



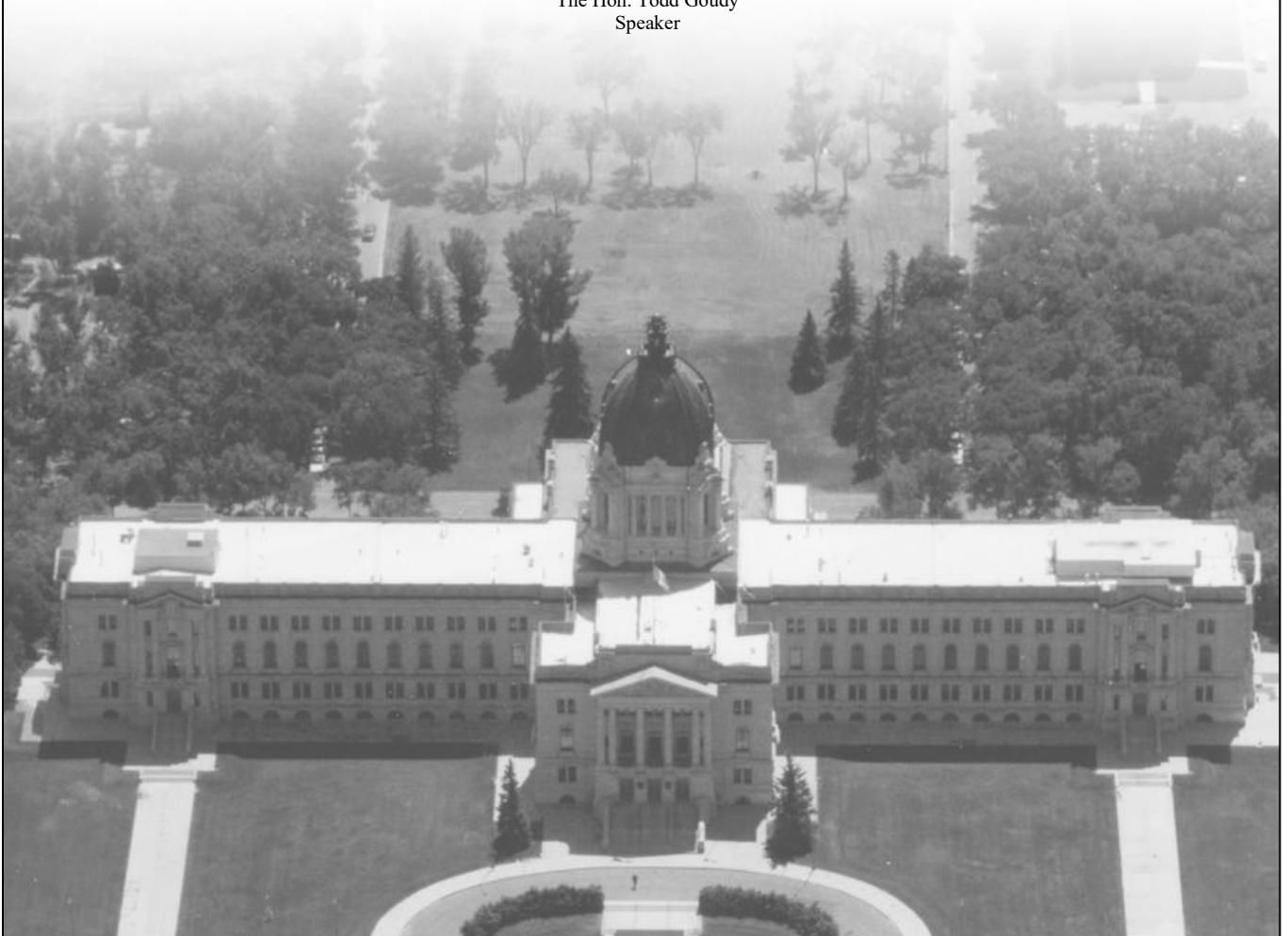
SECOND SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd Session — 30th Legislature

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

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Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
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Senger, Brittney — Saskatoon Southeast (NDP)
Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Thorsteinson, James — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)
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Wilson, Hon. Sean — Canora-Pelly (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Mount Royal (NDP)
Young, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Standings

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

Speaker Goudy: — It now being 7 p.m., this Assembly will resume.

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 Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With three-ish minutes left, what is it I want to say? Seems that the snafu that was my printer problem, I skipped over giving a word of appreciation to my office staff: constituency assistant, Paras Kumar, a fantastically well-grounded young man who has stayed so cool and collected through everything thrown at him as he works to finish his double-major degree in physics and mathematics.

Special mention to Julie Koroluk, an intern from the college of social work doing her practicum in our office. Add that to the things that I've learned — social work interns in MLA's [Member of the Legislative Assembly] office. Even in the original version that wouldn't print for me this afternoon, I didn't dare attempt to list other things I've learned. Far too many to even begin to consider listing.

It's only every day that we are meeting and learning from so many. Getting invited to everything, attending events — human trafficking to Persian New Years — and I said I wouldn't start. Suffice that the experience of being an MLA, representing my constituents, enjoying the support of an amazingly dedicated executive, I've had a wonderful life in many circumstances. As unexpected as is this latest adventure, I am loving the experience. It's so fascinating. What was a little over a year ago a complete blur has slowed down enough that I see and I believe I increasingly understand the moving parts.

I want to emphasize in these last minutes what I've grown to understand as building blocks of healthy personal, community, societal life: gratitude and servitude. Gratitude that we live in such privilege. Saskatchewan has everything we need for a thriving and inclusive society.

Admittedly I struggle hearing the Sask Party government members seemingly take credit for all the richness available. We are rich. But if there's one of us in hunger, unhoused, marginalized, we have not served our community to the extent that we must endeavour.

I am so committed to continuing every effort available to me to

serve the constituents of Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis; to serve the goals of the Sask NDP [New Democratic Party], our amazing leader Carla Beck, 26 caucus colleagues and friends. The opportunity to serve in government is irresistible, and I look forward to that.

This is why I will not be supporting the budget as tabled from the Finance minister. I will support the amendment brought by the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Doug Steele: — Mr. Speaker, I just want to comment before we get started in there that you've had a tough week and a half here. But you did okay. You got my support. You're doing good.

Anyway we're going to get into, you know, I got to start off by saying I wouldn't pick another province to live in than Saskatchewan. You know, Saskatchewan was built on the hard work of many people from across the country. It didn't matter where they'd come from; they worked together and built what we have today. We've got to be proud of this province because, you know, you take a look across to the east and you go across way over west. They've got a few things to straighten out over there, we're pretty sure.

You know, we presented a budget here that I can't believe our friends across the way can't support it. You know, it's just a natural yes, we're in there.

But anyway, I've got a few people I'd like to thank and acknowledge before I get into my written speech here and talk about, for example, my wife, Phyllis. Forty-three years we've been married. Thirty-four years she worked in the education system. Forty-three years we were married. So there you go; I got that straight. So, and our three kids.

But she worked hard, and she took pride in working in the school in Gull Lake and Hazlet. She was transferred up to Gull Lake. And you know, she had all types of kids that she worked with. And you know, when we go to the mall, you think, okay, you're elected and you're pretty important. You get a sign on the highway. You know, you got this.

These kids come up: "Hello, Mrs. Steele. Hello, Mrs. Steele." I spend more time waiting for her to have a conversation with the young kids that she worked with all her life. And some of them are adults. Or most of them now, I'd say, after 34 years. But you know, I'm very proud of her.

Her and I, you know, we take a look at what's happening here in Saskatchewan right now — taxation and budgets and all that stuff. But we started out and we bought an older home and decided, well I had a journey in my mind. I'm going to start farming. And I did work alongside my dad. And Phyllis, she was a city girl. And I had some cattle, and we raised those cattle on the farm. And she stepped in and there was just the two of us at that time, and you know, we did a lot of things. When you have cattle, it's a lot of work.

I'm very happy to see today that the prices that these folks are getting for their cattle now. You know, I used to go down to the

auction mart, Where you'd sell, you'd have a calf, you lose a calf and these types of things. You get a calf, you know, you pay 150, 200 bucks. These things replaced the value for calf loss at calving time . . . Our great crop insurance program — done by the minister used to sit here, but he's kind of wandered out — but it's amazing. I was at a meeting the other day, and they talked about 3,700-and-some dollars for a newborn calf if it's lost to, you know, wildlife and that type of thing. Pretty amazing, I tell you. So it's long overdue. They got hit hard many years.

But anyway, back to my wife Phyllis, that was where I was going with this. You know, you got to remind me of that. But anyway, like you say, we raised cattle.

We didn't have child care as you call it today. You paid your babysitter; you went to work. But we were pretty lucky as a young family because a couple of years after we got married we moved a house into my parents' farm, and we were just across the way.

And you know, I think back on that today, and you know, it was great to be that close. Not all the time. Not all the time. Talk about sleeping in in the morning — that didn't happen. You'd hear dad's truck go by about 5:30 by there; okay, you've got to get up out of your bed. But you know it's just something that I wish everyone had that opportunity. You know, as our kids grew up, mom would help babysit. But we didn't want to tie them down all the time because she had to help on the farm and that type of thing, and dad and stuff. We did have a hired man, but we took on too much work so we had to do all these types of things to keep things going.

You know, and like we went through double-digit interest rates, Phyllis and I. I stepped out, I had to have that quarter of land that was just over there, you know. I needed that and to my dad, I said, "It connects to yours." He says, "All the land connects to you. You're just going to just keep going and buying until, you know, you put yourself in a position, you're financially broke because you can't pay for this stuff."

But you had to dig your heels in and get at it and work. But the point I was making at that, living on the farm with my parents is those kids would walk across to Grandma's and see Grandma after school and whenever. Then we were there together until they all graduated. And you know, because I was working off the farm plus cattle, and she was working off farm. And I don't know what we really do as far as a definition of a family farm anymore. At one time we were farming 43 quarters. And I don't regret not doing that anymore, that's for sure; you know, it's way easier not doing that.

But like you say, she's an amazing lady. She's retired now; we've got two grandkids down in Ormstown, Quebec. And we've got two grandkids just outside of the city here in Grand Coulee. The Ag Minister was out, actually today the Minister of Education was out there at the school and my daughter's teaching there.

But you know, this is what Saskatchewan has to offer. And like you say, it's pretty awesome, the years we've been married.

And then my oldest daughter, like I just mentioned, she's at Pense and that's where she teaches at. And her husband, Eric, works in the oil industry out of the city of Regina.

And my two grandsons Kohen and Hudson. And my oldest grandson, actually his curling team is provincial champs U15 [under 15] curlers. They won the province. They were up in Edmonton this weekend curling up there, but they lost the last game pretty hard. You know, with that there was a lot of hard curling, and these guys are fairly young. They're not 15, they're 10, 11, and they're curling girls and guys that are 15. And you know, there it's pretty competitive.

And so that's my oldest daughter, Nicole. She's an amazing kid, working. She's got her master's in education. She works with children that are, you know, challenged to a certain extent and others, and she just loves it. And it's another "There's Mrs. Steele" type thing. And the kids come, she does different things outside of teaching with them. And it's very interesting.

And then there's my son Burton and Audrey. And Beatrice and Sam, those are a pair. Those two youngsters are five and six. Yeah, Sam's five and Beatrice six, and they're down in Ormstown, Quebec.

My son's career there in the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. My son's career, he got shoulder-tapped. And he's in specialty services in the RCMP and down he went, down to Quebec. He's a sniper, he's a trainer, and that type of thing. He goes multiple places around the world to assist. He's just come back from Kenya from two weeks over there with some members of parliament and stuff doing a tour, whatever they do when they're over meeting with folks like that.

And he's doing exceptionally well. I asked him one, not too long ago, I says, you think you want to come back and farm? Oh yeah, he still thinks he wants to come back and farm. But you know, but he's still got that career there. I says, you like that career? Oh, he loves that career. Well, he's been 15 years in there doing that. And his wife, Audrey, 17 years, she's in corporate crime or such with the force. And she's down there working, too. They're hoping to get back here to Western Canada — so am I and Phyllis — and to make them a little closer.

I kind of, when I leave here, and quite often there's nobody there. I don't have an old hound dog in the farm no more. The wife is gone down east. So she's spending time down there with the kids there. So they're pretty amazing grandkids.

And I know earlier — was it today or yesterday? — the member from Regina South Albert talked about her little fellow there. He's three years old and is active this and all that type of thing, you know. And I can see, you know, there's lots of other MLAs talking about their families, their grandkids, or their kids and all that stuff. It makes you feel proud. You know, it makes the whole journey worthwhile.

We sit in here and get a little aggressive back and forth and that type of thing. And you know, I think at the end of the day our intentions are in the same direction, but we just can't agree. You know how them things happen sometimes, right? You've heard that, right, Mr. Speaker? Yeah, you're saying, been there, done that. You know that saying? You been there, done that? Yeah.

So like you say, don't try not to take it too much to heart, you know. At the end of the day I think we're all in here to achieve something to keep our province strong and help it grow and be a

place to do business, not a place to visit.

You know, I've seen it in the Southwest . . . But we're going to get back on to it. I want to make sure I get through introducing my family, and then I got to introduce a couple others here too. So I want to finish that up.

So anyway my son and his wife, Audrey, and Sam and Beatrice, we usually FaceTime on Sunday. You know, I seen a couple of folks here get, they're kind of emotional; the kids are down working, they're from their constituency and stuff. And you know, some of us have to drive to constituencies and other places in the province. They're not right here in Regina, that type of thing.

So the other day we were on FaceTime on Sunday, we try to do that every Sunday. And so they had Sam and Beatrice on there. And Sam, he's got an opinion. He don't mince his words. He says when he's got something to say. So we're sitting there and my son said, "Well, we're heading out here. I've got to fly out tomorrow" or whatever.

[19:15]

Oh, yeah, he was explaining what's happening. And he's sitting there and he's telling us, and little Sam's sitting on his knee. He turned around and looked at him, he says, "You're going to be back for Easter, aren't you?" You know, he's thinking about that, so there you go.

And Beatrice, you know, these two little folks can speak French and English as fluently as one or the other. You know, they're sitting there and Beatrice sat with . . . Well my son's learning French, but he can't speak it very well. He'd take Beatrice when they went for coffee so she could order French because they don't necessarily always speak English to you down there. We were down there, and they didn't know to do that.

But anyway they got a call from their school. You want to know how things are different. He got a call from the school, and so they went to find out. Well they were concerned that little Beatrice — and again, remember she's only six years old — her and her friends that can speak both languages were speaking too much English. That's not a word of a lie. So which is good. You know, like they need to keep things rolling, that type of thing.

So anyway we're so proud of them and their careers and all that. And we've just got our fingers crossed. He did put in for maybe a transfer and coming back. And they said, well we can't release you; you have to be here for a while.

Okay, what are you grinning about? Did you get it?

But anyway, we're hoping they get back so we can have the grandkids at home.

And so then there's my youngest daughter, Brittany. Unfortunately 17 years ago . . . No, that's when she had her job. But it was a little over 17 years ago she graduated out of high school in Gull Lake, and she applied for the two universities here in Saskatchewan. And so anyway she applied; a lot of kids from our southwest corner there, they apply into Lethbridge. Well she applied in Lethbridge. Lethbridge accepted her, and she went into

nursing in Alberta. And she graduated an RN [registered nurse] or an RN with distinction from university and got a job right away. And she's been there.

She's a nurse practitioner, works in the operating room in the hospital in Lethbridge, which, you know, it's fine. And you know, she got a job and she's off with her career. And she met a young fellow there, and unfortunately . . . We don't talk politics coming back and forth. She's settled in there now. So that's good, and he's got a company, him and his parents. And they're doing quite well there too. And you know, I'm pretty proud of her.

But you know, it'd be nice to have your children close that you can see them, but it always just doesn't work out. But in the same breath, you know, they're out there and being productive in society and contributing to wherever they live, you know. And we've opened a bunch of opportunities for, you know, nurses to be here, nurse practitioners and stuff like that that, to help try and fill the gaps and the voids that we have in health care.

And health care, you know, there's things that we need to work on and that. It's a moving target with a lot of things. What's happening here? Are we under fire? But anyway, like I say, we've come across with some great — I think, and I think a lot of others, you know — opportunities through budget funding. And you know, in this world it's crazy times right now. We got tariffs to deal with, and all this type of thing.

I had a fellow phone me in my office here on Friday, and he is talking about a highway, as the boundaries changed with the constituencies, that used to be in the other guy's. I got it, and it's rough. But we're fixing it. And he said — this blew me off my chair — he says, you know, you guys are going to have start up the taxes because you need to take care of all that stuff.

So I don't know. And that's not a word of a lie. I'll just leave it there anyway. But that's the truth, that a fellow from my new area in my constituency boundary and all that type of thing.

But I'd like to acknowledge another family member, my immediate family and what they're doing. And you know, a lot of other MLAs here today, we're very proud of our children and what they're achieving. And like I say, we can't keep them all. Their careers take them to other provinces, but by gosh, when they stay with us here in Saskatchewan they do a heck of a job. You know, they're helping build the province and contributing.

So you know, that's the type of thing that we don't mind contributing and helping others, but sometimes it gets a long stretch for us to be able to do that. It's a costly thing, and you know, we've got homelessness and different things. Yeah, they need to be looked at to try and help. But you know, it's not as simple as just talking about it here tonight.

I've got a family member; it's my first cousin. They moved back there from Medicine Hat, Alberta. They're up in age, and they have no kids. They come from Toronto. He's got 40-some years down there. He was in the oil industry and with companies, and you know, he did quite well and successfully. But you know, that old C-word is beating him up pretty hard. He's dealing with cancer. He lost his eyesight, you know. And he's an avid car collector.

And he goes to Calgary. And this, it's like the stretch on our health care system. For a full year every week you go to Calgary for special treatments and that stuff and come back. And they can't do the lab work in Medicine Hat. It all has to be done there when you've taken treatment for the cancer and all that stuff. And like I say, he's lost his eyesight, and he's dealing with this, you know, cancer in other places. And he's had cancer a number of different times.

So you know, the health care systems, when you look at it and what we're trying to achieve, there's a lot of new moving parts and how to do it correctly. You know, I got to commend our Health ministers and how they take this on. And they work at it and they put it together and spend hours and hours with their staff. They go out and they talk to community leaders and hospitals, trying to keep services in all the locations, as many as possible, with staff. You can build a building, but you have no staff so you can't do much with it. You know, it just sits there.

You know, with the emergency care centres in the city we have some things we were working on with that. And I think they're doing, you know, exceptionally good things.

Anyway I got to mention I had a change of CAs [constituency assistant] in my office. Sean, he took on another career and moved on. And my first CA that we cut our teeth with, she was my CA and I was a politician — guess I still am — she's back. And I think some of the veteran politicians will remember what her son and her husband went through in the fire out west. They were cooked. They were on life support in Calgary for a number days, months, a year. And you know, they still have some trauma and they have scarring issues and all that stuff, and they made it.

But Twila just jumped on it. She did start her own bakery; she wanted to do that. She has staff working in there, and she just loves it back. And she was here at budget. We had four other ladies from the cattle industry come up and took part in the budget and that. But it was a shot in the dark. I went to talk to her. She says yes; she had to talk to her husband.

Man, you know, between Sean and between Twila, both good, both good. But that lady's touch in that office is amazing. That thing is spotless. I don't know if I can say that kind of stuff anymore. But I mean, it is. It's just great. I'm going to say it.

But I wish Sean all the best on his career move and all that type of thing, but she's just doing a wonderful job — following up on files, doing things, phone calls and that, and still managing her bakery and stuff like that. But you know, it was mentioned here today from one of our MLAs that if you want to hire somebody, hire somebody that's a busy person because they know how to get things done.

So anyway, I'm going to wrap 'er up here for the boss. He's giving me the poke here. And I will be supporting the budget as presented and seconded by the member from Canora-Pelly . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Carrot River. How come I wrote that down? Okay. And not the amendment, sorry.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I tell you, we learn so much here at night sitting. It's great to join my

colleagues on this side and all sides of the House to debate this year's budget.

I want to start today in a way that I always do and thank, first and foremost, the good people of Cumberland who have afforded me the great honour of serving them on the floor of this Legislative Chamber. The countless conversations that I've had with the people I serve — from coffee rows to the Uniplex to our local library to the coffee shops all across the North — have always and will always inspire me to fight for better in this province.

I also want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity to serve as her shadow minister for Northern Affairs, forestry, SaskTel, and ethics and democracy. The work we get to do for the people of the North, the industries that we're all so proud of, the unions who represent their workers, and the work we all get to do in this Legislative Chamber only deepens my belief that we can do a lot for this province when we form government.

To my legislative colleagues, I thank you for the good conversations, the odd time we get to share some witty banter in the hallways and some insights to the issues that matter to us across this province and share ideas of how we can better them. I appreciate your insights and always happy to share the views of the people I serve, whether it be on this floor or over at coffee anywhere.

As we all know in this Chamber, there isn't a single one of us who serves alone. I have been able to serve the people of Cumberland and fulfill my duties bestowed upon me from the Leader of the Opposition because I have the world's best wife, who is probably in the middle of tucking our two sick daughters into bed after a long day at the office. She does incredible work to bring health services to the people of the North in a way that respects and honours culture, language, and reliability. And I thank her for everything that she does.

Our family is also supported dearly by our incredibly selfless mothers and my sister-in-law, or as we all call them, Kooks, Lola, and Mama Wee. When I'm away, they somehow find time in their busy schedule to grab some groceries, be ready at a moment's notice to watch one of the girls so my superhero wife can make yet another dance class or a skating lesson, or to be ready to chat with my wife from afar despite the two-hour time difference to support her when the days get long and tiring. I thank you all for the shared sacrifice in helping this team make Saskatchewan a better place.

Lastly of the thank yous, I want to thank my CA, Modeste McKenzie. Some folks might have seen him across the Facebook world. He's a world-class jigger. We've brought him up into places like Fond-du-Lac on the ice road, you know, standing on 40 inches of ice, and partook in some good Métis culture between me and my colleague from Athabasca's CA and ourselves had a bit of a jig-off.

He works incredibly hard for the people of Cumberland, and I thank him for the service that he gives not only to the constituents, but to me as the MLA from Cumberland. I couldn't do what I do on a daily basis without the support of my team.

And on that note as well, the caucus staff here in the Legislative

Building I thank them for everything that they do for the people of the province and for our team to stand up for what is right here in the province.

Now I'll turn to this year's budget. And I want to congratulate the minister on tabling a second budget to the floor of this legislature. And for the sake of my great-, great-, great-, great-, great-, great-grandkids, I really hope his math is a little more accurate than last year, as I'm sure they will still be paying off the debt of this Premier and this government.

\$43 billion, Mr. Speaker, a debt that has doubled since this Premier took that seat in this legislature. And this government has added over \$30 billion since taking office. Now you would think that after a horrible year where wildfires destroyed the lands, homes, livelihoods of the people that I serve in the North that this government would invest the money to fix their processes, to retool their Public Safety Agency, and be ready for the future wildfire responses.

I was hopeful for a moment when this government did decide to finally fire the minister from his position, as I knew he was a major piece to the downfall of our response last year in the wildfires. However yesterday while I was medicating my daughter's fever and between the screams of a toddler's uncomfot with a headache, I hear the minister accusing our team of instilling fear in the people of the North in response to a question from my brother from Athabasca.

And I'm going to be very, very clear for that minister and his government here today. We did not instill fear in the people of the North — they did that. They did that when they didn't respond. They did that when they didn't call in for help. They did that when people were left unsupported after having to drive through smoke and flames fearing for their lives, and being left to their own devices once they got through to a safe community.

[19:30]

They are furthering that fear when they don't hold themselves accountable, when they don't allow for a public hearing, when they don't even commit to non-budgetary commitments like hearing the voices of the North when it comes to building a plan for wildfire responses, and passing my colleague's bill from Athabasca so that those northern voices can be heard in our future responses.

So my suggestion to the minister, and through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Community Safety is simple. Take the speaking notes, the sad attempts of clapbacks and one-liners that the previous minister may have drafted for you, throw them in the trash, and get to work delivering the lines in the upcoming budgets. Because you have failed the people of the North by focusing on the political game of your predecessor rather than the services you are supposed to deliver. And I will say this. If you continue to use those lines, it didn't pan out well for the last minister, so I suggest you be wary of the advice that you receive.

On a final note of instilling fear in the people of the North, I would kindly suggest that the minister clearly hasn't heard the stories of the northern people, or he has and simply has disregarded them, which after yesterday's comments, I might argue at this point is about 50/50 odds.

When I spoke in the fall that this government has threatened public safety, not only in last year's response but the many years in the future, the people I serve are already getting ready to defend their homes and their communities and stay behind. Because they know this government's word is worthless when it comes to actually delivering their promise and protecting them and their livelihoods.

When we talk about affordability measures in northern Saskatchewan, I often think of the prices of food and fuel here in Regina today, and often think that once the prices reach what the North pays year-round, the members opposite seem to start caring. But if it's only the people that I serve and the people that the MLA from Athabasca serve, it's somebody else's responsibility. And they don't think it's a problem worth solving or just don't know or want to care to know on how to solve those issues.

When I travel this great province, I often think of both of the challenges and opportunities of all of our towns, villages, RMs [rural municipality], and cities face, from crime, homelessness, gangs, mental health and addictions challenges, and so much more. I think of the incredible work done by mayors, chiefs, Reeves, Métis presidents, councillors, teachers, nurses, doctors, and labourers and what they do to help build this province. They deserved better.

From every corner of this province I hear of the struggles of the family of four. While this government stands up nearly every day and tell people how good they have it, they struggle to pay their power bills, their taxes, and put food on the table. It's a slap in the face to the people that this government claims to represent.

Just over a year ago my brother from Athabasca and I were up in places like Stony Rapids, Black Lake, and Fond-du-Lac, where we saw power bills of \$1,200 in a single month, where we saw grocery bills over \$400 for a single bag of groceries, maybe two if you were lucky. We heard of stories of the family watering down the milk and the baby formula just to bring some costs down. We saw a scurvy outbreak. And yet we have a government that stands in its place, beats its chest, and says that we are the most affordable place to live in Canada.

When scurvy hit, the minister brought out a healthy eating information campaign. There's no further place, no more evidence needed to prove that this government is out of touch and out of ideas to solve the problems in the North or anywhere for that matter. The issue was never about knowing what foods to eat, but the foods that families can afford.

I doubt the members opposite will ever know how to fix these issues, so the people of this province know that it's time for change. Our team has seen, heard, and believed these folks, and we will deliver the change that they deserve.

Now when it comes to our industries operating in the North, I think of our trappers, our outfitters, uranium workers. And I want to take pause to recognize the hard work of Cameco, Urano, Denison, NexGen on their respective wins for their industries and the people that they employ. The world truly does need what Saskatchewan has to offer, and when they win, we all should win.

That is not what we see from this government's budget. The cost

to haul these ores, these commodities, and the memories out of northern Saskatchewan is still felt by the truckers, the parents, the families, and industries on these broken highways in northern Saskatchewan.

In this last fire season, we saw how critical highways infrastructure is to transport the goods and the people safely from community to community. This year was not the time to cut; it was the time to invest in the North.

We saw heightened importance for airports in the North when we saw fires close the only roads in and out of small and large centres alike. We saw the need for good infrastructure when the ministers wanted to fly into the North and see devastation their negligence created. I still get a chuckle from the good old Denare Beach fire department's wave, but as I understand the rules of the Chamber and the protocols on this floor . . .

Speaker Goudy: — There's just a few rules that, you know . . . I know we need to debate the budget and things went on in the summer. But just, offensive words against the Assembly, imputing motives, I feel that, you know, we can get our point across with, you know, a little less. If you can lighten up on the tone towards the members, the ministers, I would and they would and the whole Assembly would appreciate that.

Jordan McPhail: — I'll have to reserve the Denare Beach fire department wave, I guess, for another setting.

When we think of the absolute atrocious vacancy rates in the North for mental health and addiction spaces, despite our government's call for better for the people of the North, we see the government refuse to lift a finger and help the people of the North who are affected by mental health and addictions challenges. The people of the North are ignored.

I also wonder if the stats that face northern Indigenous kids were anywhere else in the province, that it wouldn't be treated with a little bit more urgency. This is a government who claims to have the best recruitment strategy in the country, yet refuses to expand it to mental health professions in the North or to places like Sandy Bay.

A few years ago on the front lawn of this legislature, a good friend of mine, Tristen Durocher walked 635 kilometres to let the Premier know of his disgust with his government not passing the suicide prevention bill. This Premier wasn't willing to walk 635 steps outside of this building to meet with him and the families who have lost so much. Yet he and his ministers can stand in this House and say every day that every death is a tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, the only tragedy is this government's willingness to turn the other cheek while me and the member from Athabasca attend funerals near weekly for a family without a husband, without a brother, a mother, and son or daughter.

You know, I've had the opportunity from legislative duties here, when we're down here serving in the Chamber, to be able to sneak out to some communities close by. And I think of a community that has a couple of members of my family. It's always nice to go out and see them out in the community of Moose Jaw.

And on the odd evening while we're here in session, I like to go out there and have a good chat with the folks in Moose Jaw over some world-class fish and chips at Bobby's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It is good fish; it is good fish. Even as a northerner, I must say it is pretty good fish. And we have some pretty good chats out on the doorstep there as well with the good people of Moose Jaw.

You know, it's great to hear that they enjoy our presence out there. I remember hearing from a young dad who's had some struggles with his family accessing care, his kids finding affordable housing, and the opportunities his friends and family can't seem to find to make his ends meet. He thanks our team for the work we do to try and build a stronger economy here in Saskatchewan.

And that family knows it's our team that's actually listening. That family wonders where in the world their MLAs are, and why they aren't delivering for them. So to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to the members from Moose Jaw North and Wakamow, I say on behalf of our team, you're welcome. We will help deliver the change that you can't for the people that you serve.

On the way back from Regina, I get to stop in for a meal at the Spice Trail in Prince Albert and chat with the folks on the doorsteps in P.A. [Prince Albert] who are happy to hear that we're standing with cancer patients as they ask for fairness. For standing with their municipal government to demand that the money this province wants to take from P.A. is better spent on housing across the spectrum to help with the Victoria build and make sure that it remains successful.

They also wonder where in the world are my MLAs? Why aren't they fighting for me? Why can't they deliver change for me? Well to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to the members from P.A. Carlton and Northcote, I can also say on behalf of our team, you're welcome. Our team will help deliver the change that you can't for your residents.

I hear the stories from my colleagues on this side who have been to White City, and the good people of Brighton, talking about the much-needed schools. They thanked us for our work in getting out and talking to them, delivering petitions on the floor of the legislature, to understand their stories. And they also wonder why their MLA can't deliver for them. Well to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member from White City-Qu'Appelle and Saskatoon Willowgrove, on behalf of this team, I say you're welcome. We'll help deliver for the people that you can't in your riding.

Our team was also in Yorkton — a beautiful city. We heard the issues raised from them about their planned-but-not-planned, that conceptual-but-not-conceived hospital of many years past. I think that the Yorkton hospital folks should get in touch with the P.A. pulp mill folks for a tea and see how similar their stories that they've been communicated to match up.

Now in Cumberland we have a long-term care project under way. This was due to the hard work of my predecessor and the person who had the chair before me, Doyle Vermette. And I thank him on behalf of a grateful constituency for his tireless efforts. At the unveiling of the conceptual plans only a few short years ago, I heard Chief Tammy Cook-Searson say very clearly that this was

a project of the people, not a project of the government; and through petitions and advocacy, Doyle brought the people to this building. And I couldn't agree with her more on that.

And it was proof that you can get things done through opposition, Mr. Speaker. Our team delivered that long-term care from opposition to the people of the North. It would almost be fitting that this government could consider naming a room or a wing after the man who championed that cause and delivered that care home to the people of the North. Thousands of petitions, Premier — thousands. That's who opened up the long-term care facility, not your government.

Now back to Yorkton. The folks in Yorkton have pulled me aside at some of these conferences that we have the honour of attending. And out of general curiosity I asked them, how's the new MLA? They say, who? I asked again, thinking I don't speak loud enough . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Okay, I'm going to stop you right there. The level of . . . Like there's some offensive, provocative language. It has been fairly high level along the way, but I'm going to stop you before you make a personal comment of another one of the members on the other side. I know there's back-and-forth conversation about what one member said, but I think we're crossing the line here on this message. So please move on from whatever might be being said about the member from Yorkton. Please speak about the budget. I know, both sides. But please, this is going too far. Please continue.

Jordan McPhail: — Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to the day that we get to . . . Maybe the official Leader of the Opposition will have the great honour from the people of Saskatchewan to cut the ribbon finally in front of the Yorkton hospital and open up that hospital for the people of Saskatchewan. And maybe when that ribbon is cut, Mr. Speaker, the member from Yorkton will be on the same side as me and my colleagues on this side here.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, there's some good news out of this budget for the people of Saskatchewan. And that's with enough hard work from the members on this side of the House and the people of the province putting their trust in a better tomorrow, that there will only be a couple left from this tired and out-of-touch government on their way out before a new era of financial stewardship here in the province. One where people know that 200 million in tax dollars are going to staff at their local hospitals, not to overpay on mismanagement, government projects. One where the hundred million dollars allocated to protect the North won't be spent on overspending by a hundred million dollars on the planes but hiring northern First Nations-Métis fire teams.

[19:45]

They will know that their government will respond to their challenges and not boast about being the most affordable place in the nation while one-third of the kids in the province live in poverty, and 6 in 10 in the northern half.

In closing, I know this is a bad-news budget and will cost the people of not only my constituency but all across the province in ways that this government has yet to comprehend. I know our

team could have and would have delivered better for the people who work so hard to get by in this province.

And for the many reasons outlined by my colleagues and on behalf of the good people I serve in northern Saskatchewan, I will be supporting the amendment put forward by my brother from Mount Royal, and will not support the motion from the Finance minister. Thank you. tēniki. hay-hay. mahsi cho. ninanāskoman, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to stand in my place and respond to the 2026-2027 budget that has been put forward by the Minister of Finance. The theme of this year's budget is Protecting Saskatchewan, and that is exactly what this budget will do.

I would start off by saying that Saskatchewan is strong, but tariffs and the realignment of the world trade relationship as well as conflict in the Middle East, it created a climate of global economic uncertainty. Every province in Canada has been affected by this, not just Saskatchewan. More demands and fewer resources to address them have undoubtedly put pressure on our finances.

Despite these challenges, Saskatchewan's strong and diverse economy means we are better positioned than most other provinces to weather this current storm. But it is a challenge. And this difficult climate left us with a choice — a choice to cut services, to raise taxes, or to protect Saskatchewan. We chose to protect Saskatchewan.

So while we have projected a deficit, there are so many things going for us. We have one of the fastest growing economies in Canada, the lowest unemployment rate. We lead the nation in growth in housing starts. We have one of the highest percentage of exports with countries other than the US [United States] than any other province in Canada. And we have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio.

Mr. Speaker, just before I talk specifically about the budget, I would like to take a moment to thank those that support me every day — to my family, my friends, my constituency assistants, and to my constituency association.

As well I would like to thank my constituents, who have supported me for the past 10 years in this role. I have not taken one day for granted that I've had the opportunity to serve Estevan-Big Muddy. And I will continue to listen and bring their concerns and views forward so we can continue to be the best constituency in Saskatchewan to live, work, and raise a family.

It is an honour to serve in the health file as Minister of Rural and Remote Health, Mental Health and Addictions, and Seniors. This year the health budget is putting patients first by continuing to invest in the programs and services that Saskatchewan people expect, and there is no exception in this health budget. And we are protecting the programs and services with a 5 per cent increase to the health budget. And within that, there is targeted funding for the Estevan-Big Muddy constituency.

And I'm going to focus on my constituency during this speech, Mr. Speaker, but I think a lot of what I'm talking about you could drop in any constituency in this province. There are very direct ties right across the entire province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to start off by telling you about Elaine Walkom and her wish to bring MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] services to Estevan. She offered to donate \$2 million for that purpose. Elaine donated the money in memory of her late husband, Grant. Grant and Elaine ran a very successful oil field maintenance company servicing southeastern Saskatchewan. She felt that it would be nice to give something back to the region that supported their business over the years.

Emmanuel Health and St. Joseph's Hospital put a proposal forward — it was a great proposal — where they addressed the capital portion and included recruitment dollars and incentives as well. It was accepted and it proceeded. The fundraising goal was set at \$6.5 million, including Elaine's \$2 million. The campaign started in May of 2025, and in November of 2026 they had raised the entire \$6.5 million.

In just 18 months the St. Joseph's Hospital Foundation, under the leadership of their executive director, Lori Jarvis, raised all of the funds. I would like to extend a huge thank you to Lori and her team for their dedication, not only to the foundation but to this specific project. Today that dollar amount sits at just over \$6.687 million, so they've actually raised more than their goal. This is truly a southeast labour of love.

There were many individuals, companies from many communities who donated to this project, but as well there were surrounding towns and municipalities. I remember before the campaign started, municipalities had been writing, advocating for the MRI. And when the time came to donate, they did in a big way for a total of \$1.574 million.

What will this project mean for southeastern Saskatchewan? It will mean better access and services much closer to home. It will mean saving time and money for individuals that have to drive long distances for services. It will mean shorter wait times for receiving an MRI. And not only for those in the southeast, but it will help reduce wait times in the Regina area. So it really is a win-win for the entire province. The right care at the right time in the right place, Mr. Speaker. We are putting patients first.

There are dollars included in this budget so when the MRI is installed and ready to start operations, there will be operational dollars for staffing and supplies. This project would not have been possible if it had not been for the generous donations of individuals, companies, and municipalities. So to all of them I say, thank you.

And when we talk about our patients-first plan, one of the goals is modernizing diagnostics with working towards the 2028 goal of 90 per cent of patients receiving diagnostic scans within 60 days. Having MRI services in Estevan will, without a doubt, help achieve that goal.

And as we continue to try and ensure that services are brought closer to home, our government will continue to invest in modern health facilities. In fact that is one of our goals within our patients-first plan. This budget will continue to support the

request for proposals for a new Estevan regional nursing home. The goal is to have a proponent chosen later this spring. I know this is something that myself and the community, as well as the region, have been looking forward to. With the additional 65 beds, we will be bringing services closer to home and putting patients first, Mr. Speaker.

Another really exciting initiative I would like to talk about is the work we are doing with nurse practitioners across the province. As we look towards the future of having access to a primary care provider, we are taking the approach of using all of our professionals to the top of their scope of practice. When we think about having access, it is really important to know that access does not necessarily have to be with a physician. Depending on your ailment you are dealing with, there are several other professionals you can access, nurse practitioners being one of those.

Our government has expanded options for independent nurse practitioners who run their own clinics. To date, there have been 23 independent contracts awarded. And we have opened it up so that there's no limit on the number of contracts across the province. For my constituency, this has been a game changer when it comes to access. Two of those contracts were awarded in Estevan. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? It means access to a primary care provider for 1,600 people.

Now I did not know Jenna Kress until recently. But as I get to know her, I know that the passion that she has for transforming the way health care is provided . . . She wants to be a part of the solution. She was an RN in Estevan who chose to take schooling on her own and upgrade to become a nurse practitioner. And I am thankful that my community is benefiting from her passion. She is truly putting patients first — the right care in the right place at the right time.

Within our patients-first plan and our modernizing care delivery and scope of practice, there are a couple of goals that are important. One is to further expand the scope for nurse practitioners, pharmacists, and paramedics, as well as other professionals. The other one is to continue to enable support for team-based primary care models.

Once again, what does that mean for my constituency? It means funding within this budget that will allow someone like nurse practitioner Jenna Kress to be able to hire professionals within her clinic to provide services. For example, she could hire a registered nurse, a licensed practical nurse, or even a dietitian. Depending on the type of services Jenna would like to provide, she will be able to hire the professionals she needs to provide access to patients. This is truly the type of thing that puts patients first — the right care at the right time and in the right place.

Mr. Speaker, there is more work to do and that is exactly the work that will continue to happen under our patients-first plan. There are also other things in this budget that will benefit the Estevan-Big Muddy constituency. While there has been significant work done in the area over the past several years, there's always more work to do.

There will be some culvert work done on Highway 47 north of Estevan, as well as funding for functional study for the preservation work and improvements on that same Highway 47

north of Estevan.

There will be funds available through SaskPower to continue on with the refurbishment of coal units at Boundary dam. This is necessary work to protect the energy resources we have in our province, to ensure that we have affordable and reliable power production as we work towards nuclear, Mr. Speaker.

The decision to continue with the fuel source was incredibly important to the community of Estevan and surrounding area. If these units had been shut down, there would have been devastating economic consequences. Hundreds of individuals would have lost their jobs. Supporting contractors would have had less work or even needed to shut down as they set up specifically to support that industry. People would have moved out of the area.

And I would argue, it is also important for the province as these megawatts are needed to supply power to industries that make our province as successful as it is economically. Recently there was an announcement for a data centre for the province. One of the deciding factors was the fact that we have dispatchable, dependable baseload power.

Estevan will continue to receive funding to help protect our communities as well. We will see continued investment in the safer community and neighbourhood fund and the police and crisis team, otherwise known as the PACT team. This is a team that is an outreach team that pairs a front-line police officer with a social worker, and the goal is to help de-escalate situations as they attend.

This budget continues to protect and support our agriculture industry by supporting innovation, investing in emergency technologies, strengthening market access, and fully funding our suite of business risk management programs. This will help producers stay competitive and ready for the future.

Municipal revenue sharing will continue for all of our municipalities in our constituency. This is predictable, reliable, and stable funding that has no strings attached. Municipalities can direct those funds to whatever they feel is a priority for their ratepayers.

In education, funding has increased approximately 20 per cent over the past three years, which includes a 2.6 per cent increase this year. These are significant dollars and they are being put into investments that will help the system as a whole. When I think about the expansion of the specialized support classrooms, these are classrooms where students can receive the additional support that they need, while at the same time the teachers throughout the school are able to focus on teaching their curriculum, and all students should be able to learn to the best of their ability. Protecting our students, Mr. Speaker.

This budget also continues to support the energy and resource sector as we work towards our goal of 600,000 barrels per day by 2030. This will be achieved by continuing to support programs which help with oil production or investing in geological initiatives that will improve access to new, high-quality information to encourage exploration of new critical mineral discoveries.

As well when I think of affordability, I think of our tax structure. Tax cuts combined with indexation are providing approximately \$200 million in tax savings this year, meaning a family of four pays no provincial income tax on the first \$65,000 of income, the highest threshold in Canada.

Today a family of four earning \$100,000 is paying \$4,484 less in personal income tax than they would have when our government was first elected. If we just think about that for a minute, we are paying what I would consider is significantly less than 19 years ago. And those are not one-time savings. These are significant tax reductions that save Saskatchewan individuals and families thousands of dollars every single year.

All of the investments I talk about above would not be possible if it was not for the strong economic environment we have in our province. Right now in our province we have 60 projects in various stages of development. Those projects are bringing \$60 billion worth of investment. This means more growth, more jobs, and more revenue for the province to help support our health care system, our social services system, our justice system, all of the services that are provided by the province. And we're going to protect those within this budget, Mr. Speaker.

[20:00]

We will continue to put patients first with the right care at the right time and in the right place, Mr. Speaker. We had a choice. We had a choice to cut services, to raise taxes, or to protect Saskatchewan. We chose to protect Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I will not be supporting the amendment brought forward by the members opposite, but I will be supporting the motion brought forward by the Minister of Finance and seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley. God bless Saskatchewan and God bless Canada.

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

Betty Nippi-Albright: — Before I begin, I want to say a few thank yous. First of all I want to say thank you to my constituency assistants. I have two half-time CAs, Kate Greyeyes and Cameron Robinson. Thank you for taking care of me during this last year in the office with the half-time hours that you guys both put in. Thank you.

I also want to thank our caucus staff. You know, they work long hours. They make us look good. They push us and they plan. They're so well organized, and I just want to say I'm so grateful that we have such a strong caucus staff.

I also want to thank my colleagues, you know, for the hard work in serving the people of this province, listening to them. And I just want to take a moment here to thank one of my colleagues from Regina Lakeview. I'm really proud to be part of her team. Thank you, Carla.

And I would be remiss if I didn't mention my family. Now first of all I want to say thank you to my sweetheart — my sweetheart who has taken care of me, who has supported me, loved me, who has taken care of our grandchildren, has gone to their hockey games when I couldn't go. And I want to thank my family for the

strong foundation that they have laid for me in our cultural ceremonies as a Cree and a Saulteaux woman. Thank you.

And of course my constituents in Saskatoon Centre. The belief that you all have in me, continue to have in me, and the trust that you bestow on me to serve you in this Chamber and in this province. Thank you.

There's another group that I want to thank and that is . . . One of them is my First Nation, Kinistin Saulteaux Nation. I'm so proud to be a member from Kinistin. My great-grandfather was one of the signatories to the adhesion to Treaty 4, and I wear this Treaty 4 medallion proudly. Thank you, Kinistin, for loving me, for encouraging me, for believing in me.

I also want to say a special thank you to the First Nation communities across this province. I know many times when I go and visit you, you all say to me, "You're my MLA." And I keep telling them, "No, I'm Saskatoon Centre's MLA." But they're like, "You're our MLA though." So I want to say thank you, and thank you for the encouragement and believing in me in the work that we do.

So, Mr. Speaker, each of my colleagues will speak to their critic areas in response to this budget. And for my part, I will focus on Mental Health and Addictions as the shadow minister because that is where the need is tremendous and where this budget failed Saskatchewan people most.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin with the people who are too often forgotten in these discussions: our first responders. It's great to see that volunteer first responders are getting an increase in their tax credits. But I want to talk about those first responders that we often forget about, the ones that show up when the rest of us run the other way. They see things most of us will never see. They carry the weight of those experiences home to their families.

And yet despite everything they face, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing in this budget for their mental health. There's no dedicated supports, no family supports, no trauma-informed and trauma-practised care, no long-term services for cumulative stress injuries — absolutely nothing in this budget for those first responders. These are people who respond to overdoses, suicides, fires, violent incidents, and unimaginable tragedies. They carry those images for the rest of their lives. And this government, this Sask Party government cannot find a single dollar to support their mental health. That is not protecting communities, Mr. Speaker. That is abandoning people who protect us.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is in a mental health and substance use crisis. People across this province — adults, youth, children, families, front-line workers, health care workers, teachers, and first responders — are struggling. We have one in three children living in poverty, and we know poverty and mental health are deeply connected. When families are choosing between rent and groceries, when parents are working multiple jobs just to stay afloat, when children are going hungry, mental health suffers. And when mental health suffers, Mr. Speaker, everything else unravels.

This budget claims to be protecting patients by improving access and putting patients first, but the reality on the ground, Mr. Speaker, is it tells a different story. For years this Sask Party

government has underfunded mental health services and supports in this province, and we are seeing the consequences everywhere. Poverty, rising food bank usage, homelessness, toxic drug deaths, and suicide rates that continue to climb — these outcomes are not accidents, Mr. Speaker. They are the result of policy choices, choices made in this very Chamber by the Sask Party government.

Across this province, regardless of income, Mr. Speaker, people are suffering from mental health challenges, and many suffer in silence. When someone reaches out for help, they are in a life-or-death situation. They are not reaching out because things are a little tough or a little difficult. They are reaching out because they are at the edge. Yet when they do seek help, they are often sent home with nothing more than a pamphlet, if they are seen at all. People are told, "Come back when things get worse," as if things are not already unbearable, Mr. Speaker.

At the Dubé Centre, staff have had to modify physical spaces to prevent self-harm because so many people arrive in crisis, Mr. Speaker. That is not a sign of a healthy system. That is a sign of a system overwhelmed, under-resourced, and unable to meet the needs of the people it is supposed to serve.

I'm going to talk about youth. Youth mental health, a system that is failing our young people. Youth mental health supports are nearly non-existent. Young people are placed with adults or sent home without care. Parents are excluded from treatment decisions when their children age out of youth services, even when those parents are the ones keeping their children alive.

Mr. Speaker, I want to share one story. There's this family that came to see me. They live in the province here. They have a teenager who has struggled for years with severe mental health challenges. When she is admitted to hospital, wraparound supports are there. But the moment she is discharged, Mr. Speaker, those wraparound supports, that continuum of care ceases. It disappears. She is expected to return to school with no mental health resources. The school does not have the capacity to support her, so she is repeatedly being sent home. Her parents take turns missing work to care for her, and there is no mental health support for her parents either. This is not a failure of this family. This is a failure of this Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about mental health supports in our schools, or more accurately the lack of them. Schools are doing everything they can with what little they have, but they are not equipped to be the mental health system for this province. Teachers are not mental health clinicians. Educational assistants are not psychiatric nurses. Principals are not crisis intervention teams, Mr. Speaker. Yet every day schools, teachers, educators are being asked to manage complex mental health crises with no dedicated resources, no specialized staff, and no consistent access to mental health professionals, Mr. Speaker.

Children are breaking down in classrooms, on the playground, in hallways, in bathrooms, and the only option schools have is to call parents to come pick them up. Mr. Speaker, that is not support. That is a system failing children and youth.

We need mental health professionals in schools, Mr. Speaker. We need trauma-informed and trauma practice supports in schools. We need early intervention, not emergency room intervention.

And we need a government that understands that children cannot learn when they are in crisis, and teachers cannot teach when they are trying to keep students safe with no help.

There is nothing in this budget to support school-based mental health supports and services. Not one new investment, not one new initiative, not one acknowledgement by this Sask Party government of the crisis unfolding in classrooms across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, families are drowning. They are trying to keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table, pay bills, raise their children, and somehow, somehow maintain their own mental health. This budget offers them nothing, Mr. Speaker.

We are losing people of all ages, including children, to suicide. Saskatchewan loses nearly one person per day. There are no government-funded grief support programs or services for families left behind. We only have volunteer-led ones, and they are in demand. There's absolutely nothing in this budget to support those that are left behind. These deaths, Mr. Speaker, are not statistics. They are our loved ones, loved ones who were suffering and could not find help, Mr. Speaker.

[20:15]

Front-line workers, the very people supporting those in crisis, are also struggling, Mr. Speaker. They experience vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout. Yet there is nothing in this budget for their mental health needs. Instead, this Sask Party government is paying out-of-province, for-profit services three times more than what local, community-based, government-funded services receive.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to address the claim in this budget that the government is opening approximately 200 more addiction treatment services. These 200 services are not new, 200 spaces are not new. They're actually part of the commitment that was made several years ago, the same 500 spaces this government has re-announced again and again. There's no expansion beyond what was promised years ago. There's also nothing in this budget to increase education or training spaces for mental health and addictions professionals.

What I do want to say is it is good to see additional seats in the registered psychiatric nursing program. That is welcome. But it is nowhere near enough to meet the scale of need in this province, and that need is great.

Mr. Speaker, people have reached out to me asking who will receive the contract for forced treatment under *The Compassionate Intervention Act*. And many fear, Mr. Speaker, based on this Sask Party government's track record, that it will once again be awarded to an out-of-province, for-profit service provider. Meanwhile service providers — community-based, government-funded, in-patient treatment centres here in Saskatchewan, the ones rooted in our communities, the ones who know our people — have received no increase to expand their capacity to support more people seeking help for substance-related harms.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve better. They deserve a government that sees them, that hears them, and responds to the

reality of their lives. They deserve a government that understands that mental health is not a luxury — it is a lifeline. They deserve a government that invests in people, not in out-of-province, for-profit organizations that do not have the pulse of the community that we live in. They deserve a government that strengthens the workforce we need, not one that leaves training seats frozen while demand grows. And they deserve a government that keeps its promises, not one that re-announces the same treatment spaces year after year while people continue to wait for help that never comes.

Mr. Speaker, this government has doubled the debt to \$43 billion. Devine would certainly be blushing right now. Taxpayers will pay \$1.2 billion just to service that debt, money that could have gone to mental health supports, to the massive expansion of in-patient treatment beds for detox, long-term treatment, sober living homes, to school-based services, to first responders, to families who are barely hanging on.

That \$43 billion debt has doubled since this Premier took office. And what do people have to show for it? Longer wait times, fewer supports, more suffering, more loss. Budgets, Mr. Speaker, are moral documents. They show what a government values and who a government chooses to stand with. This budget does not stand with the people who need help the most.

I cannot and I won't support a budget that leaves people behind, that allows them to suffer and die. I cannot support a budget that ignores the suffering in our communities. And we're suffering, every corner of this province, every community, rural and urban. I cannot support a budget that fails to invest in the very services that save lives.

And that is why I will not be supporting the government's budget and will instead be supporting the amendment made by my colleague from Regina Mount Royal. Miigwech.

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

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's truly an honour to rise today and put some remarks on the record about how this year's budget is protecting Saskatchewan. In this year's budget our government outlines the investments we are making in Saskatchewan residents in an effort to protect all of Saskatchewan from the uncertainties created by the geopolitical situation around the world. We're investing in what matters most to the people of our province: health care, education, public safety, municipalities. And we're doing all this while making life more affordable and keeping Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family.

Before I take a deep dive into all the great things we are seeing in this year's budget, I'd like to take a few minutes and thank a number of people. First I would like to thank both the Premier and the Finance minister for their leadership not only through the budget process but throughout the entire year. Together they keep our team energized and on track to deliver for our constituents and the entire province. I'd also like to thank cabinet for all of the hard work each and every member puts into their portfolio and for coming together to ensure we put forward the best budget in the country.

I'd like to thank my fellow treasury board members for your long days and longer nights, for going through every item with a fine-tooth comb, bringing forward ideas and options, and having those frank and sometimes difficult conversations. I'd like to thank all the Finance officials. These folks do yeoman's work breaking down the numbers, doing the analysis, and explaining it all.

But I also need to thank the people at home. My constituent assistant Jackie, for answering all of the calls and emails coming into the office, dealing with concerns from constituents, and keeping, most importantly, me on track. My constituency team of great volunteers: Daryl, Mitch, Becky, Steve, Harold, Richard, and Brad to name just a few.

But above all others, Mr. Speaker, I need to recognize my family: my sons. Cody and Hayley, Shane and Amanda, and Jacob, I am so proud of you all.

Now, Mr. Speaker, today is kind of a special day. It's exactly 365 days since I gave my first budget reply. And the reason I know it's exactly 365 days is because it's my son Shane's birthday today. And last year I recall wishing him a happy birthday in my budget reply. So once again, happy birthday, Shane.

I'd like to thank my parents, Lorne and Marilyn, as well as my in-laws, Colleen and Ray and Helen. Your support and encouragement means so much. And of course, Mr. Speaker, my wife, my life, Lana. Lana's my biggest cheerleader. She's also my rock. She keeps me grounded, focused, and humble. And I couldn't do this without you.

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing better than having the family over and enjoying a meal together. I'm sure you can tell, Mr. Speaker, that I like to eat. What may surprise you is I also like to cook. I mean I'm no Fred Bradshaw, but I like to think I can handle myself fairly well in the kitchen.

Lana and I, recently we had everyone over for dinner. So Lana and I did a big grocery run for the evening. We picked up a nice plump chicken. Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of different ways you can cook a chicken. You can cut it up and fry it. You can smoke it. That's pretty good. You can make beer can chicken. Heck you can even put it on a rotisserie. This time however, we decided to roast it.

So Lana and I got everything you need for the stuffing: celery, onions, bread crumbs. We got a bag of potatoes that were produced locally, a couple cans of corn mostly for my son Cody. We got everything you need to make a Greek salad: peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, olives, feta cheese, and of course the best Greek dressing you'll find anywhere from Spiro's in Lloydminster, a long-time family-run restaurant in Lloydminster. And you can now buy that amazing dressing at finer grocery stores across the area.

Dessert was one of my specialties, Mr. Speaker: hot fudge pudding. Similar to one of those chocolate lava cakes you can get, it's easy to make with simple ingredients. And put over top of ice cream, it's a hit every time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't normally look that close at my grocery receipts when I get home. But given how the NDP opposition go on and on and on about PST [provincial sales tax] on groceries, I

thought I'd take a closer look. Guess what I saw, Mr. Speaker? Chicken, no PST. Potatoes, no PST. No PST on the gravy, the salad, the dessert. Nothing. All those groceries for that meal, and there wasn't one penny of PST on any of it. Perhaps before the members opposite make their claim we put PST on groceries, they should take a closer look at their own grocery receipts, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, no PST on groceries is just one of the many affordability measures that are included in this year's budget. We heard from our constituents that affordability was a key issue to them. That is why this year's budget includes 2.5 billion in affordability measures. Unlike other jurisdictions, such as NDP British Columbia, we're keeping our campaign promises, continuing to lower the personal income tax. The personal, spousal, and child exemptions and the seniors' tax benefit will all be increased again this year. Combine that with indexation; that means a family of four pays no provincial income tax on the first \$65,000 of combined income, the highest tax-free threshold in the nation.

Other affordability measures include the continuation of the home renovation tax credit, the graduate retention program, and keeping our Crown utility costs low, to name just a few. When you combine taxes, utilities, housing costs, Saskatchewan is the most affordable province in Canada for a family of four to live, work, and raise a family. That, Mr. Speaker, is what protecting Saskatchewan looks like.

I recently had the honour of joining the Minister of Community Safety to present the Premier's Commendation medallions to volunteer firefighters from Maidstone, Turtleford and the RM of Mervin, and St. Walburg for their roles in battling the northern wildfires last summer. I would like to once again thank them for their service to their communities and to our province.

To recognize the service of all of our volunteer firefighters across the province, we are doubling the Saskatchewan volunteer first responders tax credit from \$3,000 to \$6,000. In response to this announcement, the president of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Firefighters Association, Aaron Buckingham, stated, and I quote:

None of us do it for the money. None of us do it to be reimbursed. None of us do it to be recognized. This is a nice thing the government is doing for us.

Mr. Speaker, the brave men and women who take time away from work, from their families to protect the rest of us are true heroes, and we thank you.

Keeping our communities safe is a priority for our government and is something I hear on a regular basis from constituents. Rural crime is on the rise, fuelled by drugs and gangs. Police response time in rural areas can be hours, and criminals know it. That is why we are continuing to invest in more policing across the province, putting more boots on the ground to lower response times and keep our citizens safe. On top of the 310 million we've committed to support the RCMP in this province, including the \$26 million targeted policing on First Nations, \$4.8 million will be used to hire new officers for the Saskatchewan Marshals Service.

[20:30]

Marshals work alongside our RCMP and are focused on our provincial priorities such as gangs, trafficking of drugs and illegal guns, and the location and apprehension of dangerous, high-risk offenders.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I find the most exciting, while not a huge number in the budget, is the brand new small town and rural policing grant program. This new program will help towns and RMs, which have their own small police force such as community safety officers, support the RCMP in their area and potentially expand their services to respond to the unique needs of rural communities. I have a number of RMs in my constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford that have already reached out to me, excited about this new program.

Mr. Speaker, health care is obviously a big part of this budget, and the patient-first health care plan is an amazing plan. And I'd just like to talk about some of the things that are happening in Cut Knife-Turtleford as far as health care. Mr. Speaker, nurse practitioners have been a godsend to the people of Cut Knife-Turtleford. The initial expansion of the nurse practitioner contract, one of those nurse practitioners actually was set up in Wilkie. That nurse practitioner was seeing as many as 800 patients, most of whom were previously without a primary care provider.

That is amazing news for that community, who was short a health care practitioner. Now they have that, and they are very happy to hear that. Following the success of that pilot, now we're expanding the program province-wide and removing the cap on the number of contracts available, which is great news — great news for towns like Edam, Cut Knife, Neilburg, and more who could really use a nurse practitioner in their community.

Another significant part of our patient-first health care plan is the expansion of scope for our nurse practitioners. This will give them expanded hospital privileges, emergency room oversight, and greater long-term care responsibilities. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in the community of Turtleford, which I am proud to represent, nurse practitioners are already doing the bulk of the work at the long-term care facility there, and by all accounts it is going extremely well. These measures will help us ensure that Saskatchewan residents will receive the right care in the right place at the right time. That's protecting Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is not only a key economic driver in Cut Knife-Turtleford; it's a way of life. Agriculture fuels communities, schools, local arenas, and curling rinks. From the rich farm land around Unity, Maidstone, and Edam to the ranchland around Senlac, Cut Knife, and along both sides of the North Saskatchewan River, our agricultural producers continue to provide the very best in wheat, canola, and beef. That is why we continue to support those producers by fully funding the suite of business risk management tools that are available, with an over \$500 million investment in crop insurance and AgriStability. These programs allow producers to sleep well at night, knowing that in the event of drought, market downturns, or other negative impacts out of their control, they are protected.

There is that word again, Mr. Speaker — protect. It makes me think of a long-standing tradition when it comes to budgets. Apparently this tradition goes all the way back to 1960 when John Diefenbaker's minister of Finance, Donald Fleming, bought

a new pair of shoes to deliver his first budget. This year, our Minister of Finance took a different path. He kept the same shoes as he wore last year because they were still in pretty good shape, much like our economy is today. However he did spray a nice coating of protectant on those shoes to ensure they would remain in good shape in the future, much like our budget does for the economy and the residents of Saskatchewan.

It's because of our strong and diverse economy that we are able to keep our deficit low while keeping our campaign promises of lower taxes and protecting Saskatchewan families, unlike NDP British Columbia who brought forward a massive deficit and broke their campaign promises by increasing taxes. In fact, Mr. Speaker, their per capita deficit is four times what ours is, and they increased taxes. We continue to have the best credit rating in the country, the second-lowest debt-to-GDP ratio, and are the most affordable place for a family of four to live, work, and play.

But I do wonder, Mr. Speaker, what would happen if the tradition was extended to the opposition? What kind of footwear would best represent their take on the budget? Well I decided to do a little research. I have listened intently to the members opposite as they have given their replies, and I looked back in *Hansard* to see what they had said in previous years. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you won't be surprised to hear what I discovered.

It doesn't seem to matter which year you look at — the same old, tired lines are repeated over and over, year after year. First they'll criticize us for overspending. Then in the very next breath they'll criticize us for not spending enough. They claim we need to get to balance, then they say we need to lower taxes. Year after year it's always the same thing: spend more, spend less; make more, tax less.

I think the evidence makes it clear, Mr. Speaker. While it would take some lenience from you on the Assembly dress code, I look forward to seeing the Finance critic, the member from Mount Royal, wearing an old, worn-out pair of flip-flops at next year's budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, on a more serious note, I did notice something else as I was reviewing *Hansard*. Over the past number of months, the opposition NDP have been asking the government to condemn certain people and groups. We even had a 75-minute debate on it. They'd like us to condemn leaders of other countries. They'd like us to condemn premiers of other provinces. They even want us to condemn our own citizens . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry . . . [inaudible] . . . I don't think you can be saying that that's what they'd like you to be doing. You can't impute what their thoughts are.

James Thorsteinson: — I'll withdraw that and apologize. Mr. Speaker, they refuse to condemn one of their own even when that person is inciting hate towards other individuals. Mr. Speaker, most members of this Assembly know that I served as the Saskatchewan Party president for almost nine years. If anything had come out of the party office that was this egregious, I would have acted immediately to ensure that the individual responsible was held accountable. And if I hadn't, Mr. Speaker, I can guarantee you that I would have received a very quick call from the Premier demanding action. Mr. Speaker, the silence and inaction from the Leader of the Opposition and all members

opposite on this speaks volumes.

And, Mr. Speaker, with that, I'm happy to support the budget brought forward by the member from Rosetown-Delisle, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley. And I will not be supporting the amendment.

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

Nathaniel Teed: — Mr. Speaker, the moral high ground we're standing on here, its heights, it's tipping too, Mr. Speaker. I have some thoughts about this later on, but I think I'll save it for another part of my speech because I'd rather start with some of the good stuff than dive right into this pile of stuff we've been hearing from the other side, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we've been hearing a lot of thanks to our families. Everyone kind of starts in a different direction, but I'm going to start with a big thanks to my support system, my partner, James, who is actually in Regina tonight in the city at the Sask Realtors Association awards happening at Casino Regina. I'm trying to get him to come for a sitting tomorrow, but we'll see how it goes.

James has been a real estate agent now for about three years and just absolutely loving that career. He has met so many new people and he's just having a blast tonight with all of them, alongside my colleague I think from Regina South Albert whose partner is also a real estate agent. So they get to have fun. We're holding down the fort here in the legislature.

But I just want to say a big thanks to him. He always teases me that if he ever does show up, he really wants a heartfelt introduction like the member from Saskatoon Fairview has given her partner. Every single time, Mr. Speaker, I hear about this introduction that the member from Fairview gave to her partner, and it's impossible to top at this point I think. It's legendary now.

I want to say a big thanks to the rest of my support system. My mom and sister. The family that we've had recently move to Saskatoon — James's mom and her husband, who we moved from Grande Prairie, Alberta out to Saskatchewan, out to Saskatoon. I kind of spoke about it last time, but it's just so nice to have that family closer to home. We'd been working on them for a while and finally got them out to Saskatoon for their retirement that they so deserve.

Every time I do a response I try to say a thank you to some of the . . . We kind of talked about friends, friends that recharge the battery. In this work you really do have to carve out that time to see those friends because it can sometimes just be such a busy job. But I do want to give a shout-out to a couple friends here. So Rachel, Jesse, Katie, Ross, Spencer, Jordan, Thomas, and Brayden — these are my board game crew.

So I have seen these folks sometimes, you know, on the weekly, where we'll play board games, recharge the batteries. And I just so appreciate that time that we're able to spend. During session it's a little tougher. I usually will try to book it home. But you know, like after a long week you're going to be tired. But been trying to get to see them as much as possible because, you know, when you get to spend that time recharging, you're just better for the rest of the week.

I also want to say a big thank you to my constituency assistant, Avery Beaudin. I spoke a little about her joining my office in the Throne Speech response. But I just think that, you know, the people of Saskatoon Meewasin are so lucky to have someone who is so passionate at representing their needs and is so ready to dive into the hard work it does to make a difference in folks' lives.

And I'll say that her along with the member from Saskatoon Fairview probably do give the best romantasy book recommendations in the province. So if you're really looking for something new to read, you've got to reach out to saskatoonmeewasin@ndpcaucus.sk.ca and you could probably get a good book recommendation while you're getting your casework taken care of in the constituency office of Meewasin.

To the people of Saskatoon Meewasin, it is an absolute honour to continue to do this work representing you in this Chamber. You know, again we're all biased about how beautiful our ridings are. I know we spoke about the Maple Creek area, and my colleague from South Albert talked about how beautiful she thinks her riding is. Well we all, you know, think those ridings that we represent are beautiful.

Saskatoon Meewasin is always . . . It's always such a joy to go door knocking in those communities and getting to chat with folks, getting to learn more about what makes them tick and what are the issues that are important to them. So I have to say a big thank you to them and say, yeah, I think my riding might be the most beautiful in the province. So we'll have to debate that at some point, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to jump into the '26-27 budget here because I know we've got some . . . try to keep to the clock here. I can talk a little longer, so I'm going to set my little timer here.

You know, Mr. Speaker, whether it be on cost of living, access to health care, quality of education for the future generation, you know, I think that this is a bad-news budget, Mr. Speaker. There's not a lot to celebrate when you come to the ideas around cost of living, around health care, around education.

Budget '26-27 is full of flatlined funding, Mr. Speaker. And flatlined funding in health care and education, it means cuts when you're up against inflation that just keeps going up year after year. So in every one of those areas, folks that are working on our front lines are doing more with less.

On cost of living, for all the boasting that this government does about Saskatchewan being the most affordable place to live in the country, Saskatchewan workers and families continue to tell us that the cost-of-living crisis is one of their biggest concerns. Saskatchewan people have been reporting for some time — not just this year, but for many years — the highest financial anxiety in the country, and 4 in 10 are borrowing money just to put food on the table.

And despite this we did not see a single new measure of cost-of-living relief in budget '26-27 to help working people weather the storm. No new measures to lift the almost 78,000 children out of poverty in Saskatchewan.

On cost of living, this government will talk you blue in the face

telling you that you have it all wrong, that it's the most affordable place to live. Every year they will pat themselves on the back for the 2.5 billion in annual affordability relief baked into every year's budget. But the truth is that after that affordability relief baked into every year's budget, quote unquote, Mr. Speaker, it's cold comfort for the folks who work a full day shift in our health care systems or in our education systems who are stopping at the food bank on the way home from that full-time shift.

[20:45]

These are the same working people who are turning to selling their blood plasma to supplement their income, after receiving the Saskatchewan Party's \$2.5 billion affordability annual baked-in in every budget, Mr. Speaker. This is the state that we really have in Saskatchewan.

Instead of making life more affordable, Mr. Speaker, this government actually made your life more expensive. Just days before this budget was announced, on a Friday afternoon in a quiet little news dump, Mr. Speaker, the government chose to actually make the people's lives in Saskatchewan more expensive.

Hikes to SaskPower rates hitting small businesses and agriculture producers. Hikes to SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] rates and deductible rates. Hikes to deductible rates: we're seeing up to 36 per cent increase, \$700 to \$950. Hikes to SGI fees: we've got a \$15 fee to register a vehicle or renew your licence. Hikes to vehicle registrations: a \$5 fee to renew your vehicle registration. Heck, there's even a new \$2 fee when you go to renew your licence.

Mr. Speaker, that's not all. We're not even done. Because now, if you are a qualified health care worker or in ag or you want to work in any of the in-demand fields, you will now have to pay \$500 to apply for the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program.

Mr. Speaker, another cherry on top of this affordability crisis that we're seeing is that the government decided that we should also be taxing our fun too. We saw new fees for hunting and fishing added on to all the things that we want to do after work. It's all becoming more expensive.

They'll say, Mr. Speaker, on this side they're also protecting services and they're not raising taxes, while making a huge cash grab into the pockets of working families with this budget and those tax hikes. This is a bad-news budget, Mr. Speaker, for families desperately looking for relief from the affordability onslaught.

On health care, let's talk about health care. This is a bad-news budget that fails health care workers, and it fails the people of Saskatchewan when it comes to accessing publicly funded health care. Again, flatline budget, Mr. Speaker. Budget '26-27 sees a 0.3 per cent increase in health care funding over last year's spending. Flatline funding is a cut in the face of inflationary pressures.

But where else budget '26-27 fails the people of Saskatchewan on health care is that it fails the very front-line health care workers working every day, holding on to our unravelling health

care system. There is nothing in budget '26-27 to get health care workers the real wage increases they so desperately deserve. Health care workers have gone three years without a collective agreement in Saskatchewan. They've gone four years without a raise, Mr. Speaker, in a recruitment and retention crisis where every single jurisdiction in Canada is fighting to incentivize health care workers to take up jobs in their province.

This province continues to fight those health care workers at the bargaining table and continues to disrespect them by blocking real wage increases that they desperately deserve and that they need. There are no dollars set aside in budget '26-27 to signal that that government has any interest in bargaining in good faith. No signal that this government will sign a health care deal after three years of negotiating.

We will continue to lose those health care workers to other jurisdictions who are making their salary grids more and more competitive, who are listening to those health care workers and making the changes in health care that encourage folks to take up the career in health care or move for that job in health care. It's time to sign a deal and get a real raise for health care workers.

Mr. Speaker, this is also a bad-news budget when you look at it from an education perspective. A bad-news budget for students and their families. This budget means cuts for those very students and families. Let's look at per-student funding. The '26-27 budget actually cuts per-student funding by \$33 year over year when you take into account inflationary pressures and the influx of students that our school system is seeing.

There are also cuts to the infrastructure budget. And when you read the small print in that budget, you will discover that of the '26-27 budget, the Minister of Education has paused numerous school renovations across the province, schools in desperate need of repair. And we've toured through these schools, Mr. Speaker, their leaky roofs, water pouring into classrooms and hallways, buildings that are bursting at the seams.

There are no updates on the desperately needed schools in Brighton where 9,000 Saskatonians are calling home, one of the fastest growing communities in Saskatoon. And there's no new high school in this budget for White City, the largest community in Saskatchewan without a high school.

But very curious, it seems here that while we saw a pause on school renovation because of budget cuts, there was one curious exemption. And I'm going to walk through this one very narrowly, Mr. Speaker, as per your ruling.

A new school was announced for Shellbrook. A curious, curious, situation. I think the through line is very clear without having to say it in explicit words. When you dive in a little tiny bit more into that situation, you find that there are actually almost 200 more schools in worse shape than the school in Shellbrook. We jumped right out the line and up to the top.

So let's review: budget cuts, per-student funding for education; budget cuts, renovations projects stalled or paused. But through this a new school was announced for Shellbrook. I think that this Premier and his Minister of Education have a lot of explaining to do to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'm going to jump over to social services, and I don't want to take too long in here, but I think that I really need to point out a few things that I found very glaring in the social services section of this budget, Mr. Speaker.

You know, what we saw from this government was that we cut direct payments from Social Services to landlords. We were warned. We were told that if you cut those direct payments, you are going to see evictions. This government decided to cut the direct payments to our power utilities. We were warned, Mr. Speaker. They said that if you cut those direct payments to the landlords and the power utilities, the delinquencies are going to go up. And, Mr. Speaker, we have seen that.

We have seen the onslaught of homelessness hit absolutely every community in our province, and the through line goes right back to that decision to cut the direct payments from Social Services to landlords. Homelessness is at record highs. And what I thought was absolutely . . . I'm just gobsmacked, Mr. Speaker, that this government chose in this budget to bring in a new measure: \$1,000 for those individuals to make up for the power utility delinquencies that this government's choices have caused. So now we're digging out our old mistakes.

But, Mr. Speaker, it gets even better. That \$1,000 is a loan, and what we're told is that no, no, no, don't worry. This won't affect your payments, your social services payments. But at some point, you're going to have to figure out how to pay that back. We've seen this story before. Those payments get deducted.

These are folks that are already living in precarious, precarious situations, and any kind of loan or deduction, it's going to wind up in the constituency offices of the MLAs sitting on this side of the House to deal with when those folks are seeing their payments deducted and they're in conflict with the Ministry of Social Services. We knew that this is going to be a problem. We've said, go back. Go back to the way it used to be, and we'll start to bring down the mess. Mr. Speaker, it was really just baffling to me to see this — just cleaning up a mess with another mess. We'll just keep cycling it through.

Mr. Speaker, I've got a few more minutes, I've only hit 10 minutes here. I thought oh man, this speech is going to take me 20 to 30 minutes to get through.

An Hon. Member: — You had seven before you pushed the button.

Nathaniel Teed: — That's true. Okay, uh-oh. Okay, so we're really actually way ahead . . . The member from Saskatoon Fairview here is telling me I have eight minutes. Okay. I'll really hurry it up here, I promise.

You know, I really got to the part of my statement that I was going to kind of respond to. Mr. Speaker, we've seen a lot of . . . And I, you know, I was really bandying around parliamentary language, intent. I landed on "disingenuous" statements made. I really don't feel like the members — and maybe I'm putting . . . — really meant what they're saying. You know, maybe they do, but it's a tough one because I really think that this is a really big attempt to change the channel on a really terrible budget. You know, and I really don't feel like there is a lot of ground to stand on, on that side of the House, on that moral high ground that

we're talking about.

You know, it's been three years since this government used the full weight of an emergency session, the first in 20 years, Mr. Speaker, to ram through harmful — and some in our community might say hateful — legislation targeting members of my community, targeting queer and trans kids in our schools.

You know, that's also been three years since this government blocked third-party educators from talking about consent and safe relationships and bodily autonomy in our schools. It's been three years, Mr. Speaker, since Saskatoon Sexual Assault and Information Centre has run their program I'm the Boss of Me, a puppet show that helps children understand that they're not at fault for abuse that's happening in their homes. You know, that's really what concerns me. Well I'll say both: both the pronoun policy but also that we're blocking such valuable education from our schools.

And there's so many other organizations that were doing so much important work, bringing expert-driven, age-appropriate education to our classrooms. So I will once again stand in this Chamber and say that if the government wants to do the right thing, if they want to "debate, not hate," they can repeal Bill 137, and we can start to rebuild the now non-existent relationship that this government has with the queer and trans community in this province. Then we can have a conversation and really see eye to eye, I think, Mr. Speaker.

So in closing, I think, at a time when people are struggling to get by, when families are choosing between groceries and their bills, when workers are exhausted and falling behind, I think this government made a really clear choice. They could have made life more affordable, they could have strengthened public services like health care and education, and they could have shown respect to the working people who are keeping this province running. And they did not do any of those things. Instead they chose higher costs, they chose cuts dressed up as stability or protection, and they chose to leave working people behind to carry that burden.

It doesn't have to be this way though, Mr. Speaker. And I think that is what this team on this side of the House brings to the doorstep every time we talk to someone and every conversation that we have. The Saskatchewan NDP has the backs of hard-working people in this province. And there's a choice in front of us because I think Saskatchewan does deserve a government that will choose them.

So in closing, I will not be supporting or voting for this budget. Instead I will be supporting the amendment brought by my colleague, the member from Regina Mount Royal. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Colleen Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we customarily do and as many have already done in their replies in this Chamber, we take the opportunity to thank folks who have supported us in our role as members of this Assembly.

And I want to begin by thanking my constituents. It truly is humbling and an honour to serve them, and I thank them for the

confidence and trust they have placed in me to advocate for them and be their voice within government. Their issues and concerns are sincere and require my full attention, no matter how big or small. I am always so grateful to be invited to many organization and community events, not just bringing greetings and speaking at these events, but feeling a warm and kind welcome as a friend and supportive community member.

Mr. Speaker, Tracy Patterson was my CA for the past 12 years. She was my lifeline when it came to handling constituency business, doing yeoman's work when I was away in session, tackling every task with enthusiasm and professionalism. She could handle even the toughest of phone calls, constituent office visits, organize events for me, and always with pleasantry and a caring and compassionate attitude.

Tracy has had a very trying past two years with her husband's passing in the spring of last year at the young age of 55. And earlier this year she had to step out as my CA due to having to work through some of her own medical challenges. I miss her strong, caring work ethic and wish her all the best during her very trying journey. Life is definitely not fair.

[21:00]

Mr. Speaker, thank you to my very supportive and loving husband, Kim, who now, after 35 years on the bench as a Provincial Court judge and doing another five years as a relief judge, is finally fully retired. So to him and my family for always being there to encourage me in my role, but also for always sharing their two cents, thoughts, and advice about what should and shouldn't be done as a government. It keeps me grounded in what matters to the next generation of young families and businesses and entrepreneurs who look to Saskatchewan to be a leader in continuing to remove red tape and allow for growth opportunities for young families to thrive and prosper.

This is the first time in a while that I've had to stand up and talk about my own family and where they're at in their lives, so I'll take a little bit of time to do that here. So my daughter Nevada has a master's degree from the University of Saskatchewan in biology and a teaching degree, and continues to teach grade 12 biology, and has taken on a new role as an academic advisor and student support at the Lloydminster Comprehensive High School.

Dr. Casey Young is a radiologist working part-time at his clinics in Lloydminster, but is also the community development officer for the last two years for Canada Diagnostic Centres, and travels to cities across this country working with other radiologists and physicians to build diagnostic clinics and create more efficient opportunities for diagnostics within Canada. He and his wife, Jessica, a special ed teacher, have five girls and one son: Pearl, 13; Belle, 11; Hazel, 9; Ruby, 7; June, 5; and Otto, one and a half. A very busy household to say the least.

Dr. Chester Young is a dentist and partner of Rainbow Falls dentistry in Chestermere Lake, Alberta along with his brothers, Dr. Riley and Dr. Duke Young. They also own a second clinic in a new development near the Calgary airport. Dr. Riley is married to Ashley, a pharmacist who works for a company managing pharmacies in western provinces. They have two three-year-old twins, Dax and Tenley, and a two-year-old, Cade. And just on

Friday they told us they were expecting their fourth.

Dr. Duke Young is also an owner with a partner of a dental clinic in Kindersley and did training in January and February of this year to practise orthodontics at the Rainbow Falls clinic.

Dr. Fraser Young is an orthodontist, owns and runs Edge Orthodontics in Lloydminster, Camrose, and Cold Lake. He and his wife, Chantal, a dental assistant, have three very young children: Beck, six; Harris, four; and Nellie, one.

Dr. Percy Young, a dentist, works with his brother Fraser at Edge Orthodontics. He is married to Lesia, a dentist at SmileWorks in Lloydminster. They have a two-year-old son, Wells, and are expecting their second child this summer.

Dr. Ace Young owns and practises dentistry at Lloydminster Dental. He and his wife, Shelby, an RN, have two-year-old twins, Briggs and Brinley, and are expecting another child in May. Yes, Mr. Speaker, 15 grandkids and 3 more on the way. It does appear my kids are taking care of population growth.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposition have called this a bad-news budget. Well I stand here before you to say I am proud to be a member of a government that has chosen not to raise taxes or cut the very important services to the citizens of this great province. This is a good-news budget.

During some very challenging economic times in the history of our country and our world, to be able to have the lowest debt-to-GDP in all of Canada while continuing to make strong investments in affordability, health care, education, and communities shows our government's commitment to protecting Saskatchewan and all that we have worked to grow, build, and provide for those whom we all serve.

Mr. Speaker, our government has enacted policies that foster economic growth while maintaining strong financial management. All provinces have had to make tough decisions in how they can continue funding key services while trying to keep life affordable. Mr. Speaker, this cannot be repeated enough: Saskatchewan has among the lowest personal taxes in the country.

On top of our annual 2.5 billion in affordability measures, we have introduced taxation changes to the tune of \$200 million in tax savings this year. We have the highest tax-free threshold in all of Canada. A family of four pays no provincial income tax on their first 65,000 of combined income. Indexation of personal income tax for 2025 will save taxpayers an estimated 42 million on their 2026 taxes. And the combined effect of indexation of the tax system from 2007 to 2026 will save taxpayers a total of \$489 million.

Mr. Speaker, our government continues to make significant investments in our municipalities with an 8 per cent increase to municipal revenue sharing, protecting the investments already made and allowing our communities to continue providing necessary services, infrastructure, and programs for their residents.

Lloydminster has benefited greatly from the MRS [municipal revenue sharing] since implemented by our government, which

is the only program like this in all of Canada. We are a border city, and so for the Saskatchewan residents of the city, they received \$713,166 in 2007. And today the current 11,000 Saskatchewan residents, the city now receives \$3,194,148. That's a 347.9 per cent increase.

Lloydminster has also benefited and received funding as part of the past Canada Infrastructure Program, upgrading their new wastewater treatment plant, and the recent new recreational entertainment facility, the Cenovus Hub. And under ICIP [Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program], the RM of Britannia received 197,606 for the community of Greenstreet's lagoon expansion.

Our government's municipal economic enhancement program supports the rural communities in my constituency too. The RM of Britannia received \$309,447 and the RM of Frenchman Butte received \$214,730 under this program. Continuing to increase funding to the municipal revenue sharing allows these communities to protect these investments for their residents.

Saskatchewan's 27 school divisions will receive \$2.4 billion in school operating funding. The Lloydminster Public School Division, the Lloydminster Catholic School Division, and the Northwest School Division have benefited from the \$54 million that has helped to address non-teacher salary increases, inflation pressures, and the specialized support classrooms. The school divisions in my constituency have expressed to me personally their appreciation for the financial support they receive from the government to develop these specialized support classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, I attended the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] College of Education. My husband, Kim, received his law degree from the U of S College of Law, and all eight of my children received their degrees from the U of S. And as you heard in my introduction — you can count — 11 of my family members are in the health care fields in one manner or the other.

I am so very proud of all my children, all that they've accomplished and continue to accomplish in their professional lives, their businesses, and their young and growing families. They get excited about new innovations, medical equipment, and research yet today. So I was extremely disappointed and angry to hear the opposition member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre state that she tells young people in this province not to go into health care.

An 847.1 million investment in our post-secondary institutions for the expansion of training seats, including 9.9 million to finalize implementation of three new domestic health care training programs that will begin this fall — respiratory therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language pathology — and 3.8 million for continued implementation of the physician assistants program. These investments within our post-secondary institutions are critical to support our new patient-first health care plan.

More post-secondary seats that will see more doctors and nurses, nurse practitioners be trained in Saskatchewan. The budget provides 4.1 million in new funding to add 20 physician and 26 nurse practitioner seats in the new academic year. My son was a graduate of the 60 seats in the College of Medicine back then, and it's wonderful to see the investment we've made to expand

to 120 seats, prioritizing Saskatchewan students.

Mr. Speaker, here's a telling and strong comparison when protecting our education in this province. Under the NDP 176 schools were closed. Under this Sask Party government we have built 74 brand new schools and 25 major renovations. That's 109 new schools. Add onto that numerous minor renovations, along with providing preventative maintenance and renewal funding to school divisions, a program and funding that didn't exist under the NDP. Mr. Speaker, there are more schools to come, and we are not cancelling any school builds. And it appears the only expertise in school building the NDP has is mothballing schools.

Mr. Speaker, we are protecting the safety of our highways in this province. This is key to ensuring our resources can get to market and our businesses can move products and keep our families safe as they come and go. A total budget of 764 million continues to keep this province's thousands of kilometres of highways safe for all. The '26-27 rural integrated roads for growth will provide \$348,750 to the RM of Frenchman Butte for surface strengthening. Total planned expenditures of \$12.8 million will see the continuation of trading passing lanes on Highway 17 north of Lloydminster, which will include culvert replacements, bridge repair, and other safety improvements. Protecting Saskatchewan.

We are better positioned than any other province in all of this country to protect our services, infrastructure, programs, and the citizens who choose to live, work, and raise their families in this great province. The NDP opposition can't handle the fact that we are making good-news announcements and our economy is strong and leading the way. They make statements like there's nothing here to be proud of. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we strongly disagree, and so do the 60-plus companies who have chosen to make significant investments in this province.

Jason Aebig, the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, stated, and I quote:

Importantly, it signals that Saskatchewan remains a steady and attractive place to invest and grow and that it recognizes the critical role businesses play in local economies and communities. Balancing the books takes a one-two punch. It requires a combination of fiscal discipline by government and private sector growth to close the gap.

As the province explores efficiencies and savings across government ministries, Crown corporations, and agencies, this budget will enable our businesses to do their part, create jobs, expand the tax base, and help fund the officers, doctors, nurses, and teachers we need.

Mr. Speaker, when any member of this Assembly supports the promotion of hate speech from within their own team that targets individual elected members, they should immediately remove that person from their staff and condemn those words. It's disappointing that not one member on that side of the House has taken the opportunity to stand up and condemn the actions of this employee. And it appears that the NDP's leader position is strong on this, and this is also the entire NDP's caucus position. Mr. Deputy Speaker, silence is telling.

And in closing, Mr. Speaker, here's some advice I gave to my

children that I would like to pass on to members opposite. A quote, a quote attributed to ancient Chinese philosopher Lao-tzu. It offers mindfulness — a simple, actionable philosophy for personal transformation and behavioural control:

Watch your thoughts; they become your words. Watch your words; they become your actions. Watch your actions; they become your habits. Watch your habits; they become your character, and it is your character that determines your destiny.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the budget put forth by the Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley, and I will not be supporting the amendment put forth by the opposition.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Speaker. Hoo, this is a bad-news budget. Now we know that everything is getting more expensive, and yet this budget is going to cost Saskatchewan people more.

[21:15]

Now when I look at this budget, I think about the theme. And I think back to, you know, a previous premier, when they would put out themes like making Saskatchewan the best place to live for someone who has a disability, or aspirational themes where they're trying to improve things in Saskatchewan.

When I think about the issues that we're facing right now in this province around child poverty . . . one in three kids in this province are living in poverty. We think about record homelessness that has just ballooned in this province. I think about health care in this province and that it's worse now than it has ever been. And yet the theme that we have in this provincial budget is Protecting Saskatchewan.

And so I really got to wonder about like, protecting Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, when we're cutting \$33 per student out of education. I think about, how are we protecting Saskatchewan when there's no new affordability measures in this budget whatsoever? There's nothing for wildfires in the North after an unprecedented wildfire season last year and fears about another severe wildfire season this year.

There's flatlining in health care with a 0.3 per cent increase in funding. There's no contract for health care workers. We see a deficit of \$118 million. We're spending \$1.2 billion to service the debt, which has ballooned to \$43 billion. This is a bad-news budget, and yet they're trying to put lipstick on a pig here, Mr. Speaker.

And I got to say, one of the lines that the government's been using over the last couple days is that this is a bad-news budget, which I agree with, but they add on "for the NDP." And I haven't really understood why they're saying it's bad news for us. But as I've listened to them tonight, I've come to understand that this is a bad-news budget for the NDP because just like in 1991 when we took over and we were three months away from bankruptcy as a province, in 2028 it's going to be the NDP who form government and have to clean up all of this mess. \$43 billion in

debt, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is unbelievable.

And I like the line from my colleague from Saskatoon Westview, who said this budget is divine. Simply divine. Simply divine.

Now as many members in the Chamber have done, I'm going to take a moment to welcome my colleague from Regina South Albert. And then I'm going to say some thank yous real quick to a few people before I continue on with my skewering of the budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You're right. You're right.

I want to say thank you to my constituency assistant, Wren, for all the work that she does in my office every day to keep things going and keeping the good folks of Regina Walsh Acres well served, making sure we're responding to them in good time and taking their feedback and being in constant communication. I appreciate the work she does every day.

Also want to say thank you to my constituency executive. These folks, as volunteers, put in countless hours to support me, to support our team, and I just want to say a huge thank you to each and every one of them.

I do want to thank my family: my wife and my twin girls. My wife is just an amazing human being, works as a biologist. And I think the world of her. I think she is a rock star in what she does and working in the conservation field to make sure that the legacy that we leave for our kids is better than the one that we've inherited. So really proud of her.

And I also want to just give a shout-out to my daughter Teal, who recently was part of her school basketball team, and they won the league champion here. And she got to play in the semifinal, which was really exciting. So congratulations to her. And then also to Rowan, who has been curling lately and loving it. So she also played in kind of a year-end tournament and got to skip, which was really exciting for her. Nice to see them both growing up.

I want to say thank you to my team on this side of the House. It is truly an honour and a privilege to get to serve with each and every one of you. The level of compassion, of intelligence, of care for the people of this province and the work that you all do inspires me every day. And I know you would all make amazing cabinet ministers in an NDP government.

Now a few other ones to thank. I do want to say thank you to our staff here in the building, our caucus staff. I love my 26 colleagues very much, but I think the staff here work incredibly hard to keep us all organized and on track. So a big thank you to them. And I do want to single out Kelsey Ochoski for her work in the big, bold health care consultation that her and I and the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre have been working really hard on. And Kelsey has been a really big part of that, so I just want to say thank you to her.

My last thank you is of course to the good people of Regina Walsh Acres. It continues to be just a real honour to represent you in this Chamber, from this seat. And it's been an honour to get to know you so well over the last almost three years now. And I appreciate the feedback when it's positive and when it's negative. But it's very much appreciated to hear what matters

most to you. And I bring all of those conversations into this Chamber, into the conversations we have around our caucus table for sure. So thank you to my constituents for sure.

But it's through the lens of my constituents that I look at this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think about all those conversations that I've had on the doorstep in two elections in the last two and a half years, in the emails and the phone conversations that I have, in the messages that come over social media. They all, they all weigh on me, and I think and bring those ideas and thoughts into this building.

But when I think about this budget, I think about the woman in my constituency that I met at her door. And she was in tears talking to me as she described how she can't afford to live in the house that she has lived in for the last 30 years. And I remember talking to her on the doorstep during the campaign. And I didn't have a lot to offer her, but she told me her story and she cried. And she said, "I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't know where I'm going to go. I've lived in this house for 30 years." And I think about her often.

I think about a conversation I had with a man, a constituent just recently, who has waited 17 months to see a specialist for a hip replacement. He's in incredible pain, incredible pain, and he hasn't seen the specialist yet. And he will probably wait another number of months before he gets that hip replaced once he's seen the surgeon or the specialist.

I think about the parents that I have talked to, whose kids are in one of the many schools in Regina Walsh Acres who aren't getting the supports that they need. And as a former teacher, I know that story and that issue quite well. And I've talked at length about the realities in Saskatchewan schools many times in this Assembly.

But this budget really fails on a lot of issues, on a lot of . . . When we talk about affordability, when we talk about health care, when we talk about education, when we talk about the vulnerable people in this province, this is a bad-news budget.

And again when we talk about affordability, there is nothing new in this budget. We've seen rate hikes in SaskPower and SGI recently. \$136 million it's costing people. And I think about that woman on her doorstep and how is she going to cope. There's nothing in this budget to help her, nothing new.

When I think about education, I think about the STF's [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] numbers. About \$33 per student cut to education funding across the province. So that will mean, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when school divisions are making their budgets, they will be cutting supports. They will be making classrooms larger, cramming more students in there. This is not a good-news budget. And for the government to pretend like it is, is out of touch.

And I want to talk about health care, Mr. Speaker. As shadow minister for Rural and Remote Health, I've been spending a lot of time again with my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre. We've been travelling across the province talking to a lot of different health care professionals, a lot of stakeholders, a lot of innovators, a lot of people, and been hearing a lot of solutions and a lot of excitement around what could be.

But I got to say that it's been really hard to sit in the rooms with front-line health care workers and hear how so many of them are barely holding on, how so many of them are holding on by a thread. And I've said this line before in this room. But we sat down with some nurses from the St. Paul's emergency room. And a nurse who has been on the job for two years . . . She's only been a nurse for two years, young woman. And she said, Mr. Speaker . . . We were talking about ideas and solutions and what could we do to make things better for them. And she said, "Well I've only been a nurse for two years, so I don't have a lot maybe to offer. But I will say that I don't want to go home after my shift anymore and hate my job." That is what she said.

So when the member from the other side there tries to, you know, paint a quote on a member on this side that we are somehow telling young people to not go into health care, it is so, so unbelievable that, when health care workers are telling us these stories, that that member or that government had the audacity to get up and pretend like that member is doing something wrong.

I recently sat at an event here in Regina, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I was the only . . . I went by myself, sat down — I didn't know which table I was going to be at — sat down at the table. And I sat down at a table with five nurses who worked in critical care, all for 30 years. Mr. Speaker, I can't say what they told me about what they think about how health care is going in this province. That would be unparliamentary language, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so to hear the members on the other side suggest that we are the issue, that we are telling young people to not go into health care, they should talk to some actual front-line health care workers.

Now the fact that there is no contract budget line to add money in to salaries for health care workers who have gone four years without a raise, who have gone three years without a contract, is mind-boggling. And if we want to actually fix health care in this province, we've got to take care of the people who are taking care of us. We've got to stop pretending like front-line health care workers are the enemy. Why are we not signing a deal and giving these people a raise? Health care workers shouldn't be stopping at the food bank on the way home from their shift. It's a disgrace, Mr. Speaker.

The other one I want to talk about is urgent care centres. You know, this government is championing the urgent care centre. We touched on this a little bit today in question period. But I really . . . People ask me this all the time. When the urgent care centre is not open 24-7 like it has been promised since the election — yesterday it closed at 4:30 p.m.; on Saturday and Sunday it was closed at 2 p.m. — we're going to open another urgent care centre in this city and that's going to solve the problem? Like I don't understand. And legitimately, Mr. Speaker, people ask us, well if they can't staff the one that they have, how are they going to staff the second one? I would love to hear the actual answer. I'd love to know how these urgent care centres are the answer.

[21:30]

I will give the government credit, Mr. Speaker. Nurse practitioners should have been part of the solution 10 years ago, so I don't know why it's taken this long to figure this out. Team-based care should be what we have done 10 years ago.

And I've got to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is the Yorkton hospital still in the pre-design phase? When I asked people in Yorkton — because I was there twice this last week — they don't understand. They don't understand how. They had a full design concept in place 14 years ago that went to town halls and the community talked about it. They wanted to move forward on this. The hospital foundation paid for this work to be done, and then it sat on the shelf for 14 years, and now we're back in the pre-design phase.

This is, I don't know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, building hospitals faster. Maybe they can bring that. Maybe a private member's bill we could bring in there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The bottom line is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no Yorkton hospital, there is no funding for the Yorkton hospital, and there is no timeline for the Yorkton hospital to be built.

And if you look at the capital that they're putting aside in the budget for health care facilities: this year, 472 million; next year, 252 million; the year after that, 103 million; the year after, 133 million. Where in those years is a hospital for Yorkton? Anyone who sees those numbers knows that a hospital is not coming.

But hey, we got a patient-first health care plan, the fourth edition. First launched in 2009, 2012 again, it came out again in 2015. They made a commitment to eliminate emergency rooms' wait times by 2017. You wouldn't wait a minute in a hospital emergency room. God, what happened? But this time, Mr. Speaker, this time, they're going to do it. I believe them.

Okay. This one is interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . or Mr. Speaker, gosh. You switched. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

Cancer patient parking. Dennis Ogradnick has been working — a man with terminal cancer — has been working to try and make this right. Some cancer patients in the province don't pay for parking. Other patients in places like P.A. pay for parking, and he's asking for fairness.

And he was told by members in the government that he would like what he sees in this budget. He kind of described that as meaning maybe there was going to be free parking for cancer patients across the board. I haven't seen that in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

But I think Dennis is such an incredible man. I'm inspired by him, and I just thank him for his advocacy and the fact that he has spent time . . . While he should be fighting his disease, he's fighting his government for fairness. And it is a shame.

I'm going to wrap up here in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. But one of the other lines that I really like loved from the government this week is, "This is the best budget of the whole country" — I don't know — "The best budget of all the budgets of the world." I don't know. They do know it's an \$819 million deficit, right? Like they read that part.

Because here's the piece that gets me: \$12 million surplus last year that eventually turned into a \$1.2 billion deficit. So I'm kind of worried, if we're starting at \$819 million, where this is going to end up. And I think Saskatchewan people are legitimately worried about that as well.

Now the last thing, because I feel like one of the themes of the budget responses here has been the discussion around hate. And so I will end my speech on this point as well.

It has been rich. It has been very rich listening to government clutch their pearls and gasp about an email, to throw stones from a glass house. I would like to just do a quick recap of some of the division that we have seen in this House since I've been an MLA, two and a half years. The member from Saskatoon Meewasin referenced Bill 137, the emergency sitting. That was my first time in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, my maiden speech. Three and a half hours I talked.

If you go and you listen to the LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender] community of youth in this province, you will hear the fear that they now live with because of Bill 137. I attended a rally about Bill 137 a few months ago, and 11-year-old kids, 12-year-old kids talked about the increase in bullying that they have seen since that bill has come out. I'm actually speaking at an event about Bill 137 on Saturday this weekend. I would challenge any members from government to come with me and hear from the community about the fear and the division that that government brought into this Chamber and into this province.

I will also speak and remind members in this House about the Israel-Palestine war and for how many months the Israel flag hung outside this Chamber, and no mention of the loss and suffering of the Palestinian people was recognized ever. The division that caused in this House and in this province is huge. There's a reason why members from the government aren't invited to the Ramadan celebrations of the Muslim community in this province. That's real division right there. How about the time one of the members in the government called members on this side of the House antisemites before we broke for Christmas that same fall?

How about the time a member from the government called the leader of the federal NDP a terrorist? That wasn't hateful? That wasn't divisive? I know the Sikh community called that hate. I know the Sikh community did not support that. What about that division that was brought into this House, into this province by that government?

And I will end with this, Mr. Speaker: the first order of business from that government in the election of 2024, that saw my children be the target of incredible hate to the point where the RCMP and the Regina city police were involved in monitoring their safety.

That Premier wants to stand up and talk about an email and talk about accountability from the Leader of the Opposition, when I've stood up in this spot and I have asked for an apology, and that apology has never come. In a year and a half, that apology has never come. So where is the accountability from that Premier on that decision? Crickets.

So do you want to talk about division? It's a glass house over there, and they shouldn't be throwing rocks.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will end my comments for this evening. I will not be supporting this bad-news budget. I will be supporting the amendment brought forward by the member from Regina Mount Royal. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Daryl Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to be on my feet today to reply to the budget by the Hon. Deputy Premier and Finance minister, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to do so.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into the budget I want to do a few thank yous. Once again I want with the deepest heartfelt thanks, thanks to my constituents that put me in this chair for a second term. Thank you very much.

To my CA, Trisha. She keeps the office running smoothly. My two assistant CAs, Merilyn and April. They fill in when needed, and I really appreciate all the hard work they do.

Now my family, Mr. Speaker. Two months ago our daughter Jill had a baby girl, and that made number nine in the family. It doesn't compare to my seatmate, but we're about half. All healthy and . . .

An Hon. Member: — Keep going.

Daryl Harrison: — I'm sure they will. Mr. Speaker, also had a great-grandson about nine months ago, a little more than nine months ago. So that makes nine and it's five to four, so we'll see how it plays out here in the end.

I also want to thank my wife, Cheryl. As the Minister of Agriculture would often comment, she's the one that does all the work around there. And she'll be doing most of the calving here this spring. And I have to say, I love you, Cheryl. Thank you for all your hard work and staying with me.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address that hate email. I want to state it: "Just take a moment and think of the faces of all the ones you hate so much." I'll repeat that, Mr. Speaker: "Just take a moment and think of the faces of all the ones you hate so much." And then it goes on to name the Premier and three other hon. members on this side. They are fathers. They are sons and they have families, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you grew up, but I have a pretty good idea. And I'm going to say, most of the ones on this side grew up like I did. Hate was a word we didn't use. Hate was not a word we used in the house. It's not a word we used in school, Mr. Speaker. It was extremely discouraged. We never hate anyone. We can hate . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Okay. Shoot. Okay, everybody. You should not speak out when the Speaker stands up. It's not me; it's the Chair and still.

Can I ask a favour? Like tomorrow I'm going to give a . . . Would you do me a favour and move on? The ruling was made. And just because things are "follow the rules," doesn't mean we have to do things. You are my friend. Would you move on? Thanks.

Daryl Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'll move on from that comment.

[21:45]

And I also want to say, when the member opposite states about health care workers, discouraging young people from coming in to the field, I have a wife that works in health care. Her mom worked in health care. I have two daughters that work in health care, Mr. Speaker. I have one daughter going to school to become a nurse. It is an honourable profession.

Mr. Speaker, they enjoy their work and I am so proud of the work they do. They go to work every day. It's nothing to be ashamed of. It should be encouraged. It should be encouraged to make a career in health care. It's very rewarding. I don't want to discourage anyone from taking that path, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I'll move on to the budget. The Deputy Premier and the Finance minister had some very good news about the budget. I want to quote the Deputy Premier and Finance minister. "We had a choice." Cut services? No. Raise taxes? No. Or protect Saskatchewan. We chose to protect Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in much-needed infrastructure. Over the next four years, we will invest seventeen and a half billion dollars in capital projects across this entire province — health care facilities, hospitals, long-term care, schools, municipal infrastructure, highways and roads. Mr. Speaker, it's one of the largest capital budgets in the province's history, with more than \$4.3 billion. That is something to be proud of.

Investing in Saskatchewan highways, Mr. Speaker, over 820 kilometres in this year's budget alone. And I want to thank the Minister of Highways. One of the largest complaints I get is Highway 13 from Redvers to the Manitoba border, and it is going to be done this year. So thank you to the Minister of Highways. I'm just going to say, my list got one shorter but I've got one more to add. So thank you is coming to the Minister of Highways.

Lowest unemployment rate in Canada, Mr. Speaker. One of our largest employers here in the province is our small businesses, and they are reassured that the small-business tax rate was left at 1 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that's reassuring and encouraging the commitment of small businesses to sustain operations here in Saskatchewan and even start up new businesses as we go.

Mr. Speaker, affordability. Saskatchewan is the most affordable province in Canada to live — a great place to live, work, and raise a family, a large family. We have doubled the active family benefits, Mr. Speaker, supporting those same families. And I'll say it again: it's a great place to live, work, and raise a family right here in this province. And it's a great day in Saskatchewan, like the former MLA from Riversdale used to say.

Mr. Speaker, education. One hundred and nine schools built or major reconstructions completed, in progress, announced. What an accomplishment. Our government, the Sask Party government here, is a party that likes to build things here in this province to make things better than they were under the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, the school operating fund for '26-27 school year has an increase of \$62 million. Increased funding for 50 specialized classrooms providing our students their very best start, Mr. Speaker. That's important. Education is the foundation of a family.

Post-secondary. A new multi-year post-secondary funding agreement providing post-secondary institutions with a 3 per cent increase each year for four years, Mr. Speaker. And that provides our post-secondary institutions with the stability and predictability they need. Along with this agreement, it ensures enrolment will not increase more than 3 per cent. It will range from zero to 3 per cent in those four years, Mr. Speaker. That is something to be proud of.

This budget provides \$4 million in new funding to add 20 physician seats and 26 nurse practitioner seats to those same schools, Mr. Speaker. Those are the same students that are going to graduate and be proud to take jobs right here in the province.

This year the highest overall health care budget, \$8.47 billion, Mr. Speaker, a 4.9 per cent increase. Investing in the new patients-first health care plan to ensure everyone has access to the right care at the right time in the right place. Expanding the scope of practice for all health care professionals to the maximum of any province across Canada, Mr. Speaker. Utilizing their education and their expertise is very key to providing our residents of Saskatchewan with the very best care.

Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about agriculture. An 8.4 per cent increase in business risk management programming. Changes to the AgriStability to allow ranchers to claim rented pasture land and stored feed on site that's meant to be fed — huge changes for our ranchers.

I also want to thank you . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm losing my voice. I also want to thank those hard-working producers out there that are calving this time of year. And I also want to thank the ones that are going to kick off our annual megaproject right here in a few weeks. They'll be putting in the seeds in the ground and looking forward to a bountiful harvest in the fall, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture. To keep our producers on the leading edge requires research, and our government invests in research here in the province — \$178.6 million in agriculture science and research projects over the last five years, Mr. Speaker. And I can't emphasize enough how important research is to keep our farmers at the cutting edge of farming technologies. And I think, I think every time those producers that work so hard and utilize that research results that we're providing funding for, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about municipalities, you know, our local governments. They're duly elected and they're our governments that's closest to the people they serve. I want to talk about municipal revenue sharing, Mr. Speaker. Nearly \$400 million in this year's budget.

Imagine how many mill rates, property tax dollars that saves cities, towns, villages, RMs. It's very huge. And guess what? It's one of a kind. We're the only province doing this kind of thing. Nearly \$400 million — no strings attached — for the municipalities to apply to infrastructure, services that their ratepayers need, Mr. Speaker. We are the envy of the entire country with municipal revenue sharing, and it's not going anywhere.

Mr. Speaker, investments here in Saskatchewan: \$62 billion

from 60 different projects. That just doesn't happen, Mr. Speaker. It's the policy of the Sask Party government led by Premier Moe, having a strong economy, creating and enticing the investment right here to the province. We have oil and gas, potash, uranium, lithium, helium, hydrogen, aluminum, copper, and other critical minerals, Mr. Speaker. We're here. We're an attractive investment location here in Canada. We're leading the world in mining investment. Mr. Speaker, I'm looking to the Minister of Energy and Resources. We are the envy of almost the entire world when it comes to mining.

Sorry, I might be at the end of my speech, Mr. Speaker. Cameco just signed that huge deal in India. We've got new uranium mines approved. We've got a copper mine coming on. Dipping back to agriculture, canola crush plants. My God, Mr. Speaker, we're drawing. We are drawing investment here into the province. Policy does matter. It absolutely does.

Mr. Speaker, we have the best province in Canada, and I'm going to say the best jurisdiction in North America and the best jurisdiction around the world. And we welcome more investment. And we want more people to come. We want people to live, work, play, and raise their families right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I will support this budget presented by the Minister of Finance, seconded by the member from Carrot River Valley. And I will not be supporting the amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Things have gotten a little weird here tonight. I'll do my best to provide some comments here. I wasn't looking at anyone in particular.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to provide some response to the budget here today. Not so happy about the hour, although I will deal with it being past my bedtime as we all do when we do this work, Mr. Speaker.

I want to start by thanking some folks who are close to me, as is the custom, Mr. Speaker. I appreciated what the member from Saskatoon Meewasin did in thanking some of his friends, and I haven't done that very much in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. But I do really appreciate the friends who are close to me and they know who they are.

I think the closest friends . . . And probably the best benefit of having close friends is that you feel like you can kind of turn off in those environments. And for me it's very much where you can show up wearing sweatpants and I don't have to put any makeup on and we can go camping. And you know, those are my people that I can spend time with and really feel like they just rejuvenate me. So I want to thank them.

I want to thank my family who unfailingly support me and remind me of who I am. When sometimes it can start to feel like this work is all encompassing and that it is every part of you, I think that family does a good job of reminding you of who you are and what your character is and what your values are.

Which that type of grounding is important in this work especially when so many set out to put words in your mouth and make you feel like, you know, you're questioning sanity sometimes and trying to figure out which way is up, which way is down. You know, where are my values. Where are people saying my values are. Those things become kind of messy in this job. So I want to thank my family for being that grounding force.

And my constituency assistant, Twyla Harris Naciri, who's been with me since the beginning. I think she was hired about a month and a half after I was elected, and so we've been together for about nine years doing this work. And I want to thank her for all the time that she puts in and all the guidance she provides to other CAs, but also to other members when they're learning how this work happens, how to do a budget, how the constituency office works, and all of those pieces.

[22:00]

We went through a little bit of personal change in our house. It's sort of customary to talk about what's going on in your life when you start to do your response. And it's been a big change for us in our household as my partner, Grayson, and I have welcomed in my nephew Tyler into our house. So we now have a 17-year-old sort of out of the blue. And so it's been a pretty wild winter adjusting to that and, yeah, didn't set out to be parents but ended up in this sort of situation. And yeah, it's been quite interesting, and I feel like I'm learning patience on a whole new level. But it's been good, Mr. Speaker.

I will turn my attention to the budget. When I said it was a little bit weird in here tonight, Mr. Speaker, I was sort of thinking about the excessive amounts of back-patting that I'm hearing, of like this is the best budget ever, this is the best . . . The hyperbole is very strong about how, you know, this is the best thing we've even seen. And it feels like an off-tone hype situation that doesn't match the moment, Mr. Speaker.

And so I want to speak a little bit about the moment we're in, what I hear when I chat with folks, and the importance of getting it right for the people of this province and remind folks that that's what it's all about. And that's why we're here, is to serve our constituents and not to get wrapped up in any kind of, you know, political nonsense back and forth. So I think that, you know, that's what guides me and that's what I want to speak about a little bit here tonight.

So why are we calling this a bad-news budget? Well the deficit is \$800 million forecast. It adds costs and fees and we don't see any cost-of-living relief for the people of this province. The reality is that this budget is going to cost the people of the province more. And it's really disappointing to me knowing that we have more revenue than we've ever had.

The members opposite like to talk about, you know, what we did — whatever it was — 18 years ago when we were in government. You know, there's more money to work with. The budget's bigger. There's \$21 billion. The last budget we dealt with was about \$8 billion. Like of course things are going to be two or three times bigger. That's how math works, Mr. Speaker. That's how inflation works. It's just, you know, compare apples to apples.

And I also say this in reference to the statement that I've heard a few times from members opposite saying, you know, we compare budgets to budgets, ignoring the fact that they actually spent way more money than they planned to spend, Mr. Speaker. And I think about how this would play out in a household setting, right. If I say, you know, I plan to spend \$50 on shoes this month and then I go out and I actually spend \$50,000 on shoes, do you think my partner is going to be like, well you know, we'll compare budget to budget next year? I guess the budget for shoes was \$50. I guess next year the budget for shoes should be \$50 again. Like it's just so ridiculous to not compare the budget to the actual, Mr. Speaker. And I think that members opposite would be well served to keep that in mind.

We're not seeing any gas tax relief despite high gas prices and despite the province taking in windfall oil revenues due to the war in the Middle East. There's new taxes and fees on hunting, fishing, driving, and this is all after the Premier said that they wouldn't be hiking costs. And Saskatchewan people are already struggling with higher power bills, auto insurance, taxes on groceries and kids' clothes, and all the taxes that were added in 2017.

And I remember the 2017 year very well, Mr. Speaker, because that's the summer I got elected. And walking around and talking to folks in the riding about all of those added taxes and fees, it was very much a moment in this province that will not be forgotten.

And Saskatchewan people already report the highest financial anxiety in Canada — 4 in 10 are borrowing money just to pay for food. And when you hear about kids, the rates of kids living in poverty, Mr. Speaker, it should give you pause to think about whether what you're doing is working, whether something needs to change. Despite that we see fees going up and it costing more for all of these everyday necessities.

And we know — and this came up today in question period, Mr. Speaker — that Wab Kinew's government is cutting taxes on groceries in Manitoba. And we asked the Premier to do the same thing. And instead he joked a little bit about rotisserie chickens, and there was sort of this, you know, flippant way of talking about rotisserie chickens as though rotisserie chickens are not groceries, Mr. Speaker.

And lovely, you know, to hear from members opposite about their own grocery bills and the fact that there was no taxes on them. And you know, sometimes when you have a good amount of time in the day and you can do a home-cooked meal and you can plan it all out, for sure you know, you could get to that point. But you know, I'm not cooking a whole chicken myself after I stay here until 10:30 at night, Mr. Speaker.

Some people have busy lives and they have to work. And they work multiple shifts and they work multiple jobs. And they don't have time to cook a whole chicken by themselves. So picking up a rotisserie chicken on the way home is groceries, Mr. Speaker, especially if you're shopping at Costco because that's a deal, right?

Rotisserie chicken, bag of salad, granola bars — I basically subsist on these things, you know. This is like 90 per cent of my caloric intake is these three items, right. And if those aren't

groceries, Mr. Speaker, I don't know who they're talking to. Those are groceries.

So we're not seeing anything for cost of living. We continue to hear concerns about cost of living, especially for folks who are on a fixed income.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about health care. It's near and dear to my heart as being the Health shadow minister for so long, I probably couldn't not talk about health care. And it's been canvassed well, but health care workers and patients across this province need so much more from this government.

And to see a health budget that is flatlined at 0.3 per cent increase — and that's what it is, Mr. Speaker. Look at budget to actual, right. Compare apples to apples. Compare the real value that we spent last year to what we're planning to spend this year — 0.3 per cent increase. It doesn't even cover inflation, Mr. Speaker.

There is no new plan to get the health system back on track. We've well canvassed the repeated announcements of the patient-first plan. I remember the first time I dug into history to read that, when I was first appointed as the Health shadow minister on our side, Mr. Speaker. And yeah, there are some good things in those plans, but we need to see them actually happen. And that's the problem, Mr. Speaker.

And we need to see management where we have mismanagement right now. So the AIMS [administrative information management system] contract ballooning out of control, spending 10 times as much money for women to go get basic breast care out of province, Mr. Speaker. Mammograms out of province. It sounds like a bizarre dystopian future. It defies logic that we have basic screenings happening in another province.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's so many things to talk about in health care. And this is being canvassed right now by our team, but I think I will just say that the Sask Party government has been in power for 18 years. They've broken the health care system in that period of time. They cannot be trusted to fix it, and we need big, bold change in health care.

I want to talk about crime and community safety. It's incredibly disappointing to see that the government plans to spend three times more to service the debt than they do on their policing budget, Mr. Speaker. We used to be the place where you could keep your doors unlocked. Now people don't feel safe in their own communities.

And I want to talk specifically about community safety and homelessness from a local perspective in my riding of Saskatoon Fairview. And this certainly isn't the first time I've brought this up. Mr. Speaker, I've written to the Minister of Social Services — I've lost count at this point — perhaps four times specifically asking for a meeting to talk about homelessness in my community. To talk about the concentration of homelessness in my community with a 106-bed emergency shelter in our area, which is a very residential area that has completely changed since the shelter was opened up.

So our community has felt the effects of rising homelessness in Saskatoon harder than perhaps other communities have. And when I wrote to the minister a year ago, I highlighted the point-

in-time counts from last year and I said, look, it's three times the amount of homelessness since 2022. Like, we've got to do something. Three times the amount of homelessness in two years is very concerning. And this year, Mr. Speaker, it's four. It's four times the amount of homeless people in Saskatoon this year than three years ago.

And you just can't look at a trend like that and not ask, what are we doing wrong? And what do we need to change? And what in the system isn't working? And there are so many good folks on the front lines saying, you know, we've got some solutions. And we don't care who gets credit for it. Just make the changes so that people can become housed.

And part of that is about making changes to social assistance, the SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program, so that you can restore direct payments to landlords. So that evictions happen less often, Mr. Speaker. Part of that is making sure that there are houses for folks to go into. That this housing stock that the province owns, we fix up the Sask Housing Corporation units that are sitting empty, that the province currently owns.

Like, again I think about this on a personal level. Could you imagine owning properties and just having them sit empty and sitting idly by and you're just . . . They're what, like boarded up and you're just sitting there with this asset, you know, that you're paying for? It makes no sense. It completely defies logic at the individual level. Would just . . . You know, I challenge members opposite to think about how little sense that makes, right.

So making sure that these systems are fixed, that we look for common-sense solutions and we get people housed would make such a big difference in terms of crime and community safety, and also perceptions on crime and community safety, Mr. Speaker. Because people deserve to feel safe in their own homes. You know, they deserve to be able to go into the park without having also unhoused people, you know, occupying that space too. You know, allow their kids to go out and play in parks. Feel safe going for a run. Feel safe gardening in their front yard.

That was something one of my constituents told me this summer: "I don't feel safe gardening in my front yard anymore because I don't know who's around. We see lots of transient folks. I feel like I have to have my husband out here with me because, you know, I'm elderly. I'm concerned about what would happen."

[22:15]

That's not okay, Mr. Speaker, and to not do something when faced with this monumental challenge is completely irresponsible. So I would encourage members opposite to focus up on the task at hand and put in some real change. And people were expecting that in this budget and didn't see it, Mr. Speaker.

I want to talk about education — school capital funding actually decreasing by 67 million or 35 per cent. White City and Moose Jaw didn't get new schools, but the Premier's community did get a new school, Mr. Speaker. Nothing new to support teachers and students. We have more than 140 schools that are crumbling, and this budget's going to allow them to fall into permanent disrepair as the government cuts maintenance funding. So many desperately needed schools are being ignored here, Mr. Speaker.

I think I'm already well past my time, but I want to talk a little bit about the debt. The Premier has more than doubled the debt. After this budget it'll be up to 43 billion. That's more debt than Grant Devine.

If you want to keep track, you can look in real time at the real-time debt clock at the website 40billion.moe. Which honestly a lot of folks have asked me for — you know, where's the debt clock? Because there's a federal one, and yeah, you can keep track there if you want to see what your government's doing with your money. And this is paying for mismanagement, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's going to pay \$1.2 billion this year to Bay Street bankers just to service the debt, and that number has doubled since that Premier took office. And there needs to be accountability for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they say that they're going to balance the budget in a few years. We've heard that story before. We heard that they were going to have the budget balanced by 2024 too. And then, whoopsie — no, didn't happen. So we'll see. We'll see what this whoopsie's going to be this time, Mr. Speaker.

But we know how this Sask Party government has been with managing their money, and we will stand behind the Saskatchewan NDP's record with managing money any day of the week.

Mr. Speaker, there's so many different things I could talk about in this budget. But I think the last thing I want to talk about is the fact that funding for northern Saskatchewan roads is going to see a cut of \$36 million. You know, in the wake of the wildfire crisis, I want to thank my colleagues for how much leadership they've shown in really being present for their communities. You know, to not see a dedicated investment in this issue is so short-sighted, Mr. Speaker.

And it really highlighted for folks just the state of northern roads when we had so many people driving up north to provide supports during the wildfire, Mr. Speaker. You'd think the amount of driving on the roads would highlight for government the fact that they need to invest on them. Except they weren't actually driving on those roads very much, Mr. Speaker, so maybe they didn't spend enough time up there to see how badly this investment is needed.

But I assure them, this is going to hurt the people of the North. And roads are — we heard today — roads are arteries. They are lifelines. We heard this from members opposite about the importance of roads and what they provide. The people of the North deserve those roads too, Mr. Speaker.

So I've more than taken up my time. I will conclude by indicating that I will not be supporting the budget motion, probably a big shocker for folks after my speech. I will be supporting the amendment put forward by my colleague from Regina Mount Royal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Dakota-Arm River.

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I will try to manage my last 10 minutes here. I feel like the closer in baseball coming in here to mop up the evening. But I want to first of all

just give a shout-out to my sister Corrina, and Maddie, Kevin, Clark, Nikki, Dorothy. Bridge and I are praying for you guys, praying that God's peace covers you, and want you to know that Uncle Barret and Auntie Corrina will always, always, always be here for you.

To my mom and dad, thank you for showing my sister and I the hard work and dedication as you raised us. You embraced the grind and you modelled incredible values for us. And I want to thank you for that. I love you very much.

To my wife. She just texted me about 10 minutes ago saying that's she's going to bed because she's been waiting up all night, so she'll watch in the morning. But, Mr. Speaker, this summer will be 35 years that she's been at my side. And I love the fact that she's a barber at Tommy Gun's. So if anyone's passing through Moose Jaw — this is me pumping the tires on that shop — go in there and get your hair cut.

And she is an amazing woman of God. She's actually using the graduate retention program, Mr. Speaker, because she's a recent grad of post-secondary here in Saskatchewan. And now she's mid-life career change and working at Tommy Gun's, so good on her for that. She's an amazing mother raising our three sons. She is a spectacular grandmother and I'll talk about my grandchildren here shortly.

But I just love getting older and growing older with Bridget every day. You know, we tend to head to the repair shop often to get these old carcasses warranty repair, whether it's our eyes or our teeth or our hips or our parts, or whatever it is. So I just love really just spending time with her and growing old at her side. So, Bridget, I love you.

To J-dog, who is a second lieutenant in our Canadian Armed Forces. He's out in Gagetown. He was sharing some stories with us the other night about how they had to do some frozen lake rescues, and had to learn how to throw a grenade properly, not just pull the pin and then drop the grenade and throw the pin. It was actually the technique on how to do that. And it was quite terrifying to be listening to him describe that when he said, "yeah, well at any moment it could have fallen out of my hand and then been" . . . not a very good outcome for him in that situation.

But, Mr. Speaker, to Jalen, who is a born and raised Saskatchewan boy, for him to be defending Canada with such courage and bravery, a nation that Saskatchewan is proud to be fully part of, I just want to say thank you, Jalen, for your courage in defending our nation.

To Josh and Katti. Josh, our middle son, he's an apprentice electrician. He's going through our post-secondary here in the province. And his wife, Katti, she just started her own business and she's venturing out on her own. They are raising our grandchildren with such great poise and with great patience and love. And it's so awesome to watch them do that for raising Hazy and Bobby.

And so I know Hazy . . . Well I guess maybe Hazy is maybe up. I mean she's three years old. Her sleep cycle could be out a little bit. But, Hazy, I just want you to make sure that you keep Bobby safe tonight from the dinosaurs. And you know, from Grandpa, I will see you later, alligator.

She had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to go and watch the Globe Theatre, Hazy did, with her mom and grandma, and watch the play *Frozen*. It's the best-ever show that the Globe Theatre's ever had, and so congratulations to the Globe Theatre for that. And Hazy thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the crowd there, and she runs around and dances around the house in her Elsa costume, and so it's so fun to see that.

Mr. Speaker, Jacob, our youngest, he is a compassionate, intelligent . . . He's a leader. He loves the wild outdoors and rugged BC [British Columbia]. We had a chance to talk to his boss at Wood Gundy a few months ago, and Spencer was just talking and gushing about all the great things that Jacob is and how he's such a mature young man that's super smart with finances but he can also hold a conversation with adults. And they're really proud of him. And it took me like two days to re-sew the buttons back on my shirt to hear him talk about Jacob like that.

But you know, there's a problem that Jacob is facing. It's a massive issue for him actually, Mr. Speaker, because as I was just saying, he lives in the NDP BC, that place that has a financial disaster. It's at catastrophic levels, their policies, to the point where our Jacob had to sell his car, Mr. Speaker. He's now down to two feet and a heartbeat, catching the bus and catching rides with his girlfriend because his insurance, every month, was costing him over \$300 a month, Mr. Speaker. Not affordable for a young man trying to build his career, so he's had to sell off his car.

And the rent that he's paying in a tiny, minuscule, one-bedroom basement suite is at \$1,900 a month, Mr. Speaker. It's so small that he has to store his hockey equipment outside under a chunk of wood.

And so I'm confident in my son Jacob though, Mr. Speaker, that I know that he is the unicorn that his boss spoke of. I know that he will prevail. I know that he will have great courage to continue standing up for what is right in his life. He will continue to find ways to work through the expensive part of living in BC because I know, Mr. Speaker, that in the middle of that cash-strapped life that he's living, his efforts will allow him to outlast the treacherous NDP government in BC, Mr. Speaker.

I want to quickly say thank you to my CAs in Davidson, Lavonne and Cat. You guys do a great job, you know, keeping things flowing there in the office. I really appreciate all the work that you are doing. We've all given shout-outs to our CAs, and we all brag about each being the best. And I just think all of our CAs are the best including Lavonne and Cat. So thank you for the work that you do.

To my Dakota-Arm River executive, I appreciate all that you do, and we've got our AGM [annual general meeting] coming up on Thursday. Looking forward to seeing you there as we plan out the future.

And last night, Mr. Speaker, in game 5 of the league championships, the Davidson Cyclones played the Loreburn 19ers. And it was game 5. And in the first time in 25 years, congratulations to the Loreburn 19ers for winning the league championship at that barn at the Ice Palace.

And it was really weird because as my colleagues well know that over the last winter, I collected a lot of steak dinners off them when my teams, my senior team from Dakota-Arm River would continue to win hockey games. So you'll imagine for me having to stand at centre line or centre ice and cheer because all the Davidson fans were on this side and all of the Loreburn fans. So I kept my hands in my pockets and just continued to cheer for both teams, knowing that regardless of the outcome, I was going to win a steak last night as I bet on the game myself.

Mr. Speaker, I'm running low on time here, so I just want to give a quick thank you to our volunteer firefighters across the province, and the work that happens all across the province and the work that they do. I know that the \$6,000 tax credit is going to be a huge benefit as you continue to put yourself in the line of fire and be brave for our communities. I really thank you for that.

And really just say, you know, closing off the night to say a huge thank you to all the leaders in all of our communities, whether they are the mayors or the council or all of our producers or business leaders. You know, you hate to start mentioning a few of them because then you miss some and you get in trouble. But, Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do that our province is filled with great people that are doing great things.

And it's just an honour for me to be the MLA for Dakota-Arm River. And it doesn't matter which town I stop in, whether it's in Bethune or up to Outlook, over in Imperial or over to Elbow and everything in between, Mr. Speaker, I run into great people doing great things here in our province. And I'm really thrilled to be their MLA and serve them every day.

One more quick shout-out. Well I won't have time, Mr. Speaker, so I'll just say thanks to, I don't know, the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, the Minister of Crown Investments for that great AI data centre. Where is he? AI, why not have AI here, Mr. Speaker? And that's a great data centre that's going to bring lots of jobs to our province. I'll have more to say about it tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — It now being 10:30, this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30. Thanks for being here.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

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President of the Executive Council
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Hon. Chris Beaudry
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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for
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Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for the Firearms Secretariat

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Minister of Finance

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Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Darlene Rowden
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Minister Responsible for the
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Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

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Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority