



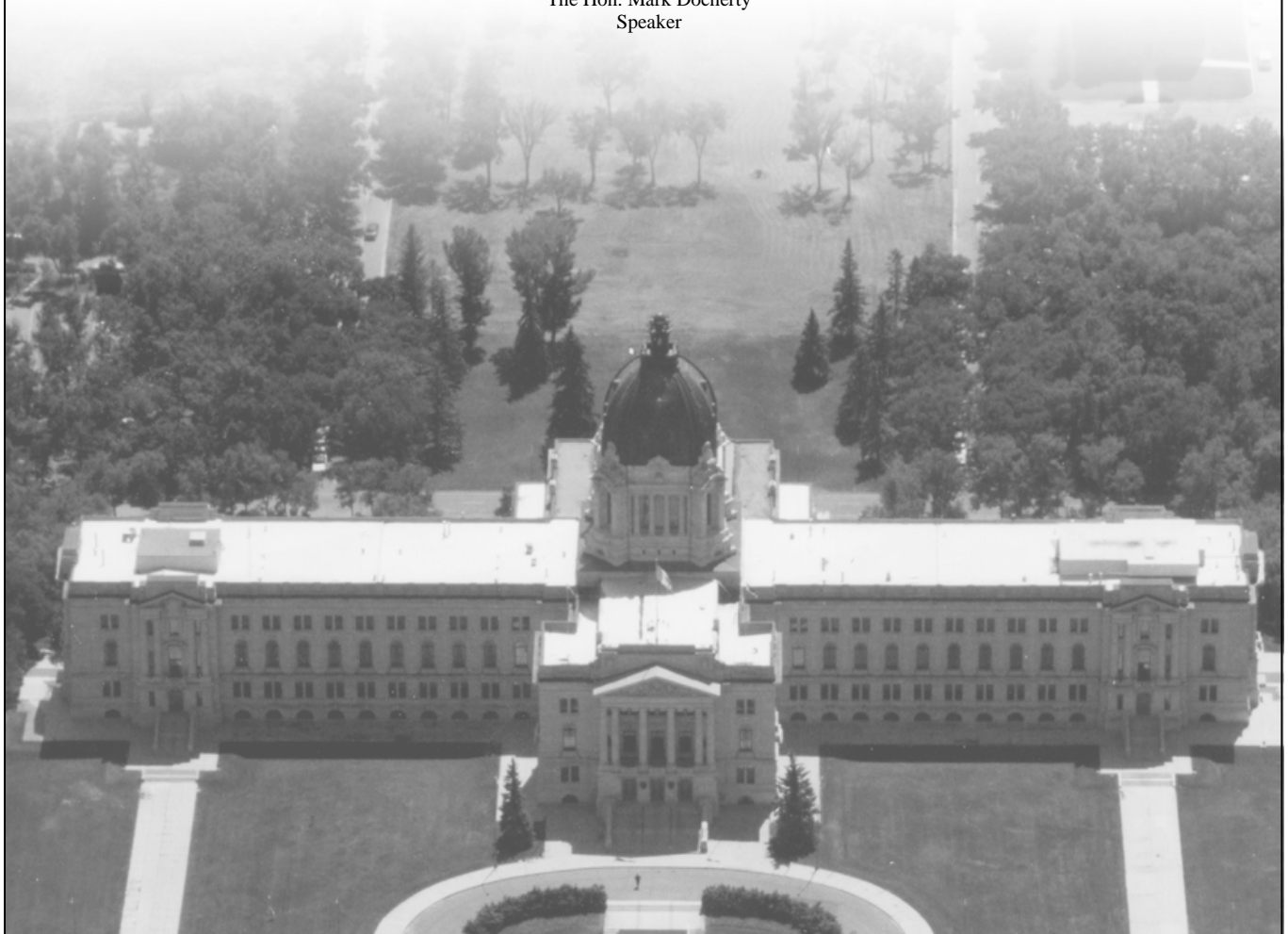
THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Mark Docherty
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Goudy , Todd — Melfort (SP)	Steinley , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
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Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce some special guests seated in your gallery, in the Speaker's gallery, this morning. With us today from the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation is executive director Darrell Crabbe. Accompanying Darrell are Darren Newberry, James Villeneuve, Doug Gibson, Chelsea Walters, Laurel Waldner, Shannon Anderson, Lauren Beaton, Jason Thiessen, and Adam Holke.

Mr. Speaker, Lauren, Jason, and Adam are joining us from the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Conservation Corps program. This program presents an opportunity for youth ages 18 to 30 to learn, grow, and experience Canada in a unique way through wilderness journey and field placement with national leaders in conservation. And, Mr. Speaker, Shannon has recently completed the program and has recently begun working for the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation is here today for Camo Day, to celebrate Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Heritage Day. I want to thank all members that are taking part with their camouflage, and we're going to hear a little bit more about this day in a member's statement. And I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming members from the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a tremendous honour to join with the minister and welcome the guests with the wildlife federation, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, also the Canadian Wildlife Federation, to welcome Darrell Crabbe, the leadership of the wildlife federation within our province to their Assembly, and importantly to thank them for the important work that they take on across our province.

I think they have over 30,000 members, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be one of them — at times, if I've got my membership renewed. I should probably check that, Mr. Speaker. And you know, they represent hunters and landowners all across Saskatchewan. And they play such an important role in instilling values of ethical hunting and connection to land that's so important within our province, as well as values and actions around conservation and protection of habitat.

As I've shared in this Assembly before, I'm born and raised an avid hunter at the side of my, you know, at my dad's knee as a young child. I get to share that now with my son William, hunting and fishing all across this beautiful province, Mr. Speaker. I know that this is a very important industry and practice with a heritage connection to our province. So I thank the wildlife

federation for being here. I'd also like to register the member for Carrot River in a learn-to-fish program, Mr. Speaker, and I'm wondering if the wildlife federation could help the member from Meadow Lake shoot straight, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education is not here today, so I would like to, on his behalf, recognize a number of guests that are here in both your gallery and in the west gallery today, Mr. Speaker. These are members of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, and as we all know the SSBA represents school board members from across the province. And, Mr. Speaker, the member that is now the Minister of Education I think has done a superb job of trying to improve the relationship from when I was the minister of Education, and I think has done a remarkably good job of doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I hear a lot of chirping from the members opposite. And, Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to urge them to do is when I am done, is have them get up and support my introduction and my support for the good work that's done by the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

So, Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me to continue, from the SSBA and with us today is — and I hope I have all the names here — Shawn Davidson, the president; Aleana Young, vice-president; Jerome Niezgodza, executive for the Catholic constituency; Jaimie Smith-Windsor, executive for the CSF [Conseil scolaire fransaskois] constituency; Joe Daigneault from the northern constituency; and Donna Banks, executive for the urban public constituency.

The SSBA is a voice for our public education system. It helps provide leadership and clarity and enriches the learning experience for our students. So we thank them very much for that.

But I want to recognize some other board members who have joined us today from Prairie Valley School Division: Janet Kotylak, a board Chair; Judy Bradley, board member; and from Saskatchewan Rivers, Barry Hollick, who is a board Chair. Mr. Speaker, these people do great work. They are the democratic voice of the citizens that they represent on the education system. But I can tell you this about them: they are most committed to each and every student that exists in our province, so for that I thank them very much and ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly today.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the minister and rise today and welcome these important local representatives to their Legislative Assembly.

Of course, this is the fall assembly this weekend of the SSBA, a very important event in our province, a very important opportunity for locally elected school board trustees from around the province to gather and to bring their local knowledge and expertise towards improving policy and eventually the

well-being and outcome of students all around our province. And for this we are all very grateful.

I will join with the minister in just again making some introductions. My former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], Ms. Judy Bradley, is up in the gallery with a number of her colleagues from Prairie Valley. Again as the minister had introduced, Bert de Gooijer is with them. Barry, Janet, Terry is up there as well. Jaimie, I see in this gallery. Back here, welcome to Martin, to Jerome, to Jansen, to Shawn, to Aleana, to Donna, and a number of other school board members who are here with us today.

I would also agree with the minister about the important role that all of these locally elected officials play in their communities. And I would invite all members to both thank them and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister and the member opposite in welcoming the SSBA to their Legislative Assembly. In particular, hiding behind the clock is a gentleman from Prince Albert who I've had the honour of meeting numerous times, Mr. Barry Hollick. Mr. Barry Hollick's the Chair of the Sask Rivers School Division and has held that position for some time and has done an excellent job in that role. And I'd like all members to welcome Mr. Hollick to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the members in welcoming the SSBA here today, in particular my friend, Aleana Young. But also I would like to welcome — a special welcome — to Donna Banks, who is the ward 3 school board trustee for the public school board in the area that overlaps with Saskatoon Fairview.

I want to thank her for nearly a decade of service and also for being one of the first people to reach out to me as soon as I was elected. And I remember fondly our first meeting, before we had a constituency office. So I want to thank her for the work that she does and everyone who's involved with the SSBA for being here today.

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with my colleagues and welcome the members of the SSBA. In particular, Mr. Jerome Niezgodna not only is an advocate for education in our province but housing as well, and I count him as a very close friend. It's great to see Jerome here this morning.

As well somebody that's in this Assembly virtually every day, Mr. Speaker, with little recognition, Ms. Patricia Fraser is up in the west gallery. She has led the Saskatchewan House of Prayer in this place for well over a decade, a faithful attendee here, up there praying for us, for our province, for our country without fail.

In fact, you know, I don't know how many good things I could say about Patricia. She is a good friend, Mr. Speaker. She sent me an email last week, and I won't go into too much detail of it. She was apologizing for not being here because they were up in North Battleford for 10 days for the events up in North Battleford, a very powerful Christian event up there for 10 days.

She did share with me that she is going through some challenges, Mr. Speaker. And what I shared with her is, you know, I have total confidence in our medical system but total faith and trust in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the great physician. And she's been praying for us for years, and I just call on all members for recognizing her hard work in this Assembly for the last decade, but also to include her in our prayers, Mr. Speaker, and thank her for her dedicated service to this place and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join in with the minister to welcome Patricia Fraser to her Assembly. Certainly she is a quiet but faithful presence in this Assembly, and I just want to say thank you so much to Patricia Fraser for her care for all of us. Many of us have gotten to know her. I'm thankful that I've gotten to know Patricia. She's somebody who takes time in this Assembly and shares with us that she prays for all of us, and it's nice to know that, Mr. Speaker. So I ask all members to welcome my friend Patricia Fraser.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to introduce in the west gallery the president of St. Peter's College in Muenster, Rob Harasymchuk. And he's here with what he will call his better half, his wife, Leanne, and their three sons Ethan, Michael, and Thomas. I would like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — I'd like to join with the Minister of Finance in welcoming Rob and his family to the Legislative Assembly. I had the opportunity this fall to travel around the province and visit some of our post-secondary partners and had the opportunity to visit St. Peter's College in Muenster. And it is a beautiful and intimate campus in the Benedictine Catholic tradition, Mr. Speaker. They are important partners to us. I welcome you and your family to this Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You look so surprised. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who oppose the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

And I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request

that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Carrot River, Nipawin, and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions in the Assembly here today on behalf of concerned citizens with the giveaway, if you will, and takeover of Wascana Park. And people are rightfully outraged with the takeover of control, taking that control away from the city of Regina and from the University of Regina, an over 50-year partnership, Mr. Speaker, that has served us so well.

Of course Wascana Park is an incredible public space, Mr. Speaker, a gem within the city of Regina and a jewel for this entire province, Mr. Speaker. And sadly, right now we see a government actually not just taking over Wascana Park, but actually giving away the rights to develop a large commercial office space to a private corporation, Mr. Speaker. And that's just not on for Saskatchewan people and the people of Regina.

[10:15]

And the petition reads as follows:

We, in the petition that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to restore the governance structure of the Wascana Centre Authority and end the commercialization of Wascana Park.

These petitions are signed by citizens of Regina. I so submit.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to call upon the government to restore the cuts to our children's classrooms. Those who have signed the petition today wish to draw our attention to the following: that the Sask Party cut \$54 million from our classrooms in their devastating 2017-2018 budget and that the 2018-19 budget only partially restored this cut despite growing numbers of students across the province; even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, that our kids are actually getting less; and draw attention to the fact that these cuts have had devastating impacts in classrooms all around the province and have lessened the supports for students in the classroom.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in

Moose Jaw. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for a public inquiry into the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land deal. The people who have signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: the Sask Party has refused to come clean on the GTH land deal, a deal where Sask Party insiders made millions flipping land and taxpayers lost millions. There has been much talk from the Deputy Premier about shining a light on the issue, but that hasn't happened yet, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party continues to block key witnesses from providing testimony about that land deal. And it is Saskatchewan people who footed the bill for the GTH land deal and deserve nothing less than the truth.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to stop hiding behind partisan excuses and immediately call for a judicial inquiry and a forensic audit into the GTH land deal.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition today are from the communities of Gravelbourg and Verwood. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to your attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, even those living outside the province, to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties. And they believe that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics.

Mr. Speaker, we know that over the past 10 years the Sask Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations, and of that, 2.87 million came from companies outside Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people. And we know that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws to end out-of-province donations, to put a ban on donations from corporations and unions, and to put a donation limit on individual donations.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to stand to present a petition to restore the rental housing supplement. The individuals who signed this petition wish to draw the following points to your attention: that the rental housing supplement helps people living with disabilities and low-income families pay their rent; that the Sask Party's elimination of the rental housing supplement hurts low-income families and people with disabilities; and that those who currently receive the supplement have no assurance that a change of circumstance won't lead to them losing this supplement; that this cut comes after previous Sask Party cuts to the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program have already affected hundreds and left people living with disabilities living with fewer supports; and that rents remain high for many, since the cost of living has increased significantly in the last decade while social services benefits have remained unchanged.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately restore the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition come from the beautiful city of Moose Jaw. I do so present.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Goudy: — Request leave for an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave for an introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Goudy: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself and the member from Arm River, we have two good men in the west gallery I'd like to introduce: Scott Sander and John Collins, hard-working trustees from the Sun West School Division, Mr. Speaker. So I'd like to welcome them to their legislature.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Day

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And just to let you know, I am a straight shooter.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak about the significant contributions that hunting, fishing, and trapping have made to our province. While many of us are aware of the importance these activities have played in Canada's history,

many don't realize that these activities continue to be an integral part of the life of this province. These activities contribute more than 500 million to Saskatchewan's economy every year.

Since *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act* was passed in 2009, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation has been our partner in recognizing the significant economic, cultural, and social contribution that these outdoor pursuits have made in our province.

Today Saskatchewan residents and visitors across the province will celebrate Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Day. This past week, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation launched Camo Day in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day announcement. People across Saskatchewan are encouraged to wear their camo and share their stories with friends and colleagues. Thanks to all the members in the House today who are wearing their camo as well.

Mr. Speaker, by working together we will ensure the ongoing success of this relationship as we continue to raise awareness and promote the integral role that hunters, anglers, and trappers play as stewards of our environment.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Women in Leadership Luncheon

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 5th, I had the pleasure of joining with Prince Albert residents for a luncheon organized by the Prince Albert Council of Women called Women in Leadership: Practical Strategies for Transforming Intentions into Actions. It was held in honour of Persons Day, and it was a full house, Mr. Speaker. It was very encouraging to see so many post-secondary students in the audience.

Dr. Vianne Timmons was the keynote speaker. She discussed her experiences of being a woman trying to be successful in a mostly man's world. She encouraged us not to become complacent and to continue to work towards gender equality. Mr. Speaker, Dr. Timmons asked the attendees to stand if they had ever experienced or seen sexual harassment take place. Not a single person was left sitting in their seats. That was a powerful moment.

I was pleased to have been one of the four women asked by the Prince Albert Council of Women to sit on the panel along with Dr. Shelley Storey, Patricia Weir, and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson. Dr. Timmons led us through a discussion of the obstacles we faced, the support we received, and asked us to explain what drove us to become leaders and what advice we would give other women.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the Prince Albert Council of Women, Dr. Timmons, Dr. Storey, and Chief Tammy Cook-Searson on this very successful event. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rochdale.

25th Anniversary of First Nations Gallery

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On June the 26th, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum marked the 25th anniversary of its First Nations Gallery. When the gallery opened in 1993, it was a groundbreaking achievement that launched a new era of showcasing indigenous cultures in museums.

The head of programming and exhibits, John Snell, calculated that over the 25 years, the Royal Saskatchewan Museum has had more than 3 million visitors. Mr. Speaker. That's 3 million students, teachers, parents, newcomers, long-time residents, or visitors that now have a better understanding of the rich cultures and heritage of the indigenous people of Saskatchewan.

Since 2017, the gallery has included the exhibit, We Are All Treaty People. This exhibit is centred around a Chief Paskwa pictograph, a two-panel document with pencil drawings that is the only known historical indigenous perspective on Treaty 4. We Are All Treaty People gives people a chance to learn more about the land that has been settled on, farmed on, and ranched on.

The First Nations Gallery has for 25 years, and will continue to instil in every visitor a sense of respect for the indigenous culture, a sense of fellowship through our shared history. Congratulations to the Royal Saskatchewan Museum and the First Nations Gallery on an exceptional milestone. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Co-op Celebrates 40th Anniversary

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that part of my constituency consists of what many Saskatonians would consider the heart of Saskatoon — Broadway Avenue. A central figure of Broadway Avenue is Steep Hill Co-op, a non-profit grocery co-operative founded by 12 people, including current manager Gerry Yakimoski, in October of 1978. This year it is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

The store operates on two central tenets: to maintain a relationship and camaraderie with the community, and to sell locally produced, organic goods at an attainable price. Although organically labelled produce is a commodity found in most modern-day grocery stores, it was considered an innovative idea for any grocery store operating four decades ago. It was established with the primary goals of selling local goods on a co-operative basis; providing nutritious, non-chemically enhanced foods to residents; and promoting a healthier, ecological lifestyle and co-operative spirit within the community.

Steep Hill was initially dependent on volunteer workers as the store established itself within the community before it finally gained enough ground to hire paid workers. Today it continues to be staffed by members who contribute to everything from store management to shelving and cleaning.

Mr. Speaker, Steep Hill Co-op continues to honour its goal of promoting a healthy, vibrant, and connected community. It's my privilege to congratulate Steep Hill on its 40th anniversary and to wish it many more years of success.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Navratri Festival

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last month the Gujarati Samaj of Southern Saskatchewan held the Navratri Mega Dance Festival 2018. I had the honour of joining them. The festival ran over three nights as members of the Gujarati Samaj invited everyone in our communities out to celebrate the traditional Indian dance festival. The Navratri festival is one of the most religious and traditional festivals that takes place throughout India.

Mr. Speaker, this marked the 25th year that the Samaj hosted the Navratri in Regina, and it was a great success with over 2,500 people attending. The event was full of colour, life, and celebration as the members of the Samaj community danced to the late hours of the morning.

Mr. Speaker, the Gujarati Samaj of Southern Saskatchewan was created by immigrants who came to Canada and wanted to bring their cultures and traditions into our communities. The families first came to Canada in the 1950s, but became an official non-profit in 1987. Mr. Speaker, since then they have hosted a number of events, from bowling nights to picnics, to bring their community together in sharing cultural values which have originated in the Gujarat, India province. The Samaj currently has 150 families as registered members, who are working hard together to organize social and cultural events, as well as provide social interaction for the children of the Samaj.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking the Samaj for having myself out to this year's Navratri festival, and congratulate them on a successful event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina University.

Students Donate to Drive Away Hunger

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I am really pleased to rise today to recognize a wonderful school in my constituency.

Many of us in this House are familiar with the Farm Credit Canada's Drive Away Hunger program, Mr. Speaker, and this year marked 15 years since the campaign was created. Thus in recognition of this milestone, FCC [Farm Credit Canada] created tractor tours meant to stop in provinces throughout the country, collecting food and donations from individuals, organizations, industry partners, and schools.

[10:30]

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Martin LeBoldus High School was one of the schools that participated in the food collections. Leading up to the tractor's visit, the students and teachers collected non-perishable foods to donate. And when the tractor arrived, the students of Dr. Martin LeBoldus High School donated an impressive 3,968 pounds of food, Mr. Speaker. Just to put that into perspective for members of this House, that is nearly 4,000 pounds, or the equivalent of the weight of a rhinoceros, Mr.

Speaker.

The leadership shown by the students, I think, should be applauded. I ask all members to help me congratulate the students and teachers of Dr. Martin LeBoldus High School for being fantastically socially conscious community leaders and wonderful examples of kindness, Mr. Speaker. And of course to Farm Credit Canada, for their continued efforts to end hunger, we thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Swift Current.

Swift Current Radiothon Supports Healthcare Foundation

Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. \$171,813 — that's how much money was raised by the 10th annual Pharmasave Radiothon for Health Care in support of the Dr. Noble Irwin Healthcare Foundation.

The radiothon took place on November 1st and 2nd at the Cypress Regional Hospital in Swift Current. There were professional radio announcers working the microphones. There were also some former washed up has-beens, such as myself, there for a couple of hours, and community leaders that were a part of the 15-hour broadcast.

This year the radiothon partnered with the Bank of Montreal, who generously partnered and matched donations of up to \$25,000. There was also a major donation from the Kinsmen Foundation of \$50,000, Mr. Speaker. In fact the foundation had a goal of raising \$150,000 and they surpassed that by about 20 grand.

This radiothon is only the latest example of the generosity of the people of Swift Current and southwest Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the Dr. Noble Irwin Healthcare Foundation had already raised earlier this year about \$50,000 through the Muddy Mayhem Run, Ribfest, a hockey draft, and also a golf tournament.

And, Mr. Speaker, the money raised is going to be going towards the purchase of a portable digital X-ray machine for the Cypress Regional Hospital. Clay Thompson, the foundation's executive director who does great work for the organization, says that if there are still some funds left over after the purchase of that machine, they're also going to try and purchase a bladder scanner unit for the hospital as well.

I'd like to thank all of the people who donated toward such a fantastic and meaningful cause, Mr. Speaker. To the Bank of Montreal, the Kinsmen Foundation, all of the businesses and organizations and individuals from Swift Current and surrounding area, thank you so much. And I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating the Dr. Noble Irwin Health Care Foundation for yet another successful radiothon.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Code of Conduct and Government Transparency

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday we heard the Minister of Health tell us that employees of eHealth taking luxury trips, paid for by vendors to whom they were giving contracts, wasn't so bad because these activities were, and I quote, "not criminal in nature." And for months the GTH minister has been telling us that the GTH land deals were just fine because the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] didn't find enough evidence for criminal charges.

So my question to the Premier is, is he sticking with the new slogan: the Sask Party — not criminal in nature? Does he think that's a good enough standard for accountability in the Government of Saskatchewan? Is he satisfied with setting the bar so low?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the questions yesterday around eHealth and some of the happenings there, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for us to note that the Public Service Commission does have a conflict of interest policy that all government employees are required to follow. Mr. Speaker, it says that employees are not allowed to accept any gift of service like a trip that could be viewed as a payment for services rendered through his or her employment within the public service.

And our province, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say, is served by thousands of professional public servants who are honourable people and they follow this policy, Mr. Speaker. In the rare circumstance that someone does not follow this policy, as we saw, there are serious consequences, consequences up to and including getting fired, which is what happened in this case, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you may know, in question period in Ottawa, the Prime Minister likes to take all of the questions on Wednesdays. In this House, our Premier seems to like to take no questions on Wednesdays, so I'm glad to see him up on his feet today. Glad to see him up on his feet today. And unfortunately, however, I didn't hear him answer the question. I would really have liked to hear this Premier commit to a standard of ethics that is higher than simple non-criminality, Mr. Speaker, because not criminal is not good enough.

People in our province expect their government to do so much better. They expect their government to be honest and transparent when it comes to dealing with conflicts of interest. Given that these problems at eHealth had been known about for so long, people deserve to know: at what point did the Premier find out that there were these problems with vendor-sponsored travel? How widespread is this practice? And will he commit, will he have the courage to table the list of all vendor-sponsored travel within government ministries, agencies, and Crown corporations?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Public Service Commission has a conflict of interest policy and every

government employee is required to follow that, Mr. Speaker. And I hope the Leader of the Opposition isn't suggesting that politicians should step into human resource departments and ministries and Crown corporations across government to express our views, Mr. Speaker, and to run the human resource departments in government.

Human resource matters of this nature are dealt with by the appropriate officials, Mr. Speaker — as they should be — the appropriate officials in various ministries such as eHealth, not by elected officials on either side of this House, Mr. Speaker. I have every confidence that the government conflict-of-interest and travel policies are being handled, they're being handled appropriately by the professional public service officials that we employ, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We see a Premier who hides behind his ministers, ministers who hide behind the public service. The question is, what is it that they are trying to hide? How widespread is this practice? There's been no such reference to what is exactly going on . . .

The Speaker: — You're on the line there, Leader of the Opposition. Right, right on the very line. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the caution there. The problem here, Mr. Speaker, is that we've seen a very disturbing pattern from this government. They don't correct course until they get caught, and even then they won't come clean. They didn't call for an audit of the GTH land deals until there was a public outcry, and then they misrepresented the findings, Mr. Speaker. They didn't review the Health Authority's policies on vendor-sponsored travel until media started asking why they hadn't changed. And then, if no one's facing criminal charges, the government says everything's fine; nothing to see here; please move on, and that we should all just trust them.

Well, Mr. Speaker, not criminal is not good enough, but that appears to be the only standard they're applying. Saskatchewan people deserve so much more when it comes to transparency. When will the government call the judicial inquiry into the GTH that's so badly needed to clear the air? And when will we see the investigator's report on exactly what happened in eHealth?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Global Transportation Hub, the minister's been clear as we set out into the months and years ahead with that facility, Mr. Speaker, that in fairness was an idea that was thought up by the previous administration and acted on by this administration, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the Public Service Commission, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is speaking as though there was no consequences. People lost their jobs here, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the policy being followed, and the consequences of that policy not being followed by certain individuals, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to vendor-sponsored travel, there are examples where vendor-sponsored travel actually does happen in the

ministries, Mr. Speaker, and I would put an example on the record. We purchased a linear accelerator — L-I-N-A-C, LINAC, Mr. Speaker. This is needed for cancer treatment for the people of this province. And cancer I think, in fairness, is a disease that has touched each and every family in the province of Saskatchewan. But this equipment, this linear accelerator, is literally too big to transport. Prior to the purchase of this machine you have to actually travel to see the equipment and to look at it to learn to operate that equipment, Mr. Speaker. If this is taxpayer-funded travel, it would be more expensive, Mr. Speaker. So there are examples when this will occur, Mr. Speaker. But when those examples are out of what is the policy of the public service, Mr. Speaker, there are consequences. And in this case, people lost their job.

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

Global Transportation Hub

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very clear that this Premier and this government don't want a clear eye cast on what's going on with vendor-sponsored travel. And they don't want us to find out what exactly happened at the GTH. They just want to walk away from that problem, and yet we have no idea what their plan is to do so.

So I'll repeat my question from yesterday for which we got no answer. To the Premier: what is his plan? He can't sell the GTH. He can't give it away. What's he going to do?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, this plan has been laid out in this Assembly, in the rotunda, and around by myself, by the minister, by other members as well. The Global Transportation Hub and the vision of the Global Transportation Hub was necessary, Mr. Speaker, for a province such as Saskatchewan, an importing and exporting province, to allow us every opportunity to get our goods. And we're seeing the consequences of not getting our goods to market in the lack of pipelines with a \$7 billion reduction in our GDP [gross domestic product], Mr. Speaker, due to a lack of pipeline.

So anything that we can do to enhance our opportunity to get our goods to market, Mr. Speaker, is a valiant initiative. This was an idea that was put forward by the members opposite. It's a project that was acted on by this government, Mr. Speaker. Questions around land procurement have been referred to different independent officers, Mr. Speaker, including the RCMP and Manitoba prosecutions.

Mr. Speaker, as we move forward with this project, I think it's fair to us to understand, this is not a project that likely government should have ever been involved in. We are involved in it, Mr. Speaker. We will be taking the appropriate steps to move away from the management of the Global Transportation Hub, eventually away from the ownership of the Global Transportation Hub. But we will ensure that the taxpayers' investment, the people of this province's investment, is protected, Mr. Speaker. And we will give it every opportunity, give that facility every opportunity to be the success that was envisioned under that party and all members, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Condition of Regina Bypass

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We keep asking the Premier, what's the plan? And his answer is, we've got a plan. That's no answer, Mr. Speaker. We need to know where and how this government is going to divest itself of the GTH.

Now over the last couple of weeks . . . Somebody's grumpy over there today, Mr. Speaker. Over the last couple of weeks we have asked a number of very important questions related to the bypass that have gone unanswered. Documents we received from the Ministry of Highways shows that all is not well. An email between senior Ministry of Highways officials indicates there were 1,100 minor deficiencies in phase 1 alone. But here is what's strange, Mr. Speaker. It reads: "The roundabout's non-compliance is considered a minor deficiency because it only impacts a fraction of the permitted trucks."

Are you kidding me, Mr. Speaker? The mess at Balgonie is considered a minor deficiency because only some trucks got stuck. How could a situation that at a town inundated by trapped semis, one that denied the community safe access and exit to their town, be considered a minor deficiency? And how much did it cost to fix the other 1,099 deficiencies?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Estevan is not here today and she's been answering this question graciously, she really has been. And it's time, Mr. Speaker, that they really . . . we really set the record straight. What they should really do, Mr. Speaker, is they should go out and talk to the residents of Balgonie, White City, Emerald Park, Pilot Butte and ask then what about the bypasses that are out there and the safety that has come with them now, Mr. Speaker.

The roundabout issue has been dealt with. It was an oversized tractor when it rubbed the tires on it. I drive a four-wheel drive tractor, Mr. Speaker; a six-inch lift doesn't bother it. The roundabout has been dealt with, Mr. Speaker. The trucks are going through there. Over 600 trucks a day are passing through there, Mr. Speaker. This a good project for the province of Saskatchewan. It is a safe project, Mr. Speaker. It is on time. It is on budget. The deficiencies were fixed at no cost to the taxpayers of this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — And, Mr. Speaker, no answer about the other 1,099 deficiencies and what they cost. The email we received from Highways . . . The email we received from Highways also lists a number of major deficiencies which the flawed Balgonie roundabout apparently wasn't one of. If something like the Balgonie roundabout didn't make the list of major deficiencies, what did, Mr. Speaker? Saskatchewan people are paying for this project over the next three decades and they have a right to know what they've signed up for and how much it's going to cost. So a simple question for the minister: what were the major deficiencies identified with the Regina bypass and will she table that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. I hope there's more questions because really, Mr. Speaker, this is a process and a project that's the largest infrastructure project in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

This project is a signed, sealed, delivered contract for 30 years, Mr. Speaker, with fixed costs, Mr. Speaker. There is no cost overruns to the taxpayers in this province, Mr. Speaker. All deficiencies are paid for by the partners of the project, Mr. Speaker, not by the taxpayers of the province, Mr. Speaker. It's a signed deal. It doesn't matter what the deficiencies were.

Yes, there were some major ones. I'll give you an example. On the Wascana Creek, they hit an aquifer, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what the cost of that was for us to fix because we don't care, as taxpayers — the partners paid for that. That's who's paying for it, Mr. Speaker, not the taxpayers of this province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Support for Addictions Services

Ms. Chartier: — We are joined today by Stacey Bereza, single mom to 24-year-old Kaden. She has watched her son suffer with opioid addiction and struggle to find a placement in the province in his time of need. Kaden was told by Wakamow Manor detox in Moose Jaw that there would be about a two-week wait and he would have to call every day by noon to keep a spot — not easy for someone to do who is drug sick and doesn't have his own phone. "Slim" Thorpe in Lloydminster said they weren't equipped to deal with opioid addictions at that time.

With so few options that could properly support him, she felt she had no choice but to take Kaden out of province for care. She has spent more than \$80,000 out of pocket for Kaden's treatment in BC [British Columbia]. In her words, "I don't have the money for this, but you do what you have to do for your child," and added, "I literally can't do this again if need be."

The shortage of addiction supports and spaces is a crisis and this government can't wait until next budget to stem this tide. What is the plan today?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, we recognize that any issue like this — opioid addictions, any addictions, mental health issues — are very serious. That's why we've increased the budget in the health budget by 60 per cent, but 60 per cent also towards mental health and addictions. We know that we have well over 355 beds in the province. We're continuing to analyze where more resources are needed.

Just last week, we had some significant meetings with ministry officials and some other stakeholders and other families that are struggling with this very same issue, and we were informed that,

when we look at the intakes, we have a very low wait-list with a lot of the intakes. Sixty-five per cent of our addictions clients are able to be dealt with through outpatient; some of the detox facilities, about 25 per cent; then about 10 per cent through the longer term addictions beds, Mr. Speaker.

And we've been told that there are waits in some areas. Some different facilities have no waits, and we're working with the stakeholders to minimize those increased capacity where we can and of course invest in other areas that will alleviate some of the strains with these families when it comes to naloxone kits and other supports, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Stacey knows first-hand this government's response hasn't matched the spike in demand for services. She has been a 911 dispatcher for a provincial police service for the past eight years, and in her experience, the number of overdose calls has increased dramatically in that time. She's frustrated because in both her personal and in her professional life, it is clear there are too few options. I quote, "I am supposed to give people the list of resources we have, but what we have is no resources. I deal with this on a daily basis."

Like everyone with lived experience, Stacey knows what the answers are. And the minister needs to listen to these voices that are crying out for more and better services today, Mr. Speaker. The time to act is now. We shouldn't sit idly by as people are lost for something we know how to treat. The evidence is there. Will this government take action and immediately direct funding to address the gaps in treatment and increase capacity for medically aided detox and rehabilitation beds?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, we just announced this very week the partnership with the federal government, the \$5 million investment that will be rolled out over the next little while to address some of these issues. We've also added, of course, on recommendation from my co-minister and myself . . . Crystal meth is also an issue that we have to really be focusing on, Mr. Speaker.

We know that these issues are very serious. In fact the issue raised by the member opposite about intakes and making the system more streamlined, we actually heard that from another family last week. We directed the ministry and the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to look at where we can better coordinate and share that information, that people can make very minimal contacts to make sure that they can access the services that are available in this province in a more streamlined fashion.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Access to Health Care in Northeast Saskatchewan

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday I wrote to the Minister of Rural and Remote Health about health care for women and babies in northern Saskatchewan. People in Creighton, Sandy Bay, Deschambault Lake, Denare Beach, and

Pelican Narrows are isolated and they rely on the Flin Flon Health Centre, just across the border in Manitoba, to get care. Last week we learned that the Flin Flon Hospital will no longer deliver babies as of November 18th.

In fairness to the minister, he's not responsible for the cuts that the Manitoba government is making, but he is responsible for making sure Saskatchewan people can access care. What is the minister's plan to provide those services?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, we have interprovincial agreements with many of our neighbouring provinces obviously, whether it's with Alberta or Manitoba. This issue that happened with the residents in that area, Creighton and surrounding area, where they get services from Flin Flon, did come to our attention a little bit of time ago.

My co-minister and I contacted the associate minister, the minister in Manitoba, talking about this very issue a number of times. We actually just spoke with him as recently as yesterday.

This is not a cut. This is a matter of a struggle that we've had in this province for many years when it comes to recruitment and retention and sometimes training of professionals. We've done some really great work I believe in this province. We've been recognized internationally, as I've spoken about before, some of the momentum and some of the initiatives we've been able to roll out in this province when it comes to rural and remote health care services.

And we are assured by the minister in Manitoba that they are looking at recruiting and retaining. They've been trying to backfill with locums and support of services. They don't feel it's safe. That's why now they are moving their patients to Le Pas. We're moving some patients that need services over to Prince Albert while the services get reinstated.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — On Tuesday I attended a town hall meeting in Flin Flon that was attended by more than 100 people who are very concerned about these cuts to health care in Flin Flon. They are concerned about the long distance mothers and families will have to travel to access care. They are concerned about what will happen in an emergency. People are concerned about the need for upgrades to the airport in Pelican Narrows.

With the services being cut in Flin Flon, will the government consider improving the airport in Pelican Narrows to make sure northern residents will have timely access to care in emergencies?

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, our access to health care is of utmost importance to this government. That's why we've done a number of things, whether it's remote-presence technology, whether it's investing in rural training of physicians and health care providers so that they're more in tune and more

accepting of maybe working in some of these more rural and remote areas, or whether it's upgrading infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

In fact just last week . . . Whether northern or southern, sometimes we rely heavily on our airstrips and our aircraft. I recently wrote to the federal minister about an access issue and an instrument approach issue in southwestern Saskatchewan. I know the Minister of Highways has looked, the previous and I think the current one as well, has looked at some of the airports within our province. And we know Pelican Narrows was actually assessed recently, Mr. Speaker, for its safe operation. And we know that the air ambulances can get in and out of Pelican Narrows.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess it's very clear. The question that I put to the minister: will your government make sure there's adequate airport in Pelican Narrows in case of emergency for those residents who are so concerned right now?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I think we can be very proud of the record that this government has put into the infrastructure in northern airports. Over the past 10 years, we've invested over \$20 million into the maintenance and infrastructure in the airports, Mr. Speaker. That's a 61 per cent increase over the past 10 years. And I can go on, examples on what we've done in the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker. And since 2008 we've invested more than 11 million in northern airports.

Is there more work to do? You bet there is, Mr. Speaker, but this government is dedicated and committed to working with our communities in the North and improving our airports, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, next month children who are deaf and hard of hearing in Regina will finally have access to vital supports that they never should have lost in the first place. For years this government has refused to fund special pre-Ks [pre-kindergarten] for high-needs children, and after this government's devastating 2017 budget, school divisions had no choice but to make cuts, including to pre-Ks for kids with special needs. The minister sat on his hands and signed off on budgets that scrapped these supports.

As Melanie Hack, mother of three-year-old Gideon who is hard of hearing and faces other medical challenges, told the media after being awarded a spot in the new pilot, ". . . if they hadn't shut down all the special needs preschools in the first place, we wouldn't . . . be in this situation."

And, Mr. Speaker, we know that there still aren't as many spaces as were lost. What does the minister have to say to families like Gideon's, who lost critical months that they will never get back,

and to the kids who have not yet been placed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would encourage those families to work with the school divisions to make sure the resources are carefully allocated and that they're able to get the supports that they need.

Mr. Speaker, I'll say this to the members opposite: our per-student funding in our province is the second-highest in Canada. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we want to provide more supports for our students. And I'd say this to the members opposite: under the NDP [New Democratic Party], the number of teachers in the province dropped by 400. Under our government we've added 925 teachers. Last year we increased funding by \$30 million so the school boards could work hard to add 86 more teachers, 177 more educational teacher assistants.

Mr. Speaker, total funding for our pre-K education is \$2.5 billion, the highest it has ever been. Operating grants are up 33 per cent compared to a 12 per cent increase in enrolment. Mr. Speaker, I would say this: under the SSBA, who gives us information, a carbon tax is going to cost \$8 million. I'd like to know the members opposite position on the carbon tax.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, to say that that answer is disappointing is an understatement. I'm less interested in what the minister has to say to me and more interested in what he has to say to people who are in the gallery with us today.

Mr. Speaker, families were left waiting, losing months of critical support, while this government waited yet again for federal dollars. Parents and boards have been fighting for these children but the Minister of Education has been letting them down for over a year. In the same *Leader-Post* article, Melanie Hack said, "It's frustrating when you see special-needs kids get kind of lost in the cracks and they're the ones that need it the most."

This pilot, while desperately needed, only partially undoes the damaging cuts that have been made to supports for early learning. Will the minister finally get serious about ending the turmoil in education funding and work with these boards here today to finally achieve funding in this province that is sufficient, that is balanced, that is predictable, and allows boards both the respect and autonomy to meet the needs of their students as they are elected and they are mandated to do?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, this government has got a good relationship with the SSBA, the school board trustees, the school board administrators and professionals. I'll say this. We've increased from last year total educator FTEs [full-time equivalent] up by 105. The divisions are employing more professionals across the sector. These have been more support teachers, EAL [English as an additional language] teachers, speech-language pathologists, and social workers. Mr. Speaker, we're committed to the education of our students in the province. We'll continue to work with them, unlike the members opposite who chose to close 176 schools.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — With leave to make a point of order.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader. What's your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — During question period, the Leader of the Opposition directed a question over to this House, which I believe under our legislative *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly*, broke rule 51(b).

The Speaker: — Okay. I'll certainly review that point of order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 151 — *The Personal Property Security Amendment Act, 2018*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

[11:00]

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 151, *The Personal Property Security Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 151 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. We're in the middle of a bill introduction. Fuck. When shall this bill be read a second time?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 611 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Incremental Increase to the Minimum Wage) Amendment Act, 2018*

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker, I move that . . .

The Speaker: — I'll recognize you first. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Meili: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I apologize for the free-for-all today. I move that Bill No. 611, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Incremental Increase to the Minimum Wage) Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition that Bill No. 611 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Mr. Meili: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Government Highway Infrastructure Investment

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great pleasure to stand in this Assembly and start off the 75-minute debate and recognize the highway infrastructure the government has invested in, which had been neglected by the previous NDP government.

Mr. Speaker, roads make a crucial contribution to economic development and growth and bring important social benefits. They are of vital importance in order to make a nation's growth and development, in addition providing access to employment, social, health, and education services. Moreover highways and the road networks are important in fighting against poverty.

About the highways, Mr. Speaker, an article was published in 2003 in California. Saurav Bhatta and Matthew Drennan wrote:

This article reviews the recent literature on the long-term economic benefits of public investments in transportation. It organizes the literature into six groups according to the type of benefit being measured: namely output; productivity; production costs; income, property values, employment, and real wages; rate of return; and noncommercial travel time.

The central question addressed by the papers reviewed is whether public investments in transportation yield long-term economic benefits. While the different studies arrive at different numerical answers, most of them do indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between such investments and economic benefit measures. Transportation planners engaged in efforts to win funding for the best competing projects would gain by an awareness of that economic benefit literature and by applying those methods to measuring benefits of their project.

Mr. Speaker, NDP Premier Lorne Calvert from 2001 till 2007 and of course the NDP government completely ignored the people of Saskatchewan, completely ignored those studies that how important roles these roads are playing in our economy, ignoring productivity and contribution of transportation in our

economy, and even neglecting the safety of our people by simply saying this, Mr. Speaker, “we have been doing things ad hoc without long-term plans.”

Mr. Speaker, here are a few numbers I would like to bring in the books: 59 collisions, 42 injuries, and 2 deaths in 2004 on Highway 1 between Balgonie and Regina. Mr. Speaker, 57 collisions, 12 injuries, and 1 death in 2005 on Highway 1 between Regina and Balgonie. And the same, Mr. Speaker, 62 collisions, 43 injuries in 2006 on Highway 1 between Regina and Balgonie. Mr. Speaker, the NDP has a history of neglecting many things — highways, health, education, jobs — and everything, Mr. Speaker. The NDP leader of the opposition, Dwain Lingenfelter, when he once hinted the government was very seriously looking at the idea of volunteer maintenance, Mr. Speaker, this was the max they thought about highways, transportation, economic value, and the safety of other people, Mr. Speaker.

Here are the facts: from 2004 till 2017, there were about 1,031 collisions and 465 injuries and 20 deaths on Highway 1 between Regina and Balgonie. Mr. Speaker, there are many sad stories, and one was in 2009. And unfortunately I was about 500 yards away from that crash when it happened and that 16-year-old boy was pronounced dead the next day in the hospital.

Mr. Speaker, here is a little bit of comparison of 2017 crashes and 2018 crashes. In 2017 there were 72 collisions and 21 injuries. Since the Regina bypass opened partially and we are almost at the end of 2018, and there are only 29 collisions and 12 injuries between Regina and Balgonie, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP government did not invest in the highway infrastructure according to the people’s needs, never thought about the long-term economic benefits and Saskatchewan’s logistic needs, and the flow of benefits in business communities.

Mr. Speaker, when the people of . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I will bring your reference very soon in the speech, Mr. Speaker. When the people of Saskatchewan sent them on that side of this Assembly, they started bringing the petitions. And the member from Rosemont, actually heckling from his seat, I would like to bring up his petition, when he used to bring the petition in this House, and that petition was more than 80 times he brought it in, Mr. Speaker.

And talking about addressing the truck traffic on Dewdney Avenue, on April 7th in 2014 in the Economy Committee the same member said, and I would like to quote that, Mr. Speaker, Dewdney Avenue is “inundated with heavy-haul truck traffic . . . And it’s just a major safety issue that, really it’s my greatest concern that . . . there’s going to be tragic circumstances if left unresolved.” Mr. Speaker, this is what he is saying:

The bypass is an important long-term solution . . .

Another area that lives are being placed at risk on a daily basis in and around Regina is out at Emerald Park and White City as they connect to Highway No. 1. And of course, the bypass is an important piece there and proper connections to [the highway].

Mr. Speaker, he was further saying, “Of course, bypasses are the

long-term plan here. We are going to be looking for commitment to resource and build those bypasses.”

Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca and the former minister of Highways stated in the Economy Committee on April 29th, 2014:

It should be stated right at the front that one of the things that’s really important to this side of the Assembly is that it is important that people out there understand, when it comes to the Regina bypass, the NDP are in full support of having the bypass built . . . We’ve said that on many occasions. We’ll continue saying that, that the bypass must be built [I’m still in the quote, Mr. Speaker] and that bypass must be built as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with them when they are right. And we are doing it, Mr. Speaker. We’re building the bypass, bridges, and service roads. And it is on time and it is on budget. But, Mr. Speaker, it was long overdue, and it could have been done long ago, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to quote from CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] Regina, published on August 11th, 2012:

The community of Balgonie is banding together for change. They say there have been too many deaths at the intersection of Highway 1 and Highway 46, including 16-year-old Michael Lechner.

Now, Michael’s mother Michelle is rallying her neighbours in protest. She says her son’s life was tragically cut short just weeks before his 17th birthday. “He had so much energy and he would just fill the room with energy when he came in.”

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote that:

“We need to have something done and it should have been done last year, it should have been done before then. I don’t understand why it’s taking so long,” says Michelle.

[Mr. Speaker] A small group gathered at the intersection [those days and on a] Saturday morning to hold a stand-off in an effort to see the intersection become safer.

Michael’s sister Stephanie was at the protest Saturday, [saying] “Something needs to be done, and done soon.”

[Mr. Speaker] The group plans on continuing to hold the protest on a regular basis, in hopes that their concern will be heard and no more lives will be cut tragically short at this corner.

Mr. Speaker, we listen to people and we do not ignore them as the NDP had done in their term. We have invested over \$8.4 billion in our 11 budgets, a 100 per cent increase from \$4.2 billion that the NDP spent in their 16 years when they were in office. Our government has invested over \$3 billion in highways in the last three years. Again, the NDP spent a total of \$4.2 billion on highways in their 16 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\$61 million invested in the northern highways and airports in the

2018-2019 budget, up \$8 million from last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, and a 97 per cent increase from \$31 million that the NDP spent in 2006-07 budget. Mr. Speaker, since 2008 we have invested over \$511 million in the North. Since 2008 we have improved over 13 000 kilometres of Saskatchewan highways and \$61 million invested in the bridges and culvert repair, a 535 per cent increase from the \$9.6 million invested by the NDP in their last budget.

Mr. Speaker, 12 overpasses, 40 kilometres of new four-lane highways, 20 kilometres of repaved four-lane highways, 55 kilometres of service roads, over 400 utility moves. Mr. Speaker, these are the main arteries that play a significant role in business operations, good economic impact on the region, creating new jobs, tax expansion, less vehicle operating costs, less fuel consumption, and the safety of the road users, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a few quotes that . . . how desperately people were looking to have this bypass need to be built. Michael Fougere, mayor of the city of Regina: "Our position has been that we will support the province to build it, because we want one built, no question about that," *Leader-Post*, December 11th, 2014. "We are totally satisfied with the location." "I've been on council for 15 years, and the city spent longer than that waiting . . . it looks like the government will move it through. We're extremely pleased with that." Mr. Speaker, that was in the *Leader-Post* on March 21, 2013.

[11:15]

White City, Mr. Speaker, the mayor of White City, Bruce Evans, is writing in the *Leader-Post*. He is saying, "His town lobbied for years to get an overpass at the intersection of Highway 48 and the Trans-Canada [Highway], and the ministry conducted study after study." And "I don't know that you'll ever find a location that is perfect and that everyone agrees on. At some point, you have to make a decision — and then you have to get . . . [what needs to be done, Mr. Speaker]."

Mr. Speaker, there is a study in the School of Public Policy, George Mason University, Arlington, United States. It says, "Findings reveal that the road stock has the highest contribution to the growth of gross domestic product and levels of social welfare," Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly recognizes the government's highway infrastructure investment to reverse the neglect by the previous NDP government.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Pasqua has moved the following motion:

That this Assembly recognizes the government's highway infrastructure investment to reverse the neglect by the previous NDP government.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place to respond to the motion made by the member from Regina — I don't have the exact constituency, Mr. Speaker — as he talks and brags about the Global Transportation Hub and the Regina bypass, Mr. Speaker.

From the perspective of the opposition NDP, Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that we get our products to market. We've made that statement time and time again. As a landlocked province, Saskatchewan has the unique challenge of having a lot of resources and a very vibrant agricultural economy. The problem we have is we have to get our product to market, Mr. Speaker, whether it's potash, whether it's oil, whether it's the agricultural commodities, Mr. Speaker. We must get our product to market. We must get it to port.

Now when we hear the motion that is before the Assembly today and a reference about the Global Transportation Hub, there's no question that the NDP have advocated for a very efficient, well-streamlined transportation system which includes really good highways, which also includes a railway transportation system that serves all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And when we speak about the bypass, Mr. Speaker, the Regina bypass is one part of the many pieces of the infrastructure that we need to build to ensure we get our product to market. But it has to be built correctly, Mr. Speaker.

What we're seeing now today is we're seeing that the Regina bypass that's made reference is fraught with a lot of difficulties. Not only did it cost \$2 billion . . . And we often talk about that on this side of the Assembly. We have very, very long conversations about how the Saskatchewan Party made a mess, made a mess of the bypass plan, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question that as we look at the options between pipelines, we look at the options of railways, Mr. Speaker, we look at a highly efficient transportation system overall, an integrated transportation system, the whole intent from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that we do this right and any money that we spend, Mr. Speaker, has to be spent in a very wise and cautious way, a very frugal way. And the objective of course is getting our resources to market.

To date, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party have squandered billions of dollars and not achieved anything, have achieved nothing, Mr. Speaker, to address those particular matters. And when we hear the member speaking about his back-patting efforts — and we'll hear more from the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker — the question I have for them is how is it, on the bypass, on one hand you could use a phantom appraisal of land and get that appraisal, which we have never seen in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and agree to that appraisal when your friends get a huge amount of money, when inside Sask Party friends get a huge amount of money from the sale of that particular land, and then you turn around and another piece of land, you give it away? You give it away to a giant food chain company, one of the richest people in Canada, and you give that land away for nothing, Mr. Speaker. And then you turn around and then you're dealing with farmers, you're dealing with farmers that are taking this government to court and saying, listen, our land is worth more than what you're giving.

So this is the Sask Party's MO [modus operandi] when it comes to the Regina bypass. First of all, they jack up the price for their buddies to a phantom appraisal on certain lands. Then they turn around and then they give land away, they give land away again to some of their inside friends. So then they turn around and now they're going to court with some of the farmers and the business community on the value of the land that they're buying off that group. So you have three distinct groups, Mr. Speaker, around the Regina bypass.

And let's not talk about the bypass and the hundreds of deficiencies that we have alluded to in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Now the government has made such a mess, such a mess of the Global Transportation Hub that they bring forward motions of this sort to misdirect and to try and keep themselves out of the line of fire when it comes to how badly they bungled the Regina bypass.

The Regina bypass, had it been designed well, had it been monitored well, and had we had our own in-house people representing the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, people that worked for the Department of Highways, people that had the technical and the engineering expertise, had they kept those people within government, they would have protected our interests. And I think they would have told the government that the design was flawed and that perhaps we can build this on our own instead of having a P3 [public-private partnership] and a conglomerate from France come and tell us how to build our own highways.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would point out now the government is trying to shed, they're trying to shed themselves of the GTH, the Global Transportation Hub. They're going to figure out how can they dump, how can they dump the GTH on someone else so they don't have to answer questions in the Assembly anymore. And I'm going to tell that particular member that sponsored this motion that we're going to watch very carefully how the government handles the potential sale of the GTH. We're going to pay very close attention to make sure that this is not another one of the Sask Party's plan to sell the GTH to one of their inside friends, Mr. Speaker, because this is something that is of great concern to the taxpayers. But, Mr. Speaker, well I would not put it past them.

And I would encourage the members opposite to do this: if you're going to sell the GTH, then I would suggest, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that you get the member from Prince Albert Carlton to sell it because he's so good at selling valuable Crowns, Mr. Speaker, and getting nothing for it and at the same time denying any of that particular action, Mr. Speaker. So if you want to sell the GTH, get the member from Prince Albert Carlton to do so because he's good at selling the Crowns, Mr. Speaker, and getting nothing back from them. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not a good salesman for the people of Saskatchewan. We need to have good transparency.

And I'm going to pose a question to the member that just sponsored this motion following my presentation, Mr. Speaker. There's an option for us to ask questions and I'm going to ask him a question after I take my place and when other members have their opportunity to speak. And I want to see how he answers it. I want to see how he answers it because there are some serious questions, Mr. Speaker, around the GTH. And they come along with silly little motions like they're trying to blame the

NDP, trying to cover up for their mistake. And I'm going to tell the people of Saskatchewan to watch that question and hear how the member responds when the question is put right to him.

Now we ask, Mr. Speaker, we ask the question of the people of Saskatchewan, how can the Sask Party, in handling their land sales, come up with a phantom evaluation, a phantom appraisal of the land from some report? We're not sure where that appraisal came from. And they agreed with that appraisal; they agreed with the high cost of land because it was one of their inside buddies getting money from the government.

Then you turn around and you give land away to a large grocery chain, again to one of the richest families in the country. And then you turn around and you're going to court with a bunch of other landowners, called farmers and business people from our area. So you have three separate groups that you're dealing totally different with, and they don't want to talk about that, Mr. Speaker. So what they do, what they do is they go on and on about how good they are. They go on and on about their record revenue when we know, when we know a full 60 per cent of the 2017-2018 budget was being spent on the bypass while over 99 per cent of the other roads throughout the province in Saskatchewan saw a reduction, Mr. Speaker.

And let us not even mention the fact that the North has been totally ignored. And we're going to watch with great interest, Mr. Speaker, on how this Minister of Highways addresses the question proposed by my colleague, the member from Cumberland, when he said, if you can't make sure there is a safe delivery of babies being pursued by Manitoba, you better have a good transportation system in place, Mr. Speaker.

And I hear my colleague from Cumberland make that direct challenge to the Minister of Health, to the Minister of Highways. And let me say, Mr. Speaker, that they have to come up with an action plan because if something happens then they knew full well this possibility existed. So we have a lot of questions and we have a lot of points. But again, if you're trying to get rid of the GTH, you want to sell it at a basement or a bottom-door price, Mr. Speaker, like our Crowns, get the member from Prince Albert Carlton to sell it because he'll get no return for us, Mr. Speaker, but he'll do it because it's a knack, the principle that he believes is right. He's sold off Crowns before. He'll continue selling them. And I'll tell you who gets the bad end of the deal is the Saskatchewan taxpayer, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The job of every member in this Legislative Assembly is to help keep Saskatchewan moving forward, to shape the better province for today, tomorrow, and for the future, a job we take very seriously. Over the past 10 years, the province's growth as an economy has seen a growth of over 160,000 new people moving to our province. Our government wants to continue to see growth across the province, giving us strength and hope for a better future for our families and for generations to follow. Our government, Mr. Speaker, wants to continue on maintaining infrastructure that will meet the needs to support the coming growth and recognize the importance of the underlying need and reliable infrastructure.

Our government in 2018-2019 budget, Mr. Speaker, shows how we continue to invest in the betterment of our province. Mr. Speaker, Highways' 2018-2019 budget is the third largest in Saskatchewan history, 924.5 million. When this government took over office after the NDP, we faced massive infrastructure deficits to many areas such as education, health care, and we really noticed it in our highways.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP government left Saskatchewan highways in terrible shape by creating a billion-dollar pothole, collecting a billion dollars more in gas tax than investing in highway repair. They felt that the people should fix their own highways.

Mr. Speaker, since the Saskatchewan government took over, every dollar collected in gas tax, and then some, has been reinvested into building and repairing Saskatchewan highways, which has been 100 per cent increase, over 8.4 billion to their 4.2 billion the NDP government invested in 16 years.

[11:30]

Since 2008 our government has improved over 13 000 kilometres of highways, and expanded our primary weight network by over 61 per cent. In the Cypress Hills constituency in 2007 alone, our government spent \$6 million on highway infrastructure.

Highway maintenance is a safety concern as well. There is a very busy intersection at the junction of 1 and 37 at Gull Lake, and has resulted in many accidents and fatalities over the years. Mr. Speaker, our government listened to the people's concerns regarding the highway junction and the safety. Last year we had highway signs put up to reduce the speed through this intersection, Mr. Speaker. Since the signs have been put up, there has been a definite notice in a difference in how many, and safety has been created in this area.

Another important maintenance project was done at the Maple Creek on Highway 21. A replacement bridge construction was done, an investment of 0.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, as a government we have honoured the commitments we have made to those who have supported us and who have voted us in. Our government has taken the time to listen to the people of our province and we have acted. Our government has made choices that will define our future. We are continuing to move forward and keep up the maintenance of our aging infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, our highways handle a lot of wear and tear in the Southwest between agriculture, oil field, and general traffic. We continue to invest in our highways to ensure that they remain safe and sustainable for years to come. The 2018-2019 budget will invest 16.1 million towards highway construction, repairing, and maintenance in the Cypress Hills area. Major projects include bridge rehabilitation on Highway 4 over the Saskatchewan River. Highway 21 south of Maple Creek will see some more resurfacing and maintenance, as well as Highway 32 northwest of Cabri will see more maintenance and resurfacing.

This year's budget will continue to see more maintenance and repairs with highways improvements being done across the province. The 2017-2018 budget invested 10.9 million towards highway construction and repairs and maintenance. Highway 13

from Eastend to the junction of Highway 21 had been worked on, with the medium preservation being done on top.

Highways are a crucial contribution to the economy, economic development, and the growth, bringing important social benefits to our province. Mr. Speaker, they are of vital importance in order to continue to make our province develop and grow. They provide access to employment, health care services, and education. Maintaining our highway infrastructure is essential to the preservation and ensuring that we can continue to utilize those services. Our highways are essential in our province, as they are the building blocks of our communities, towns, and to our economy.

Mr. Speaker, investing in infrastructure is strategically a smart choice. Our highways help bring business and trade to our province. It supports and empowers the businesses, creates work, and connects employees to their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, we have made vast improvements on our infrastructure and highways compared to the members across the way. The Regina bypass is the largest transportation project in Saskatchewan's history, and it will help address pressures and economic population growth on our highways. Mr. Speaker, it will help improve safety for everyone on the highways also.

More than 100 Saskatchewan businesses are working on the bypass, employing approximately 9,200 construction jobs. Seventy-three per cent of these businesses operate and own offices within Saskatchewan, paying taxes in Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, they employ people from Saskatchewan who also pay taxes in the province. I am happy to say that they are on time and on budget with the P3 project.

Mr. Speaker, in 1997 the NDP government committed to twinning Highway 1 and Highway 16 from Battleford to Lloydminster at an estimated cost of 145 million. It took over a decade to complete and final cost was 357 million, nearly two and a half times the cost estimate for a simple twinning job — a huge cost escalation paid by the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an important point that because this is a P3, cost overruns will not be paid by the taxpayer but paid by the Regina bypass partners. Could you image if the taxpayers had to pay for the over costs of the bypass project? It would cost taxpayers 3 billion. Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, the bypass is on time and on budget, and is 90 per cent complete with zero risk of cost overruns.

Mr. Speaker, highways are a priority for our government. And the economy is growing, as is the population, which creates demands for us to invest and improve our highways. We are working hard to meet these demands. Our economy relies on infrastructure to ensure that we can efficiently move their goods and services across the province and across Canada. Highways support and are the backbone of our healthy economy. Sustaining the infrastructure protects and adds a long-term value to our highways and to our people that depend on our prosperity and our longevity. Our government wants to ensure that our next generation is in good position to build their future right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, while our economy and the province's finances are

showing signs of improvement, we are still facing challenges due to the threats of a damaging federal carbon tax. The day before our Throne Speech, Ottawa politicians made headlines with a new plan to hit Saskatchewan with a carbon tax. This scheme is a shell game where we will all be forced to pay more for basic necessities like fuel, heat, and power. Our opposition also supports the Trudeau carbon tax that alone would cost the Ministry of Highways over 900 million per year.

The federal government promised families a new rebate to offset those increased costs, desperately trying to convince us that we will actually be better off by paying more for gas for our vehicles, heat our homes, and to keep the lights on. I support the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join today to participate in the 75-minute debate this afternoon, or morning still. Mr. Speaker, it's a real honour for me to sit on this side of the House with my fellow caucus colleagues because we know that they've been the only ones who have been speaking up for the city of bridge in Prince Albert. So, Mr. Speaker, we have a Sask Party government that has been sitting on their hands and failing to invest in a badly needed second bridge for Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, I want to put a few points on the record. Prince Albert needing a second bridge has been studied to heck, you know, and so we have a lot of information of why we need a second bridge. It's evidence-based information. It's been done by individuals who have engineering degrees. And so they've done a lot of studies with regards to the reason why Prince Albert needs a second bridge. So it's just not verbiage; it's actual proof.

So I want to put some of this information on the record today. So in 2015 the chamber of commerce in Prince Albert, they realized that this is a huge issue and that this is something that needs to be addressed, so they invited some individuals to come and do a presentation in the city. And so some of this information is coming from Dr. Gordon Sparks. He's the president of Atana, A-T-A-N-A. He's a professor of civil and geological engineering, and I believe he has approximately 40 years' experience. So he has a lot of background with regards to civil and geological engineering and is very credible.

So with regards to a study that they've done and some information they've provided, they indicated that between 22,000 to 24,000 vehicles pass the Prince Albert Diefenbaker bridge every day, Mr. Speaker. More than 75 per cent of those vehicles that are passing through Prince Albert continuing on to destinations in the region or the North or the South of the province, 75 per cent of those vehicles don't belong to people, the residents of Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

So we realize that more surprisingly, the economic cost of a lane closure or a full closure of this bridge is huge, Mr. Speaker. So the closure of one lane of the bridge costs about \$100,000 per day. That's a closure of one lane on that bridge is \$100,000 per day. So we know that a full closure of the bridge would cost the people of Saskatchewan \$1.8 million each day. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a huge economic impact if anything did happen to our bridge.

They also, within another study that was done in 2013 by Stantec, they indicated that the future projections for the Prince Albert bridge, "Traffic projections estimate that an annual traffic on the Diefenbaker Bridge will reach 8.5 million crossings in 2025." In that year alone they're projecting 8.5 million crossings. And they're projecting 9.2 million crossings in 2040. So this is why it's so really important, Mr. Speaker, that we look at this and we start addressing it now. And all the studies and everything that's been done has indicated that we need two bridges in Prince Albert so that we can help off-load that load, you know.

And so we know that resource companies rely on the bridge to move people and products and equipment. We have tourists that use the bridge to get to their cabins and camps in the North. And we know that Saskatchewan's economy is largely based on exports, and so the transportation costs have a significant impact on competitiveness. So we're looking at the economic benefits of having the two bridges and the economic costs of when anything happens to the existing bridge in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when our bridge needed some major repairs. It was a citizen that was canoeing on the river, and he looked up while he was going underneath the bridge and he noticed that there was a crack in a support beam. So that was a huge issue. And it was lucky that we had this resident that saw that, because who knows when that issue would have been caught?

So we had to do some repairs to the bridge which really showed us what the economic impact was when we have to go down to one lane. So within the study that was done, they said in September 2011, the Diefenbaker bridge had to be reduced with their traffic so they could repair that major girder failure. And so there was a load restriction of 15 tonnes was placed on the structure to ensure safety, Mr. Speaker. And so that considerably affected all kinds of vehicles that were able to move across the bridge.

So that redirected the heavy truck traffic and sometimes they had to go 120 kilometres either way of Prince Albert that they were redirected. So that had significant expenses and losses for businesses when they had to reroute those trucks.

So we know that . . . I'm going to read off this study here:

The vehicle weight and over-width restrictions on the Diefenbaker Bridge that commenced on August 30th, 2011, have cost the provincial economy in the order of \$14.2 million over the first six months of restrictions on the bridge.

Mr. Speaker, 14.2 million in six months affected the provincial economy because of those restrictions on the bridge.

This cost resulted from delays on the bridge, rerouting of trucks, and/or hauling at reduced weights and were incurred by a wide range of bridge users, including businesses, tourists, trucking companies and area residents. School boards, homebuilders, sanitation firms, municipal fire services, and others were also [very much] impacted.

So if we had a second bridge, we could prevent future economic losses. And the project of a second bridge would show to be very

economically beneficial, Mr. Speaker. So we know that we have the information right here. We have the evidence.

[11:45]

Also before my time is over here, I could talk for a long time about this, Mr. Speaker, but I want to make sure I also put on the record that there's safety concerns with regards to only having one bridge as well. And this summer a person, an individual contacted me because they had to get to the hospital. They were on the north side of the city, and they had to get into the city to get to the hospital. They were in medical distress, Mr. Speaker. And there was an accident on the bridge and they had to wait an extra 15 minutes.

And that's not a long time. There's been wait times for almost an hour sometimes when we've had issues on our bridge. But because of their medical distress it could have been fatal, Mr. Speaker, and we always worry about that. But that particular individual did make it to the hospital in time and we didn't have that issue. But what if? And that's always a concern of people around the Prince Albert area, is what if something happens and they can't get the medical services they need to cross over the bridge there? And so if we had two bridges, that would be great.

I also want to bring to the fact that when the NDP was in government they made sure that there was a second bridge in the Battleford area, which I think is very needed because that's a major highway as well. And we can't forget that Prince Albert also has a major highway. And that bridge was funded by the province and the feds because they realized that that bridge also, just like the one the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert, is primarily used by people who are going through the community, not necessarily individuals who live in that community. So it's a provincial bridge. So if Battleford can have two bridges, I can't see why Prince Albert can't have two bridges.

So the other thing I want to put on the record real quick is that we have to have a safe route area too. So when they've been talking about having a second bridge, they always talk about potentially having it on the outskirts of the city so that we can make sure that the safe goods are transported within the city limits outside the city limits, so it's away from residential areas, because right now they have to go right through the city. If there was an accident, it would be devastating, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So Prince Albert needs a second bridge, and we know that this Sask Party government hasn't been doing their part to ensure that Prince Albert gets this important infrastructure. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today of course to support the motion by my esteemed colleague from Regina Pasqua. Mr. Speaker, I'll probably take a slightly different tack on this from my colleagues because I want to spend a couple of minutes just talking about vision and what vision means and matters in the grand scheme of things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, transportation has always been, in human history, an issue that has driven the development of nations, the development of trade routes, the development of virtually everything that we do in our lives. We can think back through the

earlier days. Obviously things like the Silk Road, and the founding of North America even, was about transportation in its original form. The lakes and rivers were the original form of transportation across the country obviously, and from that the development of the railways, and subsequently into the highways.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think if we think back, even through the sort of current history, we can obviously recognize some of the incredible vision by some folks across North America. And I think of Dwight Eisenhower and the development of the interstate highway system across the United States. And even more recently in Western Canada, we can look at some of the developments that various governments have undertaken to develop the highways infrastructure in and around cities, communities that are growing and building their economies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I as you well know, lived in Calgary and in Alberta for many years. And I think personally of things like the development of the Whitemud in Edmonton, and the Anthony Henday subsequently, which is obviously quite new. But I lived in Calgary and in Medicine Hat, and I have a great appreciation for the development of the Deerfoot project in Calgary because I was there shortly around that time when it was being developed. And notwithstanding the fact that we now call it the Deerfoot 500 for obvious reasons, at that time it was a significant development of a highway project that made a huge difference to the economy of Alberta.

And I think of Manitoba for example, the infrastructure that was built around the city of Winnipeg when they developed the Perimeter Highway. And in fact that was started back in 1955 and continues to today.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the development of highway infrastructure around major centres has always been an issue. But it's not just about the highways, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's really about the development of the economy of the province or the city or the community in which that highway serves.

And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of all of the incredible vision that our government has had over the last number of years in developing massive infrastructure projects — and I'll probably have an opportunity to come back to things like the bypass — but I think of the development of our economy based on the infrastructure that we put in place. So things like the children's hospital, the North Battleford Hospital, the Moose Jaw Hospital, all of the new schools that we've opened up, long-term care facilities, and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are all a result of having an efficient economy, having the ability to move goods and services around the province, having the ability to move people around the province effectively and efficiently and safely, Mr. Speaker. I think we can all recognize that the development of our highway system is first and foremost about the safety of our citizens, and we should truly appreciate that every day.

And I want to reach out and thank the folks in the ministries of Highways over the years for the work that they do in considering the intersections, considering the overpasses and bypasses and so on that we work with now, and just really appreciate the science and the technology that goes into the development of a highway

system. And I was particularly appreciative a couple of years ago during one of the committee meetings in the House here. One of the senior leaders from the Ministry of Highways spent quite a bit of time talking about the technical aspects of the development of a highway. And it was quite powerful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of how the thought process goes into the development — and in that case, he was talking about the bypass — but the thought process that goes into developing a safe, efficient highway system. And it's pretty impressive.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say just for the record that visionary leaders that our premiers have expressed and our ministers of Highways and the various other ministers that are influenced and affected by our highways infrastructure, these are visionary leaders. And they don't plan for today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They don't build highways for today. They don't build hospitals for today. They certainly don't plan based on what happened yesterday. They are planning for 10, 20, 30, 50 years into the future. And having the vision to do that is an incredible aptitude, an incredible ability. And I am personally very proud to have now served with two premiers that have that vision about where we are, where we can be in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not about where we will be, but what are the opportunities that are available to us in the future and how do we get there. I'm very, very proud to serve with these folks who have that vision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I lived in Alberta for many years. I came back in 2003. And prior to that, we used to travel back and forth to Saskatchewan a lot to visit family and friends. And year after year after year, the kids would express concern about the state of our highways in Saskatchewan. They said, as soon as you got to the border, you knew you were in Saskatchewan. And friends who came to visit us in Calgary said the same thing: you knew you were in Alberta when all of a sudden you got on a good road.

I'm reminded, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in early 2000 the Ministry of Highways under the NDP government had a two and a half billion dollar capital plan for highways over 10 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If I asked our Minister of Finance, she would probably say that that's probably about two and a half years of our current budget. And I respect and totally appreciate her commitment to our highways infrastructure and what we do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it goes without saying that we have 150 000 kilometres of highways and road infrastructure in the province, across the province. That means that we have an incredible commitment. We as a government have year after year made incredible investment in the maintenance and upgrading of that highway system. And I think in the last number of years we've had 13 000 of those kilometres of road improvements. We've expanded the primary weight program by 61 per cent, which is particularly critical to our rural folks in Saskatchewan.

We have to spend an incredible amount of money, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the replacement of our bridges and culverts. And you will well know in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the NDP government failed miserably — miserably, Mr. Deputy Speaker — in the maintenance of the infrastructure that was there at the time. We have had to do an incredible amount of catch-up work to build that basic infrastructure, the bridges and culverts, and then we get to the highway infrastructure.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can go on and on about their failures, but I just really want to say quite simply, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can truly appreciate that when the members opposite were in government, they were desperately trying to plug the dike. Population leakage; loss of teachers, nurses, doctors; closing schools and hospitals were all measures of their management of the economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's no surprise that they probably only paved one side of the road at that time to let people get out of the province, not to allow them to come back in. Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour today to participate in this debate. I'm very appreciative of the members opposite for choosing this topic. It's one that we've been trying to bring attention to: the mismanagement on the Regina bypass. And so I welcome the opportunity to talk about this yet some more. What a great opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I always find it a little telling, you know, when a government that's been in office for over a decade now still likes to talk about history before they got in. And that's telling because it reveals what little has been accomplished. But since the members opposite want to talk about history, I thought there was some things that we should talk about. You know, there was the absolutely record-breaking debt that Brad Wall's mentor left us in — Grant Devine, who was here the other day. And under that government, that government of the day, they sold off \$40 million worth of equipment for an eighth of that. They sold it off for less than a quarter on the dollar, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so I welcome the opportunity to talk about history.

You know, another interesting tidbit from history is that Saskatchewan, at least at one point in time, had more roads than all the other provinces in Canada combined. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know who it was who paved all those roads? It was an NDP government. It was an NDP government that built all those roads in rural Saskatchewan. So I appreciate the opportunity to talk about history, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[12:00]

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that's enough of a history lesson. Perhaps we should talk about the legacy of this government. That's far more germane.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought it was interesting today that one of the ministers — I don't recall which one — referred to the contract for the bypass being signed, sealed, and delivered. Well it certainly was sealed. There was no transparency on that contract at all. And of course we know that that's not usually what we're talking about as lawyers when we're talking about sealed. Usually we're talking about that little red dot on the signature line. But this government likes to use P3 models with confidentiality clauses to avoid public scrutiny on spending billions of dollars.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in doing some research for this I came across some comments by a Terry Leigh who commented that the bypass project was "ridiculously overpriced." And Mr. Leigh gave as a point of comparison the Coquihalla Highway in British

Columbia, a highway built through mountainous terrain, a highway almost 300 . . . actually slightly more than 300 kilometres long. And what Mr. Leigh noted was that if you adjusted the cost of building the Coquihalla for inflation to today's dollars, it would have cost \$1.63 billion in comparison to the 1.88 billion that he says the bypass project is costing.

Now in comparison, the Coquihalla had 26 more overpasses than this project. The Coquihalla had 18 more interchanges, had 19 more underpasses, 8 more avalanche dams — because we know we don't need any avalanche dams in Saskatchewan — 19 containment basins, and over 270 more kilometres of pavement than the bypass project, and still would've cost \$200 million less than building 60 kilometres of road on the flattest, wide openest chunk of dirt in the continent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've also noticed a trend with this government, and while they initially spent a bunch of money on highways, the trend has been since they got elected to spend . . . get less and less value for their money. So at one point in time, for the amount of money that they were spending, they were getting 650-odd kilometres per year of highway repaired. And that keeps shrinking, probably because of the amount of overspending that happened on the bypass.

But one other factor that happened is that there were the equivalent of 300 people let go from the Ministry of Highways, and the work that was being done by those employees is now being done by higher priced consultants. And so the government is actually getting less value for the money that they're spending.

And I thought it was also interesting that the member from Kelvington-Wadena talked about the difference in highways between Saskatchewan and Alberta. And interestingly, despite having over a decade in power, there's still a difference between the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and the highway in socialist Alberta is still better than the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan. So why is it, I would like to know, if the government has done such a good job, why is it that the Trans-Canada Highway in Saskatchewan is still in worse shape than it is in Alberta?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that the bypass swallowed the Highways budget and it consumed ministry officials trying to explain away the shortfalls of their P3 conglomerates. We know that they've been avoiding scrutiny. We know that in the 2017-2018 budget that \$3.5 million were cut from strategic municipal infrastructure. We know that there was \$4 million cut from the operation of the transportation system. And we know that \$29 million was cut from the preservation of the transportation system.

My friend and colleague today talked about — this isn't directly in Highways but it still falls under transportation and infrastructure — and it was the airport at Pelican Narrows that's in sad need of improvements. We know that it took more than a year to fix the dangerous Balgonie roundabout, even though what was the bypass, the P3 should have dealt with that immediately. We know that the bypass didn't . . . In its design there was a design flaw and that it didn't take into account the types of trucks that could actually use that roundabout and that wasn't figured out until after it was already built. And of course as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it costs a lot more to fix the problem once

the concrete is poured and the pavement's in place.

We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there was more than 1,100 deficiencies identified in the first phase alone of the bypass and you know, for a couple of billion dollars I would have expected a little more expertise than that.

Over the last eight years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has repaired fewer and fewer kilometres of highway but they have spent more and more doing it.

The Deputy Speaker: — Time for debate has expired. Questions. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Regina Pasqua, the federal government has removed the P3 requirements for infrastructure projects. When will this government open its eyes, do the same, and finally commit to building a new bridge for Prince Albert?

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we were in need of a bypass and there was a cry out there in all those communities in need of that, Mr. Speaker. Regina, White City, Balgonie, and Pilot Butte, they were asking for that, Mr. Speaker.

As usual the members opposite are spreading the smear campaign when it comes to Regina bypass, Mr. Speaker. Here are the facts: the bypass being built as a P3 will save the taxpayer \$380 million; the bypass will divert 75 per cent of truck traffic approaching Regina from the east end of the city; more than 100 of the businesses working on the bypass are Saskatchewan companies. At their peak, Broda Construction had 120 people working on the project. But we know that members across the aisle would rather smear this project than look at the facts of this, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What we see on that side of the House is the same tired NDP. They stand behind a leader with no vision, no plan when it comes to safety and investment in our highways and infrastructure. It was not mentioned once in his leadership platform, and he has yet to present any opinion of the matter here in the House. My question is the member from Prince Albert Northcote: why do you stand with a leader who neglected highways, traffic, and safety from his personal leadership platform?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand on this side with a caucus who actually stands up for the city of bridge, Prince Albert. Stop sitting back and simply believing your party rhetoric and do some research, some evidence-based research about how your government is failing Prince Albert and the northern part of this province.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, to the member from Regina Pasqua: do you agree with the current Deputy Premier, who is your colleague, when he called for a judicial inquiry into the GTH? If you don't answer that question, clearly then we know that you're afraid, and you'll retreat by giving us the usual Sask Party baffle-gab, and not answer the question. So do you agree . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — [Inaudible] . . . through the Chair. I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the highways and the bypass here. I would like to tell him that's 1,031 collisions in those . . . less than one decade, and 465 injuries and 20 deaths, Mr. Speaker. I would like them to bring in their . . . notice that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we take the investment in Saskatchewan highways very seriously, Mr. Speaker. We have invested over \$8.4 billion in 11 budgets, and that's 100 per cent increase over what they spent, \$4.2 billion in their 16 years in office, Mr. Speaker. We have improved over 13 000 kilometres of Saskatchewan highways, Mr. Speaker, and we also invested 511 million in the North, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Though it has been 11 years since the members opposite were voted out of government, the people of Saskatchewan have not forgotten the pain and neglect the NDP had on their communities and roads. Over our last 11 budgets, our government has worked very hard and invested 8.4 billion in our highways budget, which is a 100 per cent increase compared to the NDP's budgets in their last 16 years in office. With new leadership, we only see the same old NDP.

My question is for the member from Athabasca. Do you stand behind your leader's 2.5 billion spending spree that will once again neglect infrastructure and safety in Saskatchewan?

The Deputy Speaker: — I would remind members to put their questions to the Chair. Order. I would remind members to put their questions to the Chair and also their answers to the Chair. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My answer in response to the member from Lloydminster's question is, why haven't they built one inch of pipeline to tidewater, Mr. Speaker? And furthermore, all the bragging that the member from Lloydminster does, why did we face the biggest agricultural transportation crisis in the history of Saskatchewan and they didn't put a dime to it to help farmers get their product to market, Mr. Speaker? Perhaps they should take a mirror and have a look at their deficiencies. From our perspective, we give the Sask Party in questions like that a big fat "F" because they have failed to get the job done.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Douglas Park.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. From the auditor to nuns to various and multiple candidates for that party's leadership, serious concerns have been expressed about how land was acquired to make room for the Sask Party megaprojects. To the member from Kelvington-Wadena: what lessons has the Sask Party government learned about land acquisition for the GTH and the Regina bypass that will prevent public dollars from ending up in the pockets of Sask Party donors?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it speaks volumes when members opposite rise day in and day out and cast aspersions on our good citizens of this province and those who are engaged in building this province, building the infrastructure. And I think it's shameful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they do that day after day after day. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

[12:15]

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite continually criticize and denounce the bypass project, yet again ignoring the needs of Saskatchewan people. Before the bypass project began, Highway 1 east of Regina experienced an overwhelming number of vehicle accidents and collision-related deaths because it was risky and unsafe to cross the highway.

With the newly open bypass, communities are breathing a sigh of relief, and the new member from Regina Northeast should know this more than anybody. So the question is to the member from Regina Northeast. Why does your party choose ideology over the safety and the lives of the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure you that this caucus places public safety as an absolutely paramount concern. And we keep asking questions over and over again of this government about safety, like when is there going to be a second bridge in Prince Albert, a bridge that would help divert dangerous goods traffic away from the heart of the city? When is there going to be improvements to the airport at Pelican Narrows? So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, safety is of course paramount and we applaud all projects that improve safety.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This question is for the member from Cypress Hills. Do you support the \$2 billion bypass project that can't even accommodate the large truck and farm equipment it was intended for?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well if we had projected to build a highway to fit everything that is being manufactured today as far as farm equipment and size, it would be impossible. We built it for safety and what's going to move on. So thank you.

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

The Speaker: — Before we resume proceedings, I would like to offer my apology for using unparliamentary language earlier. So my sincere apology to the Assembly on that use of language. Okay.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Motion No. 2 — Inquiry Into the GTH Land Acquisition

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And this is, I think, one of the first times I've ever moved the motion as a private member in this fashion. So it's kind of a new experience for me, but I look forward to being able to get some comments on the record.

And the motion that I'm going to pass at the end of my comments is basically calling upon this government finally — and we've tried in other fashions — calling on the government to launch a judicial inquiry into the land deals associated with the assemblage of land for the GTH. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue calling on a judicial inquiry, and we know it's something that has been called upon by all kinds of people.

But before I pass the motion, I just want to get some comments on the record. First of all, there was an excellent article written on August 9th, 2018 by Geoff Leo from CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] news. And in that article, Geoff consolidated a number of the many unanswered questions about the GTH.

And these are questions that weren't answered by the auditor's report because, as we know, her report was based on process only. And these answers weren't offered as a result of the police investigation because, as we know, despite hundreds of hours of investigation, they weren't able to get the information that would be needed to lay criminal charges.

But Geoff Leo put together a really good list of unanswered questions, and I really want to get those on the record today. Geoff has done some excellent work in researching the land transactions at the GTH.

And I think these questions are ones that a judicial inquiry is the only way to get answers, Mr. Speaker, is to go through a judicial inquiry mainly because, as you know . . . I think you've been on committee when the Public Accounts Committee, when time after time this government refused to allow questions of the key players in the east parcels land deal that remain unanswered. And until we can speak to those officials, until they're called to provide witness . . . And not just officials, but even the former minister himself, Bill Boyd, I mean, he's never spoken under oath as to what happened. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that speaks volumes for someone that was considered to be the DNA of the

government, Mr. Speaker.

And I can't understand why this government doesn't want to clear the air, why they don't want to finally put this to rest, have a judicial inquiry, and then have those questions answered. And then it will clear the air if there is nothing untoward, Mr. Speaker. So why are they so reluctant to call a judicial inquiry? That really raises concerns.

And I think many of those backbenchers would love to have those concerns put to rest. I think they're tired of us continually asking for the judicial inquiry and I'm sure many of them would like to see it happen as well. In fact I think even the Premier and the Deputy Premier themselves would like to see this happen. So what's holding this government back? And that's the largest unanswered question I think we have.

But of the 20 unanswered questions that Geoff Leo raised in August after the police investigation was closed, the first one: who made a mysterious call to Bill Boyd in May of 2012, offering to sell the 204 acres? Mr. Speaker, everything happened in May of 2012. The whole kind of coalescing of this weird land deal made up basically by Bill Boyd was happening in May of 2012. So he got approval to buy the 204 acres but somebody from Edmonton called his office and Bill Boyd has never said who that person was. He says he can't remember, Mr. Speaker, but it would be nice to have him under oath and to have an answer to that question.

No. 2: how was it that Robert Tappauf, who's a farmer from north of Edmonton, how was it that he knew to buy or put an offer to purchase on those two quarter sections of land at that very time, Mr. Speaker? What was it that prompted him to purchase that land? Again he's never been required to answer questions, and only a judicial inquiry would clear the air. It's 2012, Robert Tappauf put the offer to purchase on those two quarter sections. By May of that year, or in April actually, Bill Boyd then got approval of cabinet. And there's many cabinet ministers sitting here today who were at the table when that was approved but we've never been able to ask them direct questions.

"Critics have wondered [Geoff Leo says] how Tappauf was able to have such impeccable timing in his purchase." And of course we know that Tappauf had a business relationship with Bill Boyd through their farming enterprises. So you would think those two gentlemen would want to answer questions and clear the air if there was nothing untoward that happened.

Third question: why was John Law dismissed? John Law was a well-respected deputy minister for the Government of Saskatchewan. He had many, many years as a public servant and suddenly in May of 2012 — here we are again, Mr. Speaker — May of 2012 when we know John Law advised that Highways should buy the land not the GTH, suddenly Bill Boyd removed him. Actually John Law, at that time he was the GTH CEO [chief executive officer]. And the officials told him Highways should buy the land. GTH was told Highways should buy the land and then once Boyd heard that, he fired or let go John Law. And I know there's a number of emails at that time that really put into question . . . There was high-level Ministry of Justice lawyers involved and John Law was suddenly replaced by a known Sask Party supporter, Chris Dekker, as the head of the GTH.

No. 4: why did Bill Boyd authorize the GTH to offer four times more for the land than what it was worth? We know, Mr. Speaker, that Highways had the appraisals in hand. We've seen Highways officials comment on this, saying that there was absolutely no reason for Bill Boyd to offer, through Laurie Pushor, that four-times value. We haven't been able to speak to Bill Boyd. We haven't been able to speak to Chris Dekker about this.

No. 5: why did the Minister of Finance — she was then the minister of Crown Investments Corporation — why did she tell the Crown Investments Corporation that they should help pay for the land? That's a question that we've never been able to find out. Why was the minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] even involved in this deal, Mr. Speaker? And those are questions that a judicial inquiry . . . These people would be put under testimony and they would answer them.

The next question he has: why didn't the government learn who owned 139 Land Corporation? Remember, that was Robert Tappauf's mysterious land corporation. At least the Deputy Premier had the good conscience to ask those questions at the cabinet table, but no one ever bothered to find out despite the fact that even in June of 2012 we know that Highways pretty much knew. Highways officials knew who 139 Land Corporation was. The emails are there in the freedom of information request. So that's a very big question. Why didn't anybody bother finding out who owned 139 Land Corp?

And then, of course, why didn't Robert Tappauf himself come forward to say, I'm the owner; I have the offer to purchase? Why did he keep his identity secret, Mr. Speaker?

Next question: how on earth did Robert Tappauf, from north of Edmonton, and Anthony Marquart connect to make the land-flip deal? Those are questions we have no answers to, Mr. Speaker, and I think they're very important questions and I think they're ones that only a judicial inquiry would put to rest.

No. 9: why didn't Laurie Pushor tell cabinet or the GTH board about the Ministry of Highways lower value appraisal? The auditor goes through this in great detail in her report from June of 2016, Mr. Speaker. But we know that Laurie Pushor knew Highways had the lower valued appraisal and yet he somehow represented to the GTH board . . . He referenced Anthony Marquart's appraisal of land, which it was revealed later, Mr. Speaker, was not to be considered in the first place. But it was incredibly high value because it was based on a developed price per acre and certainly not what the land was worth, Mr. Speaker. If you drive out there right now, the land is still just plain old dirt. There's nothing going on, on those east parcels. So how the \$129,000 an acre appraisal got somehow implicated in the way that the GTH quadrupled the land values is very, very interesting and certainly we need answers to those questions

Even the Deputy Premier, in 2017 when he was running for leadership in the Sask Party, he said he wanted a public inquiry and, Mr. Speaker, he has been interestingly silenced as well on this. We don't know why the Deputy Premier called for it just over a year ago and, all of a sudden, now it's more like, oh there's nothing here, move along. That's the attitude we're getting from this government. But, Mr. Speaker, it's not going to go away

because there are so many unanswered questions.

No. 10: why did Anthony Marquart pay so much money for land in the path of the Regina bypass given the risk of expropriation? Any knowledgeable businessman would know that, if you're in the path of a highway, you can have the land expropriated, and certainly that was the experience of many, many, many people along the bypass route. So why would Anthony Marquart double the price that Robert Tappauf made when he knew that that land could be expropriated for a much lower rate? He's a smart guy, Mr. Speaker, so what on earth prompted him to pay double what Marquart paid when he knew that the actual value of the expropriated land was much, much lower? So again, many unanswered questions.

No. 11: what role did Marquart's high-value appraisal play in the land transactions? There's been a lot of flipping around back and forth on this high-priced appraisal, Mr. Speaker. And I think even the Premier supported it as justifying paying \$103,000 an acre because this appraisal said 125, but we know full well that Highways' appraisal showed \$50,000 an acre, maybe \$60,000 an acre, and that's exactly what the bypass was doing at every other part of this large bypass except for those two quarter sections. So I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that raises questions in your mind. It certainly raises questions in my mind and I think in the public's mind and obviously in CBC's mind in terms of this article.

No. 12: why did Laurie Pushor tell Bill Boyd and the Premier's chief of staff that Marquart's appraisal "makes a case for our position"? I would love to talk to Laurie Pushor about this, Mr. Speaker. And as you know, we have tried and tried and tried to get him into Public Accounts to answer these very questions. Why did Laurie Pushor tell Bill Boyd that this "makes a case for our position"? What is the position? What is the position that he's referring to there? We'll never know, Mr. Speaker, but it's certainly a valuable question to ask because obviously Bill Boyd and Laurie Pushor had a position that had nothing to do with the actual value of the land. So what was it? What was it, Mr. Speaker? And we're not going to know. We're not going to know until we have a judicial inquiry and that's what's required here.

[12:30]

Another question, 13: why did Boyd and Pushor negotiate directly with Marquart while leaving the Ministry of Highways and the GTH in the dark? The board of directors of the GTH had no idea this was happening in 2013. The CEO of the GTH was off on a holiday when all this came down, Mr. Speaker. And the Ministry of Highways, the member for Indian Head-Milestone, I believe, was the minister around that time. The officials knew what the actual value of the land was. The officials knew that the Highways is normally the one to do that purchase or the expropriation, and so there's no reason for the GTH to even get involved.

So again a question: why did Bill Boyd, the minister, and his special adviser . . . Why did he have a special adviser, Mr. Speaker? There's another question. Why did Bill Boyd even hire Laurie Pushor as his special adviser? And then why was Laurie Pushor put in as deputy minister of the Economy as a result of this? So those are very important questions that we simply don't have answers to, and we won't until we have a judicial inquiry.

No. 14: why did former Premier Brad Wall tell a pre-election audience that the GTH land was not politically directed when emails show that Boyd directed the purchase? So we have our Premier telling us there's no politics here; this is just business. But you have a minister of the Crown personally directing the purchase of land. That is so unorthodox, Mr. Speaker. It's out of the ordinary, and that's why we have questions.

No. 15: why did Bill Boyd decide to purchase the land from Marquart on a "willing-seller, willing-buyer" basis when all other GTH land to date had been acquired at appraised value under threat of expropriation?

We talked about this recently, Mr. Speaker. Every other quarter of land at the GTH was expropriated by the Ministry of Highways on behalf of the GTH. They expropriated it all. And in fact, I think most if not all of those expropriations ended up in court and Highways ended up paying double what they expropriated those parcels for. And then GTH turns around and pays four times the value of, or three or two times the value of for the east parcels. It just defies common sense. It defies logic. It defies, well, common sense, Mr. Speaker. I'm at a loss for words here because it's just stunning in terms of the reach that the minister did on this particular deal, and using his special advisor to seal the deal with businessmen that were known to him.

The next point is no. 16: why did Laurie Pushor write to Anthony Marquart and in a quote he said, "I wonder if we should meet face-to-face, just so we can say we did!"

That's a very strange thing to say to someone as the special adviser to the minister that you're purchasing land from, on apparently a willing-buyer, willing-seller basis. Again, a deviation from the expropriation process that Highways was more than happy to do to displace all those farmers out of the GTH. No problem, we'll expropriate, and then, of course, turn it over to CP Rail [Canadian Pacific Railway], 300 acres to CP Rail for no cost, Mr. Speaker.

CP Rail is using about 30 acres right now, so those lands were all expropriated for public purposes, with public dollars . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There's 20, Madam Minister of Finance. So there's 300 acres for free. We know that Loblaw has purchased land, but they won't tell us how much for. So again, is this public purposes when private corporations are making a killing? I'm not sure that that's exactly what the law of expropriations is about. So, no. 16, Mr. Speaker, oh that's the one I just read was when Laurie Pushor wrote to Anthony Marquart, and said, "I wonder if we should meet face-to-face . . . so we can say we did!"

There's a quote here from the University of Regina professor of public administration, Ken Rasmussen, said, "It's likely Pushor never intended for that email to get out." To quote from Rasmussen: "You kind of destroyed the optics of it if you say it's all about the optics in an email and that becomes public."

And Geoff Leo goes on to say:

Pushor has never publicly answered questions about this email. A government spokesperson wrote on his behalf, "This was just a casual comment made in passing, as all

negotiations took place over the phone."

Which raises another question, Mr. Speaker. Why were they negotiating over the phone? Why don't we have a public record of this, when this government is very proud to say we've released everything. Well we don't have the phone records, Mr. Speaker. So a lot of this happened over the phone, and we need a judicial inquiry to answer that.

No. 17: why did Laurie Pushor present incomplete information to the GTH board after the purchase decision had already been made? So just another example of how the GTH board was nothing more than a puppet. The GTH CEO was nothing more than a puppet, and this was totally the machinations of Bill Boyd and Laurie Pushor, who was his special adviser. And I think this actually answers the question of what the role of the GTH was in all of this; they were nothing more than yes-men, doing what the minister bade him to do, despite the assertions of the former premier that this was a non-political event.

No. 18: why was Laurie Pushor discussing the possibility of buying another parcel of land from Marquart despite the fact Marquart didn't own the property? We've seen the emails, Mr. Speaker. Laurie Pushor was chatting with Marquart after the east parcels deal, talking about other land that they should get together about. But Marquart didn't even own the property at the time. He subsequently bought it, but it was strange that Laurie Pushor was chatting with Marquart about further purchases after the east parcels.

More questions. No. 19. This is a big one, Mr. Speaker: why did SaskPower buy \$25 million worth of land at the GTH in the same month, the same month that the GTH needed \$21 million to buy Marquart's land? There's been a lot of dismissing of that question, saying, well you know, SaskPower was going to do it and they had no idea about these parcels. But you know, there is a unifying factor here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's that they both had the same minister. Bill Boyd was the minister of SaskPower at the same time that he was the minister for the GTH.

So the coincidence is stunning, may I say, and I think until we have a judicial inquiry — we can have the SaskPower officials on the stand; we can have Bill Boyd on the stand; and we can have Laurie Pushor on the stand and we can have Anthony Marquart on the stand and we can have Robert Tappauf on the stand — we will not get answers to these questions. We know that.

The 20th question is, how much money did taxpayers lose on the GTH land deal? Now Geoff Leo goes on to say that the auditor concluded that the GTH paid too much for the land — no kidding — but no one has ever told the public how much taxpayers lost. And of course we still have questions about the borrow land that was there.

I've asked written questions, Mr. Speaker, but they weren't answered in the spring. And I know there's a due date coming up, so I'm looking forward to getting that information at least so that we can ask better questions on the borrow land and the companies that were hired to move that dirt around, Mr. Speaker. I know one company that was hired to move the borrow was actually the highest contributor to the Premier's leadership campaign. They gave him \$50,000 for his leadership campaign.

So there's questions around that, Mr. Speaker, and we're working hard to get some of those answers.

But clearly a judicial inquiry would be the right thing to do. I think many of the backbenchers would then have to stop hearing us ask questions about it. They would be able to go back to their constituents and explain what happened. I'm sure you've had questions yourself, Mr. Minister. I'm sure that the member from Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland has questions from his members about this. And he's not able to answer them because he doesn't know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . He's asking about why don't we trust the RCMP. He's obviously completely misunderstood the point, Mr. Speaker. We trust the RCMP. They did their job. But if people don't talk, they don't get evidence. The only way to make those people talk is to put them on oath in front of a judicial inquiry.

So we don't know what Anthony Marquart told the RCMP. We don't know what Bill Boyd told the RCMP. But we don't know what he didn't tell them either, and that's what we're talking about, Mr. Speaker. According to these guys, the bar . . . just not criminal in nature? Good enough.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it isn't good enough. And if it's good enough for the member from Silverspring-Sutherland, his constituents should know that, Mr. Speaker. And I hope that he puts that in his next newsletter to his constituents, that he's perfectly happy with a low bar of not-criminal-in-nature as good enough for this government because that's what these individuals and these members opposite should be telling their constituents, Mr. Speaker.

Let's leave the last word — I'm almost done, Mr. Speaker — I'm going to leave the last word to the nuns. And we need to see what they said about the purchase because the sisters owned the land that Robert Tappauf originally put the order on. And here's what she said. I'm going to leave her the last word.

This is Sister Veronica Dunne of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. And she said, this is a quote: "I think it's horrible when governments do these kinds of things, and the taxpayers wind up paying the price." It really is horrible when governments do the kinds of things that have gone down at the GTH, Mr. Speaker. "It's the people of Saskatchewan I feel sorry for. They ended up really overpaying for that land. Some individuals wound up profiting a great deal from the sale of that land. And it didn't have to be that way."

And finally on the idea of a judicial inquiry Sister Veronica Dunne said this: "I think the people of Saskatchewan have a right to call for something like that." And so, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to put this in my motion now.

And I'm pleased to move the following motion:

That this Assembly calls upon the Sask Party government to immediately launch a judicial inquiry into the land deals associated with the assemblage of land for the Global Transportation Hub.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved that:

That this Assembly calls upon the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately launch a judicial inquiry into the land deals associated with the assemblage of land for the Global Transportation Hub.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into this debate. My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana has done a wonderful job just speaking previous to me, laying out the questions that are left unanswered about the GTH, laying out the case for the need for a judicial inquiry into the GTH. She's spoken very eloquently on this file many times.

We still have many, many questions left unanswered. We've asked several times, I know both my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana as well as myself at the Public Accounts Committee, to have the opportunity to do what we normally do at Public Accounts Committee, which is have officials come and testify and answer questions that we have about government situations, government dealings. This is, of its very nature, a government dealing that dealt with taxpayer dollars, that this government has refused time and time again to allow those officials to come to that committee to testify so that we could do our work as legislators, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We also heard from several of the leadership candidates on that side speak about the importance of a judicial inquiry and, rightly so, listen to their constituents for once and talk about how there may be a need for a judicial inquiry, despite what an RCMP charge has . . . I do think members on the other side understand the difference between the high level of finding something criminal and something that's just wrong. There is a difference. What happened at the GTH is just wrong. We need to ensure that we're able to get to the bottom of what happened with taxpayer dollars. This government has refused to allow that opportunity. We hope to see the government side finally step up and support this motion.

So with that, I know there is other folks that are going to want to enter into this debate, so for this time for today, I'm going to adjourn debate on this motion.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Douglas Park has moved to adjourn debate on the motion. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House adjourns. Is that the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:44.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor
Minister of Advanced Education
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water
Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of Crown Investments
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Transportation Company

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Minister of Immigration and Career Training

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and Gaming Authority
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Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
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