canada welcomes the Saskatchewan government's expansion of the CGM program. These devices are life changing for many people, regardless of age. This expansion will enable more Saskatchewanians to benefit from a CGM device to enhance their blood glucose management and reduce their risk of short- and long-term complications, including severe hypoglycemia.

And so we have the effective management of diabetes, which will save treatment dollars and save dollars to people that require that, making it more affordable for them.

Making the PST [provincial sales tax] rebate on new home construction permanent provides a rebate of up to 42 per cent of the provincial sales tax paid on the purchase of a newly constructed home with a total purchase price of less than 550,000.

Saskatchewan housing benefit helps eligible Saskatchewan renters whose households spend 35 to 45 per cent more of their income on rent and utilities. Again, making housing more affordable.

The graduate retention program, which I love to speak about, increased this year to a maximum benefit of up to 24,000 of tuition fees paid by eligible post-secondary graduates who continue to live and work in Saskatchewan and graduate on or after October 1st, 2024. This program has benefited more than 85,000 graduates over its lifetime, and it's not going away, saving them collectively over \$801 million. And when you start out as a young family graduating from school, the expenses are great. A helping hand is required and we're providing it.

Here for you in education, Mr. Speaker, an increase of 130 million to fund a new teacher collective agreement and address the pressures of growing student enrolment and the challenges facing today's classrooms, including the expansion of specialized classroom support to 50 more this year based on the success of the eight pilot projects last year.

Preventative maintenance and renewal. What is it? It's increased by 30 per cent or \$15 million to a total of 65 million to maintain the existing facilities. Many school boards were asking for it and it's been delivered.

A capital budget, Mr. Speaker, that I'll just highlight a few items: 28.5 million for relocatable classrooms, along with all the other capital renewable projects that many others have talked about on this side of the House, because you cannot reduce the complexity in the classroom if you don't have enough classroom space. And so we commit to doing that.

Here for you in health care, just a couple items: enhancing kidney health programs and dialysis services by adding 30 full-time positions to meet patient demand closer to home in Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Fort Qu'Appelle, Tisdale, Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon.

And expanding access to mental health and addictions service and care by delivering on the commitment to add 500 addictions treatment spaces across the province, doubling the addictions treatment capacity in the public health system. And we won't stop there, Mr. Speaker.

And supports for 65 enhanced permanent full-time nursing positions in 30 rural and northern locations across the province, building on the 250 positions that were hired over the past few years to improve nursing stability and reduce the reliance on contract nurses. And yes, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing significant reduction in the use of contract nurses. We're going to continue investments to support the province's efforts to recruit and retain doctors so that everyone in Saskatchewan has access to a front-line care provider.

And, Mr. Speaker, here for you in regards to community safety,

in the upcoming 2025 budget in this fiscal year we will invest the following in community safety: increased funding for RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] operations, hiring approximately 100 new municipal police officers, hiring 14 new safer communities and neighbourhoods officers personnel, and the hiring of 50 new positions for the Saskatchewan marshals service. That's an impressive list. And on top of that, the expansion and completion of the Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

Now I want to talk about roads and safe roads within our province. More than 1000 kilometres of improvements on provincial highways, work that has already begun on replacing — and this one is significant — the Highway 1 and No. 2 overpass at Moose Jaw, which I drive through every day, happy to slow down to the 40 kilometres per hour because it's a construction zone right as we speak. This is a \$33.7 million project that will be completed by end of 2026, based on weather conditions obviously. And it's going to dramatically improve safety and trucking efficiency on a major route which links our export-based economy with Canada and the world.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I conclude I want to thank the Minister of Finance, the member from Rosetown-Delisle, for the careful deliberation and attention to the detail shown in the preparation of this, his first budget. I'm happy, happy to support his motion to approve this budget, seconded by the member from White City-Qu'Appelle, and I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

Matt Love: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet and to, you know, actually maybe try and refute some of the accusations that were just levied at me in a very polite way that we're in fact tired and out of touch. On this side of the Assembly, we all had a good chuckle at that. And hopefully by the end of my time on my feet, we'll maybe offer a different perspective than what we heard in a very polite tone from the other side from the member opposite.

Before I dig into the meat and potatoes of responding to this budget, Mr. Speaker, I'll start as many of us do with some thank yous and some congratulations. I'm going to start with family. I just want to say thank you to my family, my support network at home — most of all my beautiful wife, Emma, who just does so much. I know it's something that we often talk about and share, and I try and do it every time in one of these speeches. Mr. Speaker, we talk about how much we need that support at home to do this work.

We've got a busy family like so many. Three kids, two dogs, and a cat at home, and my wife, Emma, is there holding it all down with incredible confidence and grace and care for our family unit. She does so much when I'm away day to day, and I'm probably not even aware of half of it. So I want to say thank you to Emma for everything that she does to make my work here possible. She's there supporting our three wonderful kids, and I appreciate their support as well.

My daughter Etta is doing great. She's 17. I had the opportunity in December, as you know, Mr. Speaker, to travel with her to the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf, where she represented

our country at the senior world championships for weightlifting. She was the only person in the world that . . . She was the only competitor in the world who went to that competition as a child and needed a chaperone. But I was surprised that they didn't call my seatmate for that. They called on me and I was happy to go. I even got a little certificate for my achievements in Bahrain, which was really just supporting her, and we had a lot of fun together.

We were brutally sick right before we left. A bad stomach flu ripped through our home. So she didn't go there, you know, feeling 100 per cent, but she had a great competition. She ended up finishing seventh in the world, which is Canada's best finish at the senior worlds, which was truly the next . . . Next to the Olympics, that's the next biggest competition in the sport, and so very proud of her.

And I mention for folks on either side of the Assembly here, she'll have a chance to lift in front of a home audience, which is rare. Usually I have to travel internationally to watch her compete, but Saskatoon is hosting the Canadian junior nationals at the Nutana curling rink June 6th, 7th, and 8th. So if you want to see her lift and some of the other top lifters, young lifters under 21 across Canada, that'll be a great event, and I encourage everybody to get out there and watch.

My middle child, Tom, is growing like a weed, Mr. Speaker. He's now the second tallest in our family. My days are numbered. He's coming for me here soon. He used to be eye to eye with his mom, and he now looks down to kiss her goodbye and to say goodnight. And he's growing like a weed. And I think when I talked about my family in response to the Throne Speech, I talked about him just starting his first year of basketball. And you know, I want to say thank you to Saskatoon Minor Basketball. They do such a great job. He had his first year in the sport. So you know, starting later than others. But he had just such a great year. Great coaches, great teammates. And the thing that I'm most proud of with him is just the incredible attitude and effort that he brings. He's always dedicated to improving himself and improving his teammates, and those are qualities that will serve him well for the rest of his life. And so I'm very proud of him and his achievements this year.

And then our youngest, Myles, he's always making our family laugh with his silly faces and his goofy dance moves, which he certainly didn't get from me. But I've really enjoyed watching him as a learner in his own right. You get to see who your kids are as people. The older they get, they kind of reveal more of those qualities that they bring, and he's just a sincere learner. I get to watch him every Sunday afternoon in his swim lessons, and it's just wonderful to see him doing his best, trying his best and always listening so intently to his instructor. And he's such a wonderful young guy.

I want to say thank you and congratulations to some of our staff. I'm going to start with my constituency assistant. Kaytee's been on mat leave since the end of February, and I'm proud to say that on Friday, she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Felix Henry. She had a bit of an unanticipated stay at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital before Felix arrived. And I'm happy to say that she received incredible care, and she's thankful for all of the health care workers there and all of the staff there at the hospital. She was hoping for a different start to her leave before Felix

arrived, but you know, we don't always get to choose how that works. And so she spent some time at the hospital. They're home now, and she's very thankful for the staff. And we're just thankful that Felix is here, he's healthy, and they're home as a family of four spending quality together.

I also want to congratulate a couple staff who have spent some time working in my office, who have come to work with our caucus operation. That's Cathlia and Aryn. We're so fortunate to have them join our team. These two women have incredible gifts and talents, and I just want to formally welcome them to our caucus team. They've got so much to offer, and they're hitting the ground running.

I also want to thank my officemates. In Saskatoon Eastview we've moved our office out of Market Mall and chosen a new location, and we're sharing space with my colleagues from Saskatoon Southeast and Saskatoon Stonebridge. We've got this great working environment there where our staff get to collaborate and work together, and it's just been a great experience so far, and I'm really enjoying that.

And I've got a funny story that members opposite will enjoy. We're in the building where Don Morgan used to have his office. Don Morgan, you know, was a legend, was here for a long time, and endured a lot of jokes about how long he served in this Chamber. Mr. Speaker, you won't believe it. We have not been able to change the outdoor signs on our office yet because when the company came to change the signs, I kid you not, they couldn't get the sign down because the material that they used was so old that they couldn't get it off the building. They actually said that they don't use that kind of material anymore and they don't know how to remove it.

So we have to just wait while Don Morgan's sign is still up on the side of our building on Taylor Street. So a little shout-out there to a former colleague of the members opposite and of all of us. Hopefully that sign comes down soon.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say thank you to my constituents in Saskatoon Eastview. I want to say thank you to everyone who has taken time to reach out with a phone call, stopping by our office, all the folks who have emailed. We've heard from a lot of folks, and I've been honoured to chat with a number of constituents since we adjourned back in December.

[16:00]

And there's some top issues that they're writing to me about. I want to acknowledge those concerns that my constituents are bringing to my office. Number one, I think, what we've been hearing a lot about is the concern for the end of affordable child care. We've been inundated: dozens, perhaps hundreds of emails and calls, folks concerned about losing affordable child care. And I want to thank each and every person who's contacted my office to bring this concern to me as their representative. And I want to let them know that my colleagues and I are absolutely going to continue representing those concerns until that deal is signed, until we know that there's a future of affordable child care here in Saskatchewan.

I also have received dozens, dozens of emails over the concern of the loss of 80 EAs in Saskatoon. We know that this loss of

EAs is one of the results . . . You know, and I'm not going to put it fully at the feet of this government. But what I will say is we've got a situation in our classrooms where many school boards are relying on these supports through Jordan's principle to deliver the services that our Indigenous students need and deserve in school because they're simply not there, as a result of underfunding from this Sask Party government.

And we know it's not just hurting 80. This isn't about 80 kids; this is about hundreds. We know this impacts every student. We know this is about 80 education workers who lost their jobs. This is about 80 children, probably many more than that, who worked with these 80 EAs as well as all of their classmates. It's impacting hundreds of families. And I have heard about this in my office, and I want to thank everyone who has contacted my office to share their concerns.

And finally I've heard a lot, Mr. Speaker, about the outrage, the outrage at the threats to our sovereignty and our way of life from our closest neighbour and ally, and the shocking inability of this Premier and this government to name the source of those threats coming from President Donald Trump. This should be easy. It should be easy when somebody threatens our way of life and our nationhood to name that source, to name that source and condemn it. It shouldn't take all the attempts that we've brought to this Assembly from our leader and from our side. It should be easy.

And I've heard the Premier say that he doesn't think that words are important on this matter. I disagree, and I would encourage the Premier and members opposite to maybe ask all of those thousands, millions of Ukrainians who have been displaced, who have lost everything due to an illegal invasion by a Russian dictator. And I wonder if we asked them, if they would say that we should take Donald Trump's words seriously, because President Donald Trump has taken actions to remove aid to Ukrainians, to cease intelligence briefings, and now to provide economic support for Russia, and we know what that economic support will be used for. So I think that Donald Trump's words do matter, and we should denounce them.

Mr. Speaker, I also wonder if we were to ask some of the other groups that President Donald Trump has attacked with words and then followed up with actions. We might think of groups like those in public education. He shared words, and then he followed through with actions in dismantling supports for public education. What about queer and gender-diverse people? He followed up words with actions attacking those individuals. What about judges, lawyers, journalists? I think that they would all caution us that we need to take what President Trump says seriously and that words absolutely do matter.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fact that our Premier is so challenged in denouncing President Donald Trump by name is appalling. And the people of Saskatchewan are watching, and they're worried, and they're angry. And on this side of the House, we have a leader who we couldn't be more proud of because she is the one in this room and in every room denouncing Donald Trump by name. She is the one in this province who's standing up for our values, for our people and our country.

And this, Mr. Speaker, brings me to this year's budget. Mr. Speaker, this budget doesn't give any comfort to the many people

who are worried about their jobs and their way of life right here in Saskatchewan. Whether that be in industry or in business, in public service, folks are worried. They're worried about their future, and this budget simply is not focused on the future. It's not focused on protecting what people hold dear here in Saskatchewan.

There's no plan for our economy, and there are no measures to protect against tariffs. And folks are paying attention to this and they're worried. And I'd like to read maybe just a few things. There's not much else to be said that hasn't been said yet by folks inside the Chamber, but I want to read just a few of the headlines that we've seen, Mr. Speaker, over the last week here in Saskatchewan.

I'm going to start with one from yesterday: "Stakeholders also puzzled by lack of tariff supports in Saskatchewan budget." So it's not just us. We see folks reporting out there in an opinion column that other folks are saying this too. This isn't just a discussion in here. It's happening province-wide. Folks are puzzled by the lack of tariff response in the Saskatchewan budget.

On the front page today of the *Leader-Post*, the headline was, "No backup goalie in Sask budget." So we got a hockey reference, and that's going to help all of us understand the implication. When there's no backup plan, you could find yourself in a terrible situation. That was the front page above the fold on the *Leader-Post* this morning: no backup goalie in the Saskatchewan budget.

Looking at last week, another headline: "Saskatchewan surplus budget an instant classic work of fiction." That should raise some concerns for members opposite when their budget is being skewered that badly in headlines of media outlets across this province.

And I've got one more from last week: "Saskatchewan budget believability enters tooth fairy territory. Saskatchewan's billion-dollar misses in its budget the last few years have severely eroded the credibility of the release of its annual estimates."

So it's not just us. This should give members opposite pause as they stand and clap and pat themselves on the back for a budget that is being skewered by the public in this province. And it's hard to imagine the bravado that they bring in here in this Assembly when folks out there are simply having a hard time accepting what they're selling.

Mr. Speaker, I'll move on to a few comments on education. Now since we adjourned in December, I've had the honour in the last few weeks and months of meeting with several school boards, elected leaders, administrators, teachers, families, parents, education workers, and so many more. And I want to say there is so much good work being done on the front lines in Saskatchewan schools.

And I want to share one good story from this weekend, Mr. Speaker. And it wasn't something from the classroom, okay, and there's so much good work happening in the classroom. It was from Hoopla. And I went out — I only got to see one game — and there were so many, you know, small schools, big schools competing from 1A up to 5A across the province, but I only went

to the last game, Mr. Speaker, and I watched the 5A boys' final between Holy Cross and Walter Murray. It was incredible. Incredible.

And the story of this game goes back several months, as these two teams have battled against each other all year. A week ago they met in the Saskatoon city final, and with 0.9 seconds on the clock, Walter Murray missed a free throw and then got a tap-in to win the game at the buzzer — city champs. It was the kind of finish that you'd see as the highlight of the night. It was incredible.

A week later they meet in the provincial final. And wouldn't you know, this time around it was Holy Cross, with a last-second buzzer beater, to beat Walter Murray. Two games, two buzzer beaters, incredible sportsmanship, incredible athleticism. The display that they put on from these student athletes is something that we can all be proud of in this province.

But something that I noticed is that when the game was done and the awards were given out, there were teachers and all these green Hoopla T-shirts all over the gym cleaning up, rolling up banners, stacking chairs, putting the bleachers away, and they all came out. And I bet, Mr. Speaker, those teachers were there all weekend long in schools all across the city volunteering their time to make this event happen.

And so I want to give some credit to teachers who have consistently shown up. They've consistently shown up in support of their students and communities. And it was just a year ago when they were here on budget day, thousands of them on the steps of this legislature, advocating for supports that their students need in the classroom. And teachers have shown up for their students.

Now we have a lot of new members in this Assembly on both sides, but I want to remind them of what this budget means in the context of the fight over the last decade, and the work that teachers have done to earn, fighting tooth and nail for the supports that they know their students need each and every day in our classrooms.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is the part of my response that I have entitled "Be careful what you clap for." As new members opposite celebrate their budget, I want to remind them that just over 10 years ago our province was first in the country in how we fund education — first in the country. And for 10 years that was eroded, year after year, and they eventually led us to their education failures in the Sask Party government to last in the country.

But do you know what's interesting, Mr. Speaker? For each of those 10 years, members opposite — maybe not all of these, some of these — stood and clapped for those budgets. They clapped and patted themselves on the back for budgets that led us to last place in the country.

Now if you look at just the years since that Premier took office in 2018, the numbers are stark. Adjusted for inflation alone, inflation alone, funding has fallen by nearly \$100 million. When enrolment increases are factored in we see that funding has fallen by nearly 15 per cent just since that Premier took office. That amounts to roughly \$1,400 for every student in our schools, Mr.

Speaker, \$1,400 just since 2018. And for each one of those budgets, for each year that those budgets were introduced, the members opposite stood and clapped and patted themselves on the back for a job well done.

So what's the impact of this disastrous track record? Well we know now, students graduating high school this year, students in grade 12 are receiving \$1,855 less in funding compared to when they started kindergarten. \$1,855 less compared to when they entered kindergarten if we adjust for inflation and enrolment, as we should.

Mr. Speaker, during just the last four years we've seen, by the government's own numbers that they publish, 15,595 more students. And during that same time period we have 86 fewer classroom teachers. Again that's over 15,000 new students, 86 fewer classroom teachers. And each year that contributed to that failure, government members opposite stood and clapped for themselves. They're proud of that record, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget we see the government celebrating 130 million for operating funds. But I want to remind them that is the bare minimum of what teachers fought tooth and nail for on the steps of this legislature and communities all around the province because they were standing up to get funding that our students needed, funding that our kids need when they get to school.

And now this government is going to stand and clap for themselves as if they were the ones standing up for our students. We know that that's not the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so we'll give credit where credit is due. It's teachers who have consistently shown up for the needs of our young people in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that members opposite be careful what they clap for, that they need to pay attention to the legacy that they've built in education in this province. I would suggest that they should be curious about why so many folks out there and the headlines that I read and so many more think that this budget isn't worth the paper it's written on.

[16:15]

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the members opposite should be concerned about what it says in black and white on page 27, that this government's plan is to spend less in health care and education compared to what was spent last year. That should raise concerns. So they should be careful what they clap for when they celebrate this year's budget.

On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we're certainly concerned. And member after member, we're proud, we're proud of the insight that we're bringing because we are listening to the people of Saskatchewan. And we know that you'd have a tough time finding anyone in this province who doesn't sit on that side who thinks it's a good idea to spend less in health and education this year than last year.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will come as no surprise as I wrap up that I will not be supporting the budget, but I will be supporting the amendment brought forward by my seatmate, the member from Mount Royal, and someone who can chaperone me any

time, anywhere. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Humboldt-Watrous.

Racquel Hilbert: — Just a few minutes ago, I did hear that there were accusations that the member from Regina Mount Royal is a chaperone. I don't know his skill set, but he could be a ventriloquist.

All right, but on a more serious note, it is an honour to speak here today to discuss the 2025-2026 budget. Today we talk about the future of our great, vibrant province, to reflect on the progress that we've made as well as the challenges that lie ahead.

But I want to thank Jessica and Justin. They are an amazing team, and I'm so fortunate to have them in my life. Some families we are born to, and some families we find. They are the latter.

I want to thank my husband. He is the most supportive man you will ever meet. He has supported me in every possible way, and my partner for life. I want to thank my parents: Murray, Deb, Rick. They have instilled principles in with me that continue to support me on my journey that I call life.

This year's budget as presented isn't just a list of figures. It's a road map for the continued success and prosperity of Saskatchewan. But before we dive into it, it's important to acknowledge where we've come from and where we are now.

Since 2007 we have rebuilt our province through hard work, perseverance, innovation, and a clear vision. Saskatchewan is stronger than ever. People aren't leaving this province anymore. They're staying, they're returning, because we've created an environment where families can thrive, not just survive. Business can grow. Opportunities are abundant. This budget reflects that success.

Some might try to paint a picture of Saskatchewan being in decline, of us lagging behind, but I want to be clear: Saskatchewan is leading. We are not just keeping up with the rest of the country; we are setting the pace. Our credit rating is stronger than ever. Our population has breached 1.2 million, and our economy continues to grow.

Our success isn't a fluke. Mr. Speaker, it's the result of solid, principled leadership over many years. Under the Premier and his predecessor, Premier Brad Wall, Saskatchewan has seen a transformation. We're building what was left behind by past governments and ensuring that the foundation of our province is strong and solid.

This budget has something for everyone. It is designed to keep us moving forward, supporting families, communities, and industries. It's about sustainability. This government has been committed to providing a province that can support future generations. Whether it's families, farmers, mining, energy sectors, we put policies in place to ensure Saskatchewan continues to grow and prosper.

Now I must address something that's been happening within the opposition. For years they've been critical of policies that have driven our success, yet they've suddenly decided to mimic those

very policies by supporting pipelines, cutting the carbon tax, and supporting international trade. Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker. This isn't about new thinking. It's about copying what works without understanding why it works.

This Saskatchewan government doesn't do things because it seems popular. They do things because they've thought them through, created policies based on the needs of our people and a future to build. A wise man once suggested that I read the eight guiding principles of this government. I did. These principles continue to serve as the foundational pillars.

Number one, economic growth and job creation through the private sector, not government as an engine for the economy. Two, smaller, less intrusive, more efficient governments. Three, steady and gradual reduction in government spending and taxation while maintaining a firm commitment to balanced budgets. Four, high-quality health care system for all people, regardless of where they live in the province.

Five, a strong social safety network which protects those who truly need support while encouraging individuals to become self-sufficient. Six, democratic reform to make government more responsive to the people it serves. Seven, individual freedom on the equity of opportunity for all citizens. And eight, calling for consistent improvement for Saskatchewan's economy and social conditions within a strong Canada.

The opposition, well, they've decided to copy what's been proven to be successful. They see the results — safer communities, more jobs, better health care, better education. They don't have the vision and critical thought that went into putting those results of today. This is the difference between following a leader and simply trying to keep up.

Let's talk about the real progress that we've made. Under this government, we've rebuilt infrastructure in schools, hospitals, highways, and diversified the economy. In the constituency of Humboldt-Watrous and area, Lanigan school is well under construction. Carlton Trail College will receive \$1 million. Highway 2 and Highway 5 investments will continue.

We've grown our health care, built more roads, invested in our social programs with a strong sustainable economy and a driving force. The evidence is clear: things are better in Saskatchewan than they were two decades ago. And it's because of the commitment and vision of this government, a vision of a bright future.

We're not just focusing on one or two sectors of the economy. We're building a well-rounded economy that can weather headwinds of today while facing the future without flinching.

Saskatchewan's natural resources — water, agriculture, oil, mining, and forestry — are key drivers for our economy. But we must also have manufacturing as a sector that's growing, creating more jobs, and exporting products to the world. This Saskatchewan government has worked to ensure industries are competitive and sustainable on a global stage.

We've built trade relations and worked to open new markets from Dubai to India, Brazil to Japan, Mexico to Italy. Saskatchewan-made products are in demand across the world and we're poised

to take an even larger piece of the global market. None of this has been easy, and in fact the road has been bumpy at times. It's been more difficult due to challenges presented by the federal government, propped up by the federal NDP, federal NDP supported by this opposition. We did not hear the opposition denounce their federal leader as being a terrorist in India, and denounce the collateral trade damage to Western Canada.

The tariffs on EVs to protect an electric automotive industry — an industry we don't even have — is just one example of a propped-up federal government with short-sightedness and an inability to understand the collateral damage that they've done. Or do they?

Meanwhile China has imposed retaliatory tariffs on our canola, peas, pork, and seafood. This is collateral damage. And unfortunately it's Western Canada that feels the brunt of it because we are one of the strongest and most resilient parts of the country.

And yet the opposition has been silent. Denounce the EV tariffs supported by their federal counterparts. Mr. Speaker, when the pipelines like Energy East, Northern Gateway, Keystone XL were on the table, where was their support? When it was time to advocate for Saskatchewan-made products in international markets, where were they? Instead of supporting these important initiatives, we heard endless criticism, virtue-signalling, mocking the work done by this government. And let's be clear; it's not a game.

This propped-up federal government supported by the federal NDP, supported . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Yeah, I just want to caution the member on some of the accusations there — virtue-signalling and others. Just please be careful with your comments. And just, I wasn't here in the beginning, but with the ventriloquism comment, I'm not sure what was meant by that. But anyways be careful with your comments please, Member. Thanks.

Racquel Hilbert: — Japan and Europe wanted liquefied natural gas, which would have lowered global CO₂ emissions greater than the 2 billion trees that the federal government pledged to plant. Where was the opposition then? Quiet and meek like a church mouse indeed.

We don't have time for politics that puts ideology in front of families. We don't have time for politics that puts ideology ahead of sustainability and affordability. We don't have time for politics that puts ideology ahead of progress. We need leadership that's not chasing headlines or making empty promises. It's about getting things done right.

We heard the tag line “meek and weak” in the House last week and even today. What is truly meek and weak is an opposition that has failed for 18 years — been a day late and a dollar short — and now what we've seen is an attempt to mimic. That's weak.

Get your elbows up, they say in the headlines. That's not a business negotiation strategy when your opponent is 10 times larger. Let me be clear. Checkers is not the same as chess. We've been planning for a sustainable future since 2007, not short-term games for catchy headlines with red shirts. Soon we'll hear the

opposition's green shirts are in the mail.

Mr. Speaker, we also heard a tag line last fall that went like, the NDP opposition have been punching above their weight for a long time, but they can't seem to escape the wet paper bag of failed elections and policy. Meek and weak must be written on that bag.

When the Premier travels around the world meeting with global leaders and making deals for Saskatchewan, he's not taking a vacation. He works tirelessly, selflessly to build relationships that benefit Saskatchewan in the long term. And yes, it's exhausting work up to 18 hours a day crossing multiple time zones in a short period of time, facilitating meetings, developing and maintaining trade relationships, all the while being criticized by the opposition. But that's what leadership is about — putting in an effort, being proactive, and creating the opportunities that'll pay off years from now. For this work I do thank the Premier, because if this is what a so-called holiday looks like, I would hate to see a work day.

Some might say we need a crystal ball. Well I'm here to tell you we don't need a crystal ball. We need calmness born of wisdom and experience. We need critical thinking and strategic planning, which we have. We are strong, a stable government under excellent leadership. We understand the realities of a global market, making decisions that will ensure Saskatchewan remains competitive. We can't rely on a handful of trading partners or we'll see ourselves at the mercy of a volatile global economy.

[16:30]

That's why we worked hard to diversify our trade partners, so Saskatchewan's economy isn't overly reliant on one or two markets. From agriculture to manufacturing, Saskatchewan is taking its place on a global stage. Saskatchewan-made goods are being sought after around the world, and that's something we should all be proud of on both sides of the House.

Another important point I want to highlight today is education. Trade and global markets are important, but people of Saskatchewan — their skills, their knowledge, their education — are the foundation for future success. This government has invested heavily in education because we know that a well-educated workforce is key to a strong economy. And it's not just about K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] education. It's about giving our young people the skills they need to succeed in an ever-changing world.

The Ministry of Education received an increase of 184 million or 5.5 per cent over the previous year. It includes increasing 186 million or 8.4 per cent for operating funds. Funding for classrooms has been provided. It is endless. Whether it's through apprenticeships, secondary programming, workforce development, we are ensuring that people are prepared for the opportunities ahead.

This budget has invested in health care with an increase of 485 million, 6.4 per cent. Sask Health Authority has received an increase of 261 million or 5.6 per cent. And we're expanding and growing health care professionals across the province.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is not just about numbers. It's about

people of Saskatchewan. It's about the future of this province. It's about families who call it home. This government has delivered a balanced budget. It's about hard-working people who have built this province from the ground up and who will continue to build it for generations to come. This budget takes action to ensure the province remains the most affordable place in Canada to live, work, raise a family, and start a business.

Tax cuts will touch every resident and family, small business within my constituency in some way, making life more affordable for seniors, families with children, persons with disabilities, caregivers, new graduates, first-time homebuyers, people renovating their home, and taxpayers. We are a province to thrive in with work, innovation, and determination.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, I was in education for 20 years. We often learn a lot from stories. Sometimes simple stories can help explain a complex concept. I want to share a shortened fable of sorts called the new Chicken Little.

Chicken Little was a normal little chicken who lived in a forest called Regina. Chicken Little was unassuming, not outstanding in any way. She was neither thick nor thin, smart nor stupid, tall nor short. Just a completely normal chicken.

And on a completely normal day, Chicken Little is eating her breakfast in the kitchen. She likes to start the day with a bowl of sour cream and sour grapes. She reads in the paper a terrifying headline, a story about a clever fox who speaks loudly and likes to create division. He shakes trees to see what ripe fruit falls out. It says that tariffs are coming, maybe. When? On what? No one knows.

When wise owl was eating his breakfast, he read the same thing and thought to himself, we will monitor, plan, remain calm. He told himself and his team, "We have a job to do, and panic never helps anyone. I have planned a robust, stable, sustainable economy for just these times." And back to work he went.

Chicken Little ran as fast as she could to tell everyone what was happening: "The economy is crumbling. We are last everywhere. Hospitals and schools are going to collapse. The end is near."

The frog, not reading the news, asked, "Why are you so panicked, Chicken Little?"

She could hardly muster a response, she was so out of breath. And in her panic, she could hardly explain that the fox had spoke of tariffs. Chicken Little put her wings wide in the air and said, "We must fight the fox. He's 10 times our size. We must fight and win."

She continued on her way looking for the fox, while high in the tree, wise owl had a better view and could make a better assessment of the situation. Not the same view from a normal chicken on the ground.

She speaks to the media and tells them of her plan: "Spread your wings really wide. We must fight and win."

The wise owl has dealt with many clever foxes before and knows that these situations are concerning, possibly dangerous, and trusts that the plan is in place and the strength of his hard-working

team will have the fortitude to ride the rough road ahead. The wise owl knows that if he tells the plan, the fox will change his plan too, knowing that the animals in this great land that they call home have elected wise owl to speak on their behalf and set a calm, wise example.

One of Chicken Little's dear friends, young hedgehog, who enjoyed a bowl of sour cream and sour grapes for breakfast, known for her prickly exterior, she meets Chicken Little and asks, "What can I do to help?"

Chicken Little says, "We need your help. We need your spikes to fight the clever fox and win." And off they went.

And on their journey, they met a yellow-bellied sapsucker, which is a woodpecker. Chicken Little calls out to the sapsucker, "We need your help. The tariffs are coming. We need your sharp beak to fight the fox."

Having no business sense, he did not know what the tariff was. He trusted the panic of Chicken Little. And as she nearly was out of breath and hysterical, the little group collected 27 forest animals in total, and strangely they all enjoyed a bowl of sour cream and sour grapes as they marched down their path to find the fox. Chicken Little in lead, with her wings spread wide, the young hedgehog with her short little prickles up, and next the yellow-bellied sapsucker with his sharp beak all followed.

They found the fox and he asked them, "Why did you come to me? Don't you realize that was part of my plan? Now I don't have to hunt you because you've come to me with your wings spread wide making it easy to grab. With your short prickles up, it makes it easy to roll over and find your soft underbelly. And with your sharp beak that is designed for wood, not made to harm a clever fox. You're just in time for lunch, and it seems lunch has arrived."

We can only guess what happens next, but it is possible that one or two of Chicken Little's friends were at the back and they escaped into the safety of the forest. But those in the front that went looking for a fight were never seen again, and a fox with a full belly moved on to another forest looking for his next meal.

Mr. Speaker, this is a child's fable, but all fables have greater meaning. And in this short fable the message is remain calm, stick to the plan, and work as a team. We are Saskatchewan strong. This budget is a testament to that strength. We have come a long way, but the best is yet to come.

I support this budget and not the amendment brought forward by the opposition.

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

April ChiefCalf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a privilege to rise in the legislature today and to have an opportunity to respond to the recently released budget for 2025-2026. But before I begin, I would like to acknowledge some people in my circle who support me.

I wish to thank my family: my husband, Cal, my children and their partners, my sister and her husband, and of course my dad.

And I would also like to thank the constituency assistants that work for the people of Saskatoon Westview, Oyun and Zach, for all the hard work that they do.

I wish to thank my colleagues for their hard work and support and the staff in our caucus that work very long hours. I'd also like to extend my thanks to my friend Lori, who has been so supportive of my turn from teaching to politics. And lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of Saskatoon Westview for putting their trust in me.

This past weekend I had the opportunity to attend a family fun day put on by the Dundonald Community Association. And I had so much fun on a beautiful, sunny Sunday riding on the horse-drawn sleigh and talking to students from the local school, who were pretty amazed when they found out that I used to be their teacher's teacher. So that was pretty exciting.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take a more serious tone in my response. There are many issues that I would like to comment on from the recent budget. However in my response today, I would like to specifically address the issues of housing and homelessness. Given the crisis that so many of our communities are facing, the amounts allocated in the budget for housing, homelessness, and Saskatchewan income supports are simply inadequate. I want to raise some concerns that have been shared with me by members of my constituency and other communities in the province and consider how this budget may or may not resolve those concerns.

Mr. Speaker, I've spent the past four months meeting with housing advocates and activists; municipal leaders; researchers; representatives from the real estate and construction sectors; members from police, health, and fire services; non-profit housing programs; and front-line workers and agencies who provide services for the most vulnerable people in our province. And these meetings took place in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and my former home community of La Ronge. I've spoken with residents from these communities who are concerned about rising rents and lack of affordable housing that leaves seniors, youth, and families at risk. In short, Mr. Speaker, we are facing a housing crisis in our province.

First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the growing situation of homelessness in our province and how this budget is inadequate in addressing and resolving the situation. But before I speak to the issue, I would like to clarify some terminology.

In speaking with a number of Indigenous people who provide supports to unhoused people, I've learned that their preferred term to use when discussing homelessness is actually "houselessness," and I'd like to explain this. These lands have always been the homes of Indigenous peoples. And while Indigenous peoples may find themselves in circumstances where they don't have a house, this does not mean they do not have a home. They have families, communities, and friends, and they have historical and cultural connections to places such as Saskatoon, Regina, and La Ronge and Prince Albert. Mr. Speaker, they have a home here.

And while many houseless individuals in our communities are Indigenous, there are other folks who find themselves houseless in Saskatchewan, and more and more people in our province

worry they are one paycheque away from losing their home.

Recent point-in-time counts have revealed the growing problem. The 2024 PIT, or point-in-time, count for Saskatoon identified 1,499 people, nearly three times the number from 2022. Similar counts have been done in other cities, such as Regina and Prince Albert, that also demonstrate a growing number of houseless people in those communities. And this one really upset me, Mr. Speaker. The PIT count in La Ronge revealed that, per capita, the number of unhoused people in that area — in the tri-community area of La Ronge, Air Ronge, and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band — is six times that of the number of unhoused people, according to the PIT count, in Saskatoon.

So all joking aside, Mr. Speaker, this is a crisis. And it deeply, deeply, affects, you know, the people that are living in these circumstances. There are many causes of houselessness, and we can't assume there is only one cause. I have heard members opposite speak to the issue of houselessness in the media and claim that the cause is addictions and mental health. And while these may be factors that are linked to houselessness, we need to understand that there are other reasons why people find themselves without a home.

For example, affordability is a key reason why people are unhoused. People on fixed incomes simply cannot afford the rising cost of rent. And we've had people tell us that their rent has gone up by as much as 27 per cent in the last two years. And if you are a senior living on a fixed income, you just can't afford that.

[16:45]

There are also many systemic factors that contribute to houselessness, such as racism, the word that nobody wants to talk about, right? Mr. Speaker, my husband comes from the Blood reserve, or Kainai First Nation, from southern Alberta. He is visibly Indigenous. I had no idea when we got married that all the things I learned about in university that were theoretical when we talked about racism were going to become our lived experience.

And I can tell you that we moved to communities and we could not find a place to live. The challenges that we faced renting an apartment or a house because people looked at my husband and said, I'm not going to rent to you. And this is a reality of many Indigenous people living in our province, Mr. Speaker.

The increase in unhoused people in our province is also the outcome of changes to the Saskatchewan income support program in 2019. The government can deny this but, Mr. Speaker, I have heard repeatedly from poverty and housing advocates as well as social and shelter workers that changes to the way rent was paid resulted in evictions of people.

As well, the shelter allowance was just simply inadequate to cover the rent in today's rental market, and these issues have not been addressed in the 2025-2026 budget. For example, a single person living in Saskatoon on SIS [Saskatchewan income support] will receive a 2 per cent increase this year, bumping their shelter allowance from \$650 a month to 663. This is meant to cover rent and utilities. Now a quick search of rental properties in Saskatoon shows that the cheapest bachelor suite in an

apartment building in the west end of Saskatoon is \$800 a month, not including utilities.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know everyone's story. I don't know how past or present trauma or current struggles with addiction may have led people to be in the circumstances in which they find themselves. But I do want to share a few stories with everyone in the Assembly today. I share these stories not to be exploitive of people's circumstances or to sensationalize the issue. I'm also not trying to make myself sound like a saviour here when I talk about the situations I've encountered. My hopes are to deepen the understanding of this crisis, and again this is not a laughing matter.

Mr. Speaker, in December I spoke with the director of the Saskatoon Indian & Métis Friendship Centre and some of her staff members. As you know, they've been operating a warming centre at the friendship centre this past winter. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to the community organizations who have stepped up to do this work. They've saved lives this winter, but they've been forced to deal with circumstances that show there are many cracks in our systems — for example, houseless individuals who are released from hospitals in Saskatoon, who have been dropped off at the friendship centre because they have nowhere else to go. They arrive in hospital gowns, in wheelchairs, with IV [intravenous] ports in their hands. And the friendship centre staff are expected to know how to support their medical needs as well as keep them sheltered.

They are also keeping people alive. They are dealing with overdoses on a regular basis. People are sleeping on cardboard because the warming centre cannot be funded as a shelter. If they provide cots for people, they will lose that funding. Funding for the temporary shelters in our province will run out at the end of March, and they will be forced to close. As we know, Mr. Speaker, winter does not end March 31st in Saskatchewan. And even when it warms up in spring and summer many people are still houseless, forced to sleep in parks and under bridges because shelters are full.

On one occasion, Mr. Speaker, I stopped by the friendship centre to drop off some items. And the centre closes between 5 and 6 p.m. because the staff need time to get ready for the evening. And I pulled up into the parking lot, opened the back of my vehicle. There were four people waiting for the shelter to open. It was minus 30. They didn't have jackets, so I found myself giving them coats, wrapping blankets around people. I gave them hand warmers. I gave them whatever I had in my car. And there was one man who didn't have mitts. I gave him my mitts.

The situation is dire. In La Ronge, they couldn't find a location in the town of La Ronge for the shelter so they located it on the reserve. The reserve is one block away from the town of La Ronge. They could not access provincial funding for the shelter because of jurisdictional issues, so the Lac La Ronge Indian Band provided the shelter for people in their community this past winter.

Mr. Speaker, in order to address houselessness in our province we need a paradigm shift. Throwing a little bit of money at the problem is not a long-term solution. We need to make drastic changes to the SIS program, create more basic and enhanced shelters, invest in affordable and social housing, and ensure there

are supports for people struggling with mental health and other complex needs.

We also need to listen to the front-line workers, who know the causes and effects of houselessness and can offer real solutions. I want to thank the many people who have taken the time to speak with me and who go above and beyond in their work with the most vulnerable people in our province. I've learned that if we understand our present circumstances and how past decisions have brought us here, we can make a plan for the future.

In addition to offering no tangible solutions to addressing houselessness in our province, this budget also does very little to improve the state of vacant units within Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. After over a decade of cutting the budget for maintenance for SHC [Saskatchewan Housing Corporation] housing, the government is now investing 9.2 million to renovate 285 units.

Mr. Speaker, this is simply insufficient to address the problem of vacant SHC houses that require repairs. When we are in a housing crisis and when homelessness is growing at such a rapid rate, leaving thousands of social housing units vacant or in disrepair is simply irresponsible. And when you look at the amount allocated for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation in the budget, it has decreased by \$1.692 million since last year. Just to be clear, that's a cut.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to relay some of the concerns that have come to me from people throughout the province regarding Saskatchewan Housing. Did you know that people are often forced to leave their community to get a social housing unit? So even though we have empty units in Saskatoon — and I've seen them — people are forced to relocate to units in other cities where they don't know anyone.

They are expected to move from houses that have been their homes for years to make room for other people on the waiting list for a home. But, Mr. Speaker, wouldn't it make more sense to invest in social housing — building, repairing, acquiring more units — than make people move around the city or the province?

Mr. Speaker, when discussing housing and houselessness, it is also important to consider the issue of affordability. Rent is increasing in Saskatoon beyond what many people can afford to pay, and there are no regulations to keep rent increases in line with inflation or cost-of-living increases.

I noticed that in the 2025-2026 budget the government has copied data from the Canada housing and mortgage rental market report from 2024 in an effort to argue that Saskatchewan is more affordable than other provinces. However they chose to use Regina as the example, not Saskatoon, which is more expensive.

And when you actually look at the CMHC [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation] rental market report in detail, you can see that Saskatoon is more expensive than Regina and in some ways is more comparable to Winnipeg. Now given that Manitoba has regulations governing rent increases and Saskatchewan does not, it is possible that we could surpass Winnipeg in the near future for the cost of renting an apartment.

The government can keep repeating the line that Saskatchewan

is the most affordable place to live in Canada, but this is not the message I hear from residents who are worried about making ends meet. Just to give an example, a single person who makes minimum wage would gross about 2,400 a month working full-time. Rent for a one-bedroom apartment on Avenue T South in Saskatoon is between 900 and \$1,200 per month, which could be half of their income before deductions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the government argues that they are making life more affordable with tax breaks. And yes, first-time homebuyers like will get a small tax credit. And homeowners like me will benefit from the home renovation tax credit. I've got plans. But these tax benefits are of little use to people who will never own their own home and who struggle to afford the basics.

As well the PST rebate on construction has limited benefits, as it only applies to houses under \$550,000. It is in fact difficult in Saskatoon right now to find a new build that is within that PST rebate amount.

Affordability also comes down to the issue of supply and demand. In Saskatoon there is a low stock of housing for sale, which raises housing prices out of reach of many homebuyers.

Last but not least, Mr. Speaker, when looking at housing we need to think about tariffs. In education we have a saying: when you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Canada does import many items from the United States for construction of new homes, including appliances, ceramics, hardware, glass. Tariffs on these items will make it that much more expensive to build. That cost will be passed on to renters and buyers. So what's the plan?

I want to finish, Mr. Speaker, by commenting on a point that was made yesterday in the Assembly. Mr. Speaker, people of the North do not owe a debt of gratitude to governments when schools, hospitals, or other services are built in their communities. Everyone in our province, including residents of the North, are entitled to these services.

Mr. Speaker, widespread extraction of resources in northern Saskatchewan actually began under the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] and Tommy Douglas for the purposes of funding schools and hospitals. Why aren't northerners expected to benefit from the billions of dollars that come from their lands?

I also want to point out that this government takes things away from northerners. Northerners lost programs like NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College], the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre, and the bus.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on a point made by the Premier in which he quoted a former Liberal prime minister. I was kind of surprised by that, but he noted that you can't be smart and angry. And I disagree, Mr. Speaker. I've taught numerous courses at the university level — Indigenous studies, women's and gender studies, anti-oppressive education — for 28 years now, and I've learned that there are many people throughout the history of this province and country who have been both smart and angry. And fuelled by that anger, they collectively acted to make things better for people.

So think for example about women in the early 1900s who were angry that women were being denied the right to vote, and collectively they fought for suffrage. And look at where we are today. Look at all the women in the legislature today. Let's build upon the efforts of those great women and support one another in the legislature. And, Mr. Speaker, they were angry and they were smart.

Mr. Speaker, this budget does not deliver. It fails to adequately fund education, health care, the North, and it fails to deliver when it comes to housing. It fails to plan for tariffs. It fails to address houselessness in a meaningful way.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be supporting the budget. I will be supporting the amendment moved by the member from Mount Royal. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — All right. I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a few minutes left and I definitely want to take advantage of all the time allotted to me. I definitely want the record to show that — also what the member opposite was talking about — we have a caucus full of very strong women, and we all have mothers and wives and everything else. So go ahead, ladies. A round of applause for all of you.

[Applause]

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Thank you for all of the hard work that you all do each and every day representing people all across the great province of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to rise and talk about budget debate. And looking forward to meeting with the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association this evening and having a great lunch, and coming back with renewed vigour, renewed energy, renewed enthusiasm from some great world-class Saskatchewan beef that will provide us with all of the vitamins and minerals that we need to stay healthy, Mr. Speaker, and provide us with the energy to finish off an evening full of delightful debate with all of our colleagues and the members opposite.

Speaker Goudy: — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until 7 p.m.

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

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Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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