



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

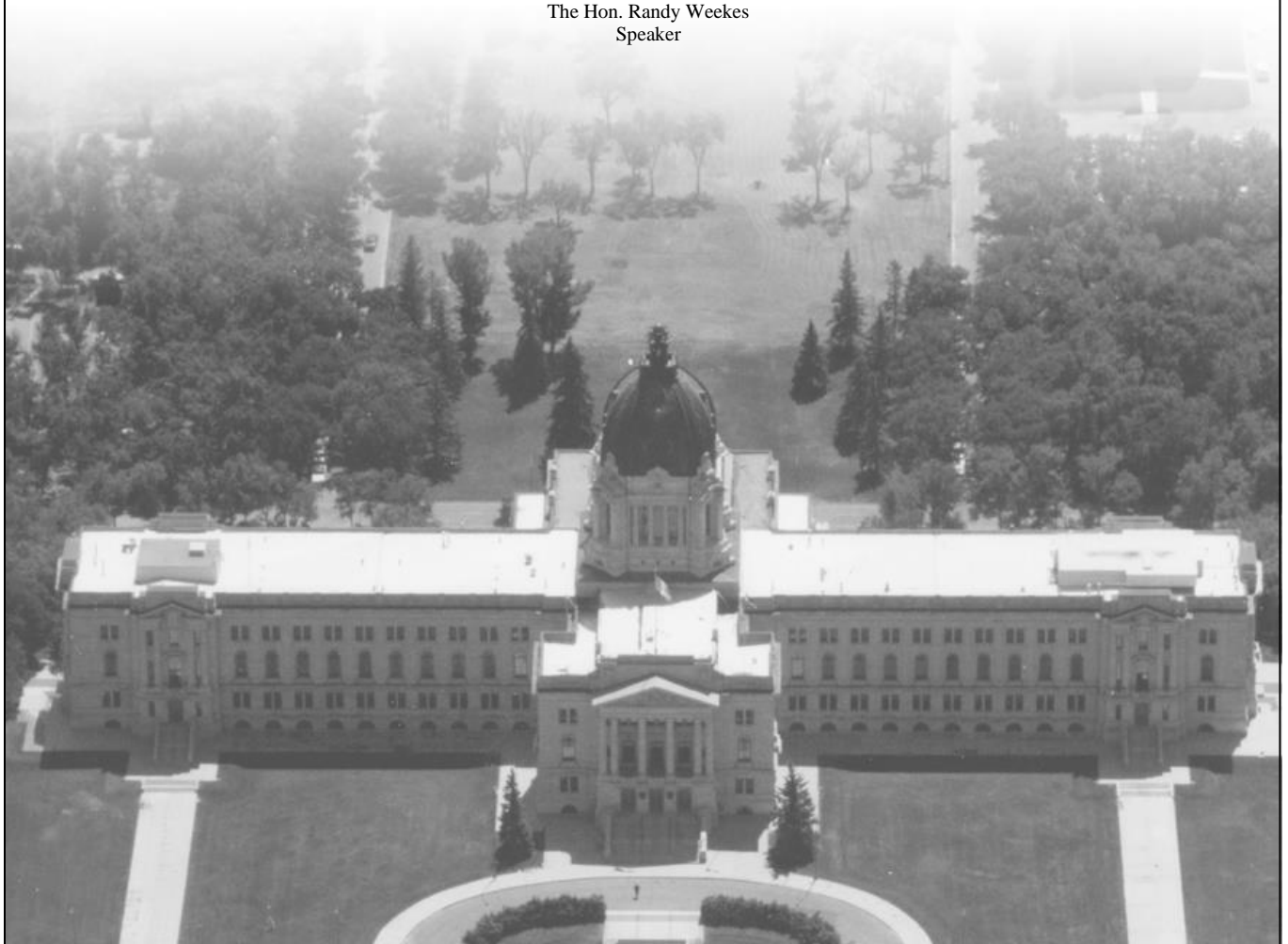
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes

Premier — Hon. Scott Moe

Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)

Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)

Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)

Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)

Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)

Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)

Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)

Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)

Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)

Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)

McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)

Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Skoropad, Hon. Dana — Arm River (SP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Lumsden-Morse

Vacant — Regina Coronation Park

Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 45; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12;

Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 3

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang

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

Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyk

Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Calendar>

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, today is a special day as we vote for the third and final time on *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*, first of its kind of legislation which will address concerns of responsible firearms owners and enhance public safety across Saskatchewan. Many individuals here today in the west gallery have worked hard on this bill with many more individuals and communities who have been consulted.

So without further delay, I would like to welcome Ray Orb, president of SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]; Elton Dutka, president of Saskatoon Wildlife Federation; Jeff Kent, vice-president, Saskatoon Wildlife Federation; Brent Lee, vice-president, Regina Wildlife Federation; Howard Closson, past president of Saskatoon Wildlife Federation; Ken Weber, president of Saskatchewan Rivers chapter of the Safari Club International; Kelly Moens, president, Wascana Pistol Club in Regina; Tony Bernardo, executive director of the Canadian Shooting Sports Association; Larry Grant, director, Division 3, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities; Tim Wallace, Regina Wildlife Federation; Matthew Shirley, director, Saskatchewan branch, Canadian Coalition for Firearm Rights; David Yorke, president of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation; Adnan Parwez, Regina Association of Practical Shooters; Wesley Stevens, Regina Association of Practical Shooters; Gary and Pat Faulconbridge, Great Plains Shooters Association; Joyce Lorenz, past president, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Saskatchewan Trappers Association, and currently serving on the Saskatchewan firearms advisory board; Gil White, chairperson for the recreational firearms owners of Saskatchewan, and current chairperson for the Saskatchewan firearms advisory board; Brent Buyers, recreational firearms owners of Saskatchewan; Kevin Omoth, recreational firearms owners of Saskatchewan; Murray Grismer, recreational firearms owners of Saskatchewan; Ron Todd, Saskatchewan Amateur Trapshooting Association; Darryl Schemenauer, TnT Gunworks; Norm Nordgulen, reeve for the RM [rural municipality] of Lake of the Rivers and is currently serving on the Saskatchewan firearms advisory board representing SARM.

Last but not least, and some of you will be familiar with the next two individuals. Of course Dan D'Autremont, former MLA

[Member of the Legislative Assembly] and Speaker; and Robert Freberg, our Chief Firearms Officer for Saskatchewan.

Thank you so very much for being here today. And I ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Leave has been requested for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the minister opposite to welcome these leaders in Saskatchewan to their Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank them for all the respective organizations and people and members that they represent in coming here today and for their work around common-sense provisions around firearms and the advice and counsel they'll have provided government around the firearms Act, Mr. Speaker.

Of course in Saskatchewan we have a practical relationship with firearms. As a proud hunter my entire life anyways, and as a member of the Regina Wildlife Federation, I know that relationship and that connection to our province for hunters and for trappers and for shooters, for those on the farm and those in the North and Indigenous communities.

We have a relationship that's important in Saskatchewan that's often not understood by those down east or in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, which is why it's important that voices like this are involved in the work that we're talking about here today, which is why we've stood united — both sides of this Assembly stood united against the overreach and the measures by Ottawa on these fronts — and which is why we've offered and voted in support of the firearms Act thus far as well, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank all of these leaders that are here. I also want to welcome, of course, the rural leaders that are here, Ray Orb and the directors from SARM that have joined us here today. I want to certainly extend that warm welcome to Robert Freberg and to thank him for his service to this province.

And I see Darryl Schemenauer up there, Mr. Speaker, owner-operator of TnT Gunworks here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. Awesome to see him here. I think one of my first purchases from him would have been as maybe a 12-year-old, Mr. Speaker, with probably some money I'd saved up while reffing hockey or something, and you know, purchased a couple rifles and a shotgun from him as well, Mr. Speaker.

But on behalf of the official opposition, I want to welcome all of these leaders in Saskatchewan to their Assembly, to thank them for their advocacy and for their service in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, while on my feet I want to give a very, very special welcome to a friend to so many of us in this Assembly. Nathaniel Cole is seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. And for the last seven years, Nathaniel has been serving the official opposition and members of this official opposition, and has just been an incredible guy to work with.

He's also a director with Affinity Credit Union here in Saskatchewan. He's been active with Queen City For All and been very active throughout his life fighting for and advancing the rights of LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] people in our community, as well as advancing workers' rights in Saskatchewan, building better communities for all.

Born and raised in southeast Saskatchewan in Gainsborough, Mr. Speaker, he also served as the candidate in Cannington in 2016. He's a heck of a curler. He loves local craft beer, likes the rodeo, local events, life of the party, one of the funniest guys that I've ever met, Mr. Speaker.

And to him I just want to say, on behalf of a grateful opposition, thank you for the tremendous value you've added to our work. Thank you for all the care and good humour you've brought to all of us in that work as well. And we wish you well with the new role, an exciting new role where we know you'll continue to lead and advance change for workers and for people and for our province.

So on behalf of a grateful opposition, we want to send all of our love and our thanks to Nathaniel Cole.

Seated beside Nathaniel Cole is his partner, Garrett Gosselin, and I want to give him a shout-out here. Born and raised in Regina, he's a member of Muscowpetung Saulteaux Nation. He's a 10-time national figure skating competitor, Mr. Speaker, an elite athlete, performed in shows around the world and on cruise ships. Since 2020 back in Regina, he's also an award-winning professional coach and choreographer for national and international skaters, teaches power skating, Mr. Speaker, to many as well.

He likes road trips and local craft beers, probably in part making him a pretty good match for Nathaniel. But I want to welcome Garrett to his Assembly and ask all to provide him a warm welcome as well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister and the member opposite in welcoming some very, very esteemed leaders in the responsible firearms ownership community, seated in your gallery, some very good friends. And looking forward to a third reading vote today on *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to recognize two guests who are seated in your gallery. These guests are no strangers to this province, having been here last in October of 2022 during a previous economic mission. And we're honoured to have with us today Her Excellency Fatima Braoulé Méité, Ambassador of Mali to Canada; and Alpha Barry, assistant

director at La Cité universitaire francophone, La Cité, University of Regina.

I understand that some of my colleagues are going to have the opportunity to engage later today, and I very much wish to welcome you to Saskatchewan, and I know it will be a productive time. So I'd ask all members to join in welcoming these esteemed guests to the Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with the minister opposite in welcoming these guests to the legislature today, the Ambassador from Mali and Alpha Barry. Thank you so much for the work that you do. And I hope that you have a wonderful visit today. I hope that the proceedings are to your liking. Sometimes it gets a little bit rowdy in here, but we'll do our best to behave. And I do want to thank you for all the work that you do, and on behalf of the official opposition ask all members to join us in welcoming you here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members of this Assembly, it gives me great pleasure to introduce one of Arm River's finest, Brent Griffin, seated in your gallery here.

Brent and his wife, Karin, own a cow-calf ranch just east of Elbow in my constituency, and he is certainly a leader in Saskatchewan's livestock community, Mr. Speaker. He's held positions with the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association, and presently, Mr. Speaker, he holds a position with the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association as well. On top of all that, he's a RM councillor, and he and the rest of the family, the Griffin family, are an integral part of the Lakeshore Stampede Rodeo, Mr. Speaker.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to be able to present Brent with a well-deserved Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal here just a month ago. But arguably, Mr. Speaker, Brent's greatest accomplishment, but also his greatest challenge, is the young man seated just to the left of him. That would be Derek, his son. And so Derek certainly is no stranger to here. I'd also like to welcome him. And now I get to see him roaming the hallways of the building as he works here. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask for all members to join me in welcoming Brent and Derek to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to briefly join with the member to welcome Brent and Derek to their Assembly. The Griffins are exceptional producers in this province. I want to thank Brent for his leadership in the livestock sector in this province, and it's such a vital industry in this province. I want to thank him for his leadership. And to his son, I want to thank him for his service to his province in this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could just briefly join the Minister of Environment in welcoming the Griffins to their Assembly today. I had the opportunity to meet Brent earlier this morning and, of course, as we've heard, he is the proud father of Derek, who I am fortunate to have working in our office in the ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and Seniors and Rural and Remote Health.

And eager is an understatement when it comes to describing Derek's work in our office and he is doing . . . And we're so grateful to have him as part of our team handling casework. And any number of things, any number of tasks, Derek is always up for.

Brent informs me today that Derek was home on the weekend to the farm. He's up at 5 a.m. on Monday morning to make it back to Regina in time. He's here just about all the time, except for a couple of occasions, once when he hit a deer while he was driving here and then another time, apparently he got stuck in a snowbank, I think. But typical rural Saskatchewan stories.

[10:15]

But again, I just want to thank Brent for being here today and Derek for being here as well in his Assembly. I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Chamber.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to introduce the Lumsden home-schooling group here today.

We have nine grade 4 students. Give a wave. You bet. They are accompanied by their teacher, Leah Japp. And I am looking forward to meeting with you after session and getting some really hard questions. And hopefully the member from Melfort can join us as well. So to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, join me in welcoming Lumsden home-school to this, their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm privileged to bring the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring your attention to the following: that the Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] federal government continues to infringe on the constitutional rights of the province of Saskatchewan and implement policies that are detrimental to our province's economic well-being; that the commitments and actions of the federal government have made the control of Saskatchewan's resource rights unclear; that an unsupportive federal government will continue to impede Saskatchewan's

potential to play a global role in providing resources to the world market.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to implement Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation that will support the development of Saskatchewan as a global supplier of food, fuel, and fertilizer without federal infringement on Saskatchewan's constitutional authority.

The below undersigned are residents of Warman and Martensville. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise once again today to present our petition calling on the government to bring in universal access to birth control for all Saskatchewan people. The undersigned residents, Mr. Speaker, would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the entire country, youth ages 12 to 20 years old; that cost is one of the biggest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, especially among adolescents; that having consistent and affordable access to contraceptive options is essential for promoting bodily autonomy, preventing unwanted pregnancy, and saving money on sexual and reproductive health care; and finally, that sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the *Leader-Post* and *StarPhoenix* we saw an op-ed by medical students from the University of Saskatchewan calling on the government to bring in universal birth control. And I think we will be seeing more and more people across this province. We've presented thousands of signatures from Saskatchewan people.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraceptive available to all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, our petition today has been signed by residents of Saskatoon and Cudworth. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Easter Message

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Good Friday, a day which many people in Saskatchewan observe as the day Christ was put to death by the state to appease a mob. For most, it's a time of deep reflection of their personal lives coupled with gratefulness for that sacrifice of love.

As we observe the Passion of the Christ, I pray for forgiveness for all. I pray a blessing for my colleagues in this Assembly, and for the people of our beautiful province. May the hope of the Resurrection fill your hearts and your homes with abundance, peace, and joy.

Easter is also a time of reminder of rebirth and renewal, and I believe in a better day to come. To all, Mr. Speaker, a very happy Easter and the hope it brings for all Saskatchewan families and their communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Green Shirt Day Raises Awareness for Organ Donations

Ms. Mowat: — As we approach the five-year anniversary of the Humboldt Broncos bus crash, our province continues to grieve. And we're sporting our green shirts with hockey sticks outside the doors to come together in solemn solidarity with the 16 families who lost loved ones that day.

Green Shirt Day was initiated in honour of Logan Boulet, who saved six lives through his donation of organs after the Humboldt Broncos bus crash in 2018. The Logan Boulet Effect became a powerful movement across the country and led to a significant rise in registered organ donors.

As powerful as that effect has been, it's important that we keep the conversation going as organ donation numbers unfortunately are still not enough to meet demand. Because of organ donation shortages, there are plenty of folks in the province on long wait-lists. Being on such a long wait-list is damaging, both physically and mentally. The longer a patient waits, the less chance they have for a healthy transplant. And most people can only imagine what that must be like.

Today I ask all members to join me in registering online to become an organ donor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, five years ago Saskatchewan experienced one of the greatest tragedies when the Humboldt Broncos bus accident occurred. The players, coaches, and their families lives were forever changed.

In their grief the family of Logan Boulet, one of the Broncos who sadly did not survive the crash, honoured their son's wishes to be an organ donor. Logan saved six lives and inspired residents across Saskatchewan and Canada to register as organ donors. This selfless legacy is known as the Logan Boulet Effect, and it inspired the creation of Green Shirt Day, which we mark on April 7th each year. This is a day to honour and continue Logan's legacy by inspiring Canadians to register as organ donors.

I would also like to recognize some people involved in Green Shirt Day: Larry Kreklewich of Melville, an organ donor receiver and an advocate for organ donations through his involvement with the Kidney Foundation and the Canadian Transplant Association. Brandy Hehn of Regina unfortunately couldn't be here today, but she is a two-time transplant recipient who

designed the 2023 Green Shirt Day logo that will be featured for the next five years.

I would like to thank both Larry and Brandy for their dedication to this cause, and I ask that all members join me in remembering the Humboldt Broncos who lost their lives and had their lives forever changed. I also ask all members to join me in thanking the first responders who were there on that day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Easter Message

Mr. Wotherspoon: — As we prepare to celebrate Easter this coming Sunday, I want to take a moment to reflect on the true meaning of this important time. Maybe it's the way the world starts to wake up from its long winter nap, or maybe it's the feeling of hope and renewal that comes with the season. Whatever it is, Easter has a way of bringing hope and bringing people together and reminding us of what's truly important.

Easter is a time of rebirth and of new life. And in my home and for my family, Easter also includes an eagerly anticipated Easter egg hunt. Easter is a time of reflection and family. It's a time for us to come together and celebrate the things that truly matter in life, like love, kindness, and compassion. It reminds us to appreciate the people we love, to be grateful for the blessings in our lives.

I wish you all a very happy Easter, and I look forward to working together to build a stronger and more connected community and province in the days and weeks ahead.

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

Sikh Community Celebrates Vaisakhi

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. April is Sikh Heritage Month. During this month, we celebrate Vaisakhi. For the Sikhs, it is not only a religious festival. It reminds them of those great moments in the Sikh history when the people of the land fought against foreign domination and struck against slavery to reveal their well-known bravery at its very best.

That age-old Vaisakhi Day began as looming importance with Guru Gobind Singh Ji creating the Khalsa, on the famous Vaisakhi of 1699. Year after year, we remember the day as the birth of Khalsa, which means pure. When he created the Khalsa on the Vaisakhi of 1699, he gave the day a new importance and additional lustre.

When Maharaja Ranjit Singh appeared on the scene, he chose the Vaisakhi of 1801 to get himself coronated as the King of Punjab. He minted new coins, henceforth recognized as the standard coins of the Sikh kingdom.

There is a cultural side to this occasion as well, Mr. Speaker. It is harvest time in the month of April in India. The farmers sell their crops and enjoy the profits by lavish festivities, folk dancing, and singing. The Sikhs as a people are known to be aggressive warriors and hard workers, generally being successful

in all professions. We have good people in Sikh community who run Guru Nanak Free Kitchen and plant hundreds of trees here in Regina.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy Vaisakhi and Happy Easter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

University of Saskatchewan Opus Program for Entrepreneurs

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another great day in Saskatoon. Saskatoon's newly launched incubator and pre-accelerator program, Opus, is creating a new dimension to the tech sector in our province. Recently at the grand opening of Opus, I had the privilege of bringing greetings alongside Mayor Charlie Clark; director of innovation and mobilization and partnerships, Alix Hayden; CEO [chief executive officer] of Innovation Sask, Kari Harvey; and vice-president of research at USask [University of Saskatchewan], Baljit Singh.

As a program for entrepreneurs, Opus helps mobilize innovations developed on campus by providing access to programming, infrastructure, and a network of mentors and advisers.

There are currently 12 start-ups, 16 mentees from various colleges, 30-plus hours of entrepreneurial training offered, 32 mentors and coaches, and 90-plus stakeholders engaged with the project. And I'm proud that our government could contribute 1.2 million in funding to launch this initiative through the U of S [University of Saskatchewan].

Entrepreneurship drives the growing tech sector and will create jobs right here in Saskatchewan. And I believe that Opus will help these entrepreneurs fully realize their potential. I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking everyone involved in making this project available to our entrepreneurs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Easter Message

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot can happen in one week. Two thousand years ago, for Jesus and his followers, this week was a busy one. On Palm Sunday, the Son of God was riding into Jerusalem on a donkey to shouts of hosanna. But no surprise to Jesus, by Friday things turned ugly, and after being betrayed by his own friend, he was standing before Pontius Pilate, a local leader, to shouts of "crucify him."

Mr. Speaker, the love of God for mankind is never more clearly understood than in the Easter message. Jesus did not come into this world to be served but to serve, to lay his life down for those he loves — us, you, and me. Mr. Speaker, as much as death brings heartbreak, Easter brings hope.

Our hearts were broken recently as we said goodbye to a member of this House we all loved. The flowers that sit on his desk came from the death of a little seed. The death of that seed gave way to new life, and that is our hope.

The scriptures say it well:

Blessed be our God and Father, who in his great mercy, caused us to be born again to the living hope through resurrection of his son Jesus from the dead.

Tomorrow, Good Friday, is the day that Jesus was crucified. Mr. Speaker, Sunday was coming and the power of death was defeated when Jesus rose from the dead. And that, Mr. Speaker, is living hope.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont

Provincial Economy and Jobs Numbers

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this Premier who is failing to deliver when it comes to more jobs and bigger paycheques for Saskatchewan people. The jobs numbers are out for March here today, and they show this Premier has the worst job creation record in the nation. You know, and it's not even close, Mr. Speaker. Just 3.9 per cent job growth — dead last in Canada since that Premier became Premier in 2018.

How is it that with all the opportunity and all the amazing people, Mr. Speaker, that we have here in this province, that this Premier has the worst economic record in Canada?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, in this province in the last fiscal year, we had 20,000 jobs — the actual numbers from Statistics Canada, who does not lie, Mr. Speaker, were 20,000 jobs — added to the communities across the province of Saskatchewan.

[10:30]

So far this year, Mr. Speaker, when comparing to last year, up 9,500 jobs this year. On track to meet or probably quite likely exceed last year's really record numbers, Mr. Speaker, which is under an environment when the Saskatchewan economy was described as having a labour market that has been scorching hot throughout the year of 2022.

So in 2022, Mr. Speaker, 20,000 jobs added in the province of Saskatchewan. Twenty-nine thousand people moved to the province of Saskatchewan. This year thus far, Mr. Speaker, up an additional 9,500 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that the economy in this province continues to be scorching hot, Mr. Speaker, despite the doom and gloom that comes from the members opposite.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that's outrageous when you look at the record of that Premier. You know, the reality of the numbers are crystal clear. They're in the black and white of the jobs report here today by Statistics Canada. Year over year, we are in last place for jobs growth. Month to month, we actually

lost 4,300 jobs. More than any other province in the country — dead last. And since this Premier took office, our province is dead last in Canada.

When will this tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government and that Premier accept any responsibility for the fact that he has the worst jobs record in Canada?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago we had the member from Nutana who had said, and I quote, “Mr. Speaker, that is not the Saskatchewan that I know, and it certainly is not the province that I grew up in.” It most certainly isn’t, Mr. Speaker. A province where we have 9,500 jobs added to communities across the province year over year, Mr. Speaker, building on 20,000 jobs added to the province last year, Mr. Speaker. We have the third-lowest unemployment rate in the country of Canada. Certainly not a province that in any way compares to when the member from Nutana grew up under NDP reign in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And today if you go to the website saskjobs.ca, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people will see that there are 18,000 job vacancies, employers that are looking for people to come and join their team, Mr. Speaker. That’s in community after community after community.

I would say that we are on pace to have a record year, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the record year we had last year in job growth, in population growth, and in opportunities for Saskatchewan people.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Just no credibility, Mr. Speaker, no accountability. That Premier has the worst jobs record in Canada, month to month, year over year, and since he’s become Premier, Mr. Speaker. Those are the facts.

And we see the impact of that terrible record on jobs in today’s latest Angus Reid poll. Fifty-two per cent of Saskatchewan people say that they’re either in bad shape or terrible shape and barely getting by — the highest in the nation by a mile, Mr. Speaker, the worst economic record in Canada by that Premier — and families struggling with the cost of living more than anywhere else in Canada while that government piles on with new cost.

When will the Premier accept any responsibility for the damage he’s caused to people in our economy by his choices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, again I’d say that the member from Nutana said that this certainly is not the province that she grew up in, Mr. Speaker. Thankfully so, because here it is in black and white, Mr. Speaker. The population numbers in 1991, Q3 [third quarter] of 1991: 1,002,713 people lived in the province of Saskatchewan. Sixteen years later, the province that that member grew up in, Mr. Speaker, Q3 of 2007 after 16 years of NDP government: 1,002,086 — a net loss of 627 people in the

province of Saskatchewan over those 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, the 16 years subsequent, the 16 years subsequent, Q4 of 2022, up 212,000 people — 212,532 people, Mr. Speaker. Many of those people are filling the 20,000 jobs that were added last year, Mr. Speaker. Many of them are filling the 9,500 jobs that have been added so far this year, Mr. Speaker.

The economy in this province is not a dumpster fire, as the NDP categorize it. It is scorching hot, Mr. Speaker, and it’s going to continue to be into the future.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that out-of-touch Premier should look at the poll that was released today, because it reads a lot like his government’s economic record — dead last on front after front. More Saskatchewan people report cutting back on spending, struggling to pay for groceries, and drawing down on savings just to make ends meet. More than anywhere else in Canada, Mr. Speaker, the worst in the country.

And it’s no wonder. This is a government that’s sitting on windfall revenues, Mr. Speaker, not offering a stitch of relief when it comes to cost of living and piling on with new costs, new taxes, cranking up the cost of living.

How much worse do things need to get before this Premier will finally act and deliver some cost-of-living relief for Saskatchewan families?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, there is something old and tired in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. It’s not on the government side of this House, Mr. Speaker. There most certainly is something old and tired, and it’s been old and tired for some period of time.

Many years ago, Mr. Speaker, when this government set a target of increasing the people that live and reside in our province of 100,000 people. The then old and tired, of the time, NDP said that that was statistically impossible and quite likely farcical, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan could ever grow. A very notable point of view when you are a part of a government that has overseen in 16 years an over-600-person population decline in the province that you reside, Mr. Speaker.

This is a government that sets targets. This is a government that sees the opportunity that lies before our communities and the families that reside in there, Mr. Speaker. We set targets most recently in our updated plan for growth looking out to 2030, Mr. Speaker. In that plan for growth, it talked about a goal of creating 100,000 jobs in this province — 20,000 last year; 9,500 so far this year, Mr. Speaker.

And they go on. As the member for Meewasin this time, Mr. Speaker, chimes in on running down the Saskatchewan economy and the Saskatchewan opportunity when he says, and I quote: “We will never reach their goal of 100,000 jobs by 2030.”

Well, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people don’t agree. The members of the government don’t agree, Mr. Speaker. And most

certainly we have tremendous opportunity that lies before us in this province.

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

Status of Child Care Centre

Ms. Conway: — Wow. Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Education is choosing to hand a quarter of a million dollars of public money to a child care operator facing serious allegations of physical abuse, someone who refused to co-operate with his ministry and had his independent school shut down.

As of yesterday, that person is still listed as the director with Grace Capstone Ministries. But the minister tried to say, everything's fine; nothing to see here.

How is this acceptable to the minister? Hasn't he seen enough to suspend funding of this child care centre for little kids under six?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I explained yesterday, we did go through a process where, with respect to the individuals that were named in the lawsuit — again, has not been tested in court, but named in a lawsuit, Mr. Speaker — with respect to the school that they operated, they did not co-operate and so we pulled their certificate.

When it came to the operations of the child care centre, Mr. Speaker, they did co-operate. And the condition was that they could not be involved in the day-to-day operations and have contact with the children or the staff that would be at the centre, Mr. Speaker. The ministry staff is doing their job and ensuring that that is the case and that that condition is being upheld, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly if allegations that are before the courts are tested and found to be true, Mr. Speaker, then certainly the ministry has the options available to take additional action, Mr. Speaker. But we want to ensure that the parents know about the allegations, that if they need additional help to move their children in the event that they don't feel comfortable in that location, Mr. Speaker. That is the case, Mr. Speaker, and the ministry, I think, is doing the appropriate thing in this case.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I guess that minister's concerns are eased because they have a consultant checking in once a month, and they've sent a letter. But, Mr. Speaker, the opposition thinks this simply isn't good enough when it comes to the safety of our children. The bar should be higher, yes. If you have to watch a daycare like a hawk, maybe it's time to rethink your approach. They didn't co-operate when it came to the school, and now they're saying, just trust us when it comes to the daycare.

But "just trust us" isn't good enough, Mr. Speaker. Why is the minister trusting leadership to oversee child care for kids under six when he couldn't trust them to run a school?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, well I trust the Ministry of Education staff to do their work, Mr. Speaker. And that's to ensure that the children are safe, Mr. Speaker, that the directors are abiding by the conditions. And that means that they are no longer running the child care centre on a day-to-day basis, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately we do, from time to time, have allegations of a serious nature in settings that involve children, whether that be in child care centres or whether that be in the publicly funded education system or the independent system. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't mean that we immediately shut those operations down.

Mr. Speaker, we put safeguards in place to ensure, Mr. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well we did, because they didn't co-operate, Mr. Speaker, in that case. In the case of the school, the independent school did not co-operate, and so yes, we shut them down, Mr. Speaker.

In this case, they are co-operating. And until that time that the charges or the allegations can be tested in court, Mr. Speaker, we will do the appropriate thing to ensure that safeguards are in place. And, Mr. Speaker, I am comfortable that they are.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the minister refers to serious allegations. What are those serious allegations? The directors of the charity running this child care centre are alleged to have performed gay exorcisms on students; physical, emotional, verbal abuse; corporal punishment using instruments.

Let's be clear: the Ministry of Education staff are not overseeing this day care. The directors of Grace Capstone Ministries, the ones alleged to have done these things, are. And it's right there in ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] today in black and white: they are still the directors of Grace Capstone Ministries today.

The minister shut down the school, and that was the right thing to do. But now we hear we're handing out a quarter of a million dollars to this day care under the same leadership. This is madness, Mr. Speaker, and I still haven't heard a satisfactory answer to my question. Why is the minister trusting leadership to provide care to kids under six when he couldn't trust this leadership to run a school?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I am trusting the Ministry of Education that put conditions in place on the child care centre, that in fact the operators and directors of the child care centre are following those conditions, and the safeguards that have been put in place are in fact being followed.

If the member opposite has information other than an ISC registration that lists the name of a director, Mr. Speaker, if they have information that would suggest that the conditions, in terms of the day-to-day operation, who are with the children, Mr.

Speaker, are not being followed, then I invite her to provide that information. And I'm sure the Ministry of Education, staff, consultants in Saskatoon would certainly want to see that information, Mr. Speaker, because they are responsible for ensuring that those conditions are being abided by.

Mr. Speaker, we sent a letter to every single family to say, if you are uncomfortable based on these allegations and based on the condition that we put in place, if you're still uncomfortable, we will help to find alternative child care, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the event that the charges . . . the allegations are tested, we will certainly make alternate plans.

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

Ambulance Services and Support for Health Care

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, every day this week we've asked the ministers of Health to provide answers and accountability on the state of ambulance care in this province. Two hundred and sixteen people called for an ambulance in the first six weeks of this year, but no ambulance was available.

They've been in power for 16 years. When will they accept any responsibility for the damage they have done to people and front-line health care workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been working with emergency medical services, both in Saskatoon and Regina, but also in rural. And we've also been working with our fixed wing and STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service], Mr. Speaker, to make sure there are process improvements at our hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, this government has invested millions of dollars into process improvements, as I've identified. The wait time in emergency rooms for ambulance providers is down 40 per cent. We've reduced the overall stay in our hospitals by one day, Mr. Speaker. We've also reduced our alternate level of care by 20 per cent since December. This helps out overall flow within the hospital system.

Mr. Speaker, we've had very positive comments from the EMS [emergency medical services] providers on budget day that I've read into the record, that the Premier has read into the record. Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue to work with these individuals to make sure that they can get their patients offloaded into the health care system and get back on the road and into their home communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — No accountability, no responsibility yet again, Mr. Speaker. This is incredibly disappointing. These ambulance shortages impact every part of the province. We saw people being told there was no ambulance available in Regina, Shaunavon, Esterhazy, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Ituna, Beauval, Langenburg, Estevan, Kindersley, Wilkie, Melville — the list

goes on and on.

Why should people in every corner of our province accept being told no when they have an emergency and they need an ambulance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

[10:45]

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've identified that there might be a delay in getting an ambulance there, but just because somebody calls, I want to reassure the people of Saskatchewan that if they call an ambulance, one will be provided. We have backup ambulances out there. Mr. Speaker, we've also invested in bringing in over 70 FTEs [full-time equivalent] in last year's budget for ambulance. We have the rural stabilization, Mr. Speaker. We have also added 24.5 full-time equivalent paramedic positions to be added into Regina and two additional ambulances. On top of that, two additional paramedic response units.

We are addressing the concerns of the EMS. We're working with them together on this, Mr. Speaker. But I want to reassure the people of Saskatchewan, if they need an ambulance, one will be provided for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, we didn't just learn this week about the number of times people went without access to an ambulance when they needed one. We also heard directly from front-line EMS staff through their logbooks, and they described a system in total collapse. And they laid bare the crisis in our emergency rooms. "Busy all night; ERs are full." "Heavy offloads at Regina General. They were down six nurses tonight." "Pasqua ER backed up. They did what they could to get us back out the door, done. Down a bunch of nurses."

Health care workers want to be part of the solutions to these problems, but this minister keeps shutting out local voices. Why won't this tired and out-of-touch government agree to the task force that Tracy Zambory and the nurses are calling for?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're not dismissing anything, Mr. Speaker. We've identified that there are problems. But also from that same logbook, which they've cherry-picked out some quotes, Mr. Speaker, I'll read them this: January 1st: "Overall not a bad night. Some busy spurts." January 6: "Okay day. Busy afternoon." January 12th: "Good day overall." January 13th: "Pretty good night overall." January 14th: "Really good day for both of us at the hospital." January 15th: "Steady overall."

Mr. Speaker, we've identified that there are challenges out there, but as usual with the opposition, they cherry-pick out a couple of stats and a couple of quotes and they try to be able to make sure that this is across the system, Mr. Speaker. This is not the case.

We have great ambulance providers that are out there working in

our streets, working in our rural communities to be able to provide the protection and the safety for the individuals. I wish they would stop running these people down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Agreements with Federal Government

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently it's been reported that the Premier made a very alarming admission. He stated, "The best this province can do right now is find ways to work with the federal government on a clean agreement with significant strings attached." Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve to know: what significant strings attached has the Premier agreed to with Justin Trudeau? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Absolutely no idea what the member is talking about, Mr. Speaker, which is not new, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, is this government, myself included, are going to continue to represent the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. At times, we are going to work with the federal government to receive health care funding, for example, to receive child care funding, for example, Mr. Speaker.

At times, we are not going to work so well with the federal government, Mr. Speaker, where they, for example, introduce a bill that is very detrimental to law-abiding firearms owners in this province, Mr. Speaker. And you're going to see retaliatory legislation that I would hope is going to be voted on and voted in favour of unanimously on the floor of this Assembly today, Mr. Speaker.

That's one example. There's many more, Mr. Speaker, of how these members on this side of the House will represent Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, on issue after issue after issue. Always in the best interest of our communities, our families, and the folks that live in this great province.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In speaking with reporters, the Premier has already admitted to one deal with Ottawa that has significant strings attached. What other agreements has this Premier made with Prime Minister Trudeau that have, in his words, significant strings attached? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, there's always ongoing relationships between the provinces and the federal government. Mr. Speaker, our goal is to continue to protect the people of this province. Mr. Speaker, that is the primary concern of the members on this side of the House. That is exactly what we're going to do going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite sort of talks about things in different kind of ways, cryptic ways that nobody can understand.

Mr. Speaker, she's got accusations against her for taking private information from another property. She's got accusations regarding invading people's privacy by sending unsolicited emails.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know about those accusations, and it's not my place to talk about them. But, Mr. Speaker, what she should do is focus on what's best for the people of the province, work forward to try and assist the government on this side of the House, to make sure that we're able to negotiate well and successfully for everyone in the province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is happy to make accusations that the opposition is colluding with the federal Liberals; however, it is his government that is working with Ottawa, hand in glove, for nearly all of the province's new programs. Whether it be day care, health care, and now agriculture, this government boasts that they are Saskatchewan-first to the people, while taking more and more strings-attached money from Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government calling itself Saskatchewan-first, the same government that is selling out our province to the Trudeau Liberals? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And maybe I can help the member opposite understand the relationship with the federal government. As the Premier said, if it works for the Saskatchewan people, we will work with the federal government. If it does not, we will stand up for people against the federal government. That's what we're going to do.

But programs we work with the federal government . . . Crop insurance, crop insurance is an agreement where we work with the federal government. AgriStability is another program we work with the federal government. The infrastructure funding — the latest was the ICIP [Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program] funding — is a strings-attached agreement with the federal government. The child care dollars had some strings attached. We worked with the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, there's housing agreements for housing dollars throughout the years where we work with the federal government. There is criteria that they require. I could list program after program after program. There was mental health funding that we worked with the federal government that was outside of our health transfer, Mr. Speaker. Those are programs, if they work for Saskatchewan and they're best for Saskatchewan people, we'll work with the federal government. We will stand up against the federal government if it damages this province in any manner.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier stand up today and say he will cut all the strings attached to the deals he's made with the Prime Minister and, like he boasts, put

Saskatchewan first? Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I've stated publicly in the rotunda . . . And I have no idea what that question is about, Mr. Speaker. But the fact of the matter is, has been stated, Mr. Speaker, this government — all of the members of this government — will always act in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

When that involves working with the federal government to receive funds into our communities, into services that are being provided, Mr. Speaker, and it is in the best interest of the people of this province, we most certainly are going to do that. When it is not in the best interests of the investment that's coming into this province, Mr. Speaker . . . For example, it's this government that took the federal government to the Supreme Court of Canada arguing that the carbon tax was an absolutely ridiculous tax that had no bearing on reducing emissions, Mr. Speaker, only had a bearing on reducing investment.

It's this government that has put together a plan for our industries, Mr. Speaker, a plan that I think is being viewed on very successfully from our industries in this province and outside with the investment that is coming in — over \$15 billion in investment, including the largest potash mine being built or in operation around the world, Mr. Speaker. That is coming into the province of Saskatchewan. We're seeing renewed interest in uranium, agri-food, value-added production, Mr. Speaker.

That is because this government continues, continues to represent the people of this province, continues to represent the best interests of the people of this province, attracting investment, attracting jobs, growing our population, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to do that with or without the federal government, or with or without that member in this House for much longer, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Request leave for an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to their Legislative Assembly — they've joined us here in your gallery — Larry Kreklewich and his wife, Bev, of Melville, seated up in your gallery here today, Mr. Speaker.

I'd also like to recognize Brandy Hehn of Regina, who unfortunately could not be with us today. Both Brandy and Larry know what it's like to be on the organ transplant waiting list in Saskatchewan. They also know what it's like to be fortunate enough to receive a life-saving organ transplant.

Larry is the director of the Canadian Transplant Association branch in Saskatchewan and also has been involved with the Kidney Foundation for many years. He's requested that Saskatchewan recognize April 7th Green Shirt Day this year, which honours the legacy of the Humboldt Broncos' Logan Boulet. Logan inspired thousands of Saskatchewan residents and Canadians to register their decision to be able to become an organ donor. I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — I would seek leave for an introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted to make an introduction?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Health minister in welcoming Larry and Bev to their Legislative Assembly. I want to thank you for your bravery but also your advocacy in advancing organ donation in the province. We still have so much work to do, and it is voices like yours that help to strengthen the system for all of us.

So greatly appreciate your presence today and your advocacy. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 120, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration to the Committee of the Whole on this bill and that this now be read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 120, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2022* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 120 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2022*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Third reading.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on
Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*, with amendments.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill, and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister's requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 117 — *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading. I recognize the minister.

[11:00]

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 117 — *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

An Hon. Member: — Division.

The Chair: — All in favour say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Speaker: — Opposed say nay. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 11:01 until 11:03.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas — 45]

Moe	McMorris	Reiter
Merriman	Harpauer	Morgan
Duncan	Tell	Wyant
Makowsky	Marit	Bradshaw
Cockrill	L. Ross	Eyre
J. Harrison	Carr	Hindley
Skoropad	Buckingham	Hargrave
Fiaz	Lambert	Dennis
Kirsch	A. Ross	Ottenbreit
Francis	Steele	Bonk
McLeod	Friesen	Grewal
Nerlien	Keisig	Lemaigre
Jenson	D. Harrison	Domotor

Mowat
Conway

Wotherspoon
Bowes

A. Young
Wilson

motion?

The Speaker: — All those opposed please stand.

[Nays — nil]

Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 45; those opposed, 0.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried,

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Third reading.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 98, *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 98, *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 98 — *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022*

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Third reading.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 106, *The Police Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 106, *The Police Amendment Act, 2022* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — No? Leave is not granted. When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting. I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Mr. Dennis: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 107, the provincial protection service Act without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 107, *The Provincial Protective Services Act* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may proceed to move third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 107 — *The Provincial Protective Services Act*

Hon. Ms. Tell: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Third reading.

I am advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is here for Royal Assent. All please rise.

[At 11:12 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor entered the Chamber and took his seat upon the Throne. His Honour then gave Royal Assent to the following bills.]

ROYAL ASSENT

His Honour: — Pray be seated.

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

Clerk: — Your Honour, the bills are as follows:

- Bill No. 96 - *The Leafcutting Beekeepers Registration Repeal Act*
- Bill No. 100 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act, 2022*
- Bill No. 95 - *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Amendment Act, 2022*
- Bill No. 88 - *The Saskatchewan First Act*
- Bill No. 102 - *The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act, 2022/Loi modificative de 2022 sur les questions constitutionnelles*
- Bill No. 97 - *The Architects Amendment Act, 2022*

Bill No. 90 - *The Telecommunications Statutes (Borrowing Powers) Amendment Act, 2022*

Bill No. 92 - *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2022*

Bill No. 93 - *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2022*

Bill No. 120 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2022*

Bill No. 117 - *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*

Bill No. 98 - *The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency Amendment Act, 2022*

Bill No. 107 - *The Provincial Protective Services Act*

His Honour: — In His Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

The Speaker: — Please rise for the departure of His Honour.

[At 11:15 His Honour retired from the Chamber.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Funding for Public Education

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to participate in today's debate on behalf of the official opposition with respect to the state of funding for public education in our province. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my comments, I will be moving the following motion:

That the Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for its failure to deliver adequate funding for public education.

Mr. Speaker, public education is something that Saskatchewan people value greatly. And that value of public education extends from our public K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system to our public post-secondary system.

Education is the single most important investment we can make for our youth in this province, as well as for Saskatchewan's economy. Treating public education as an investment, not a cost, is what leads to people thriving and to a province that will thrive as a whole, Mr. Speaker.

Sadly we have a government here in Saskatchewan that refuses to share this view. This can clearly be seen when we take a look at the state of chronic underfunding by the Sask Party government in terms of both our K to 12 system as well as our post-secondary system, Mr. Speaker, across the board.

Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party government's recent budget, we have seen funding levels for K to 12 that completely fail to provide adequate funding for our increasing student enrolment in Saskatchewan, as well as the increasing complexity of student needs here in our province.

The Sask Party budget provided an operational funding increase of a meagre 2.5 per cent, an increase that indisputably fails to account for rising costs, and one that will only result in further

cuts to our public K to 12 system, Mr. Speaker. Some school divisions are even forced to set up charity funds. They're forced to run bottle drives, Mr. Speaker, to pay for basic needs in their classrooms. What a shameful state of affairs.

Mr. Speaker, our student populations in Saskatchewan have increased at rates that are among the highest in the entire nation, yet the Sask Party government has deliberately chosen to provide less funding and less support, with significantly decreased per-student funding. Per-student funding has decreased by over 14 per cent between 2013 and 2020, Mr. Speaker. Only Alberta has made more cuts to education. This is brutal. There is simply no more fat to trim, Mr. Speaker.

From Chinook School Division: "There are no more efficiencies to be found." From the Saskatchewan School Boards Association: "This budget contributes to the erosion of the publicly funded education system."

Mr. Speaker, the following budget reaction comes from the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation:

Government either doesn't understand the issues or doesn't think they are important. I hear from parents and teachers every day. There's a serious concern for student well-being because school divisions simply don't have enough funding to meet students' needs. These decisions have a critical, lasting impact on the future of our province.

Mr. Speaker, according to recent findings in a report by Praxis Consulting, for every dollar invested in K to 12 education, more than \$4 in economic activity is generated in Saskatchewan. So what is it then that this government fails to understand? They beat their chests, pretending to be masters of the economy, day in and day out in this House, yet they continually fail to grasp that the investments made into public education now will greatly pay off down the road for our province's economy.

Instead the Sask Party government sinks more and more of Saskatchewan people's hard-earned tax dollars not into public schools, Mr. Speaker, no, but into private independent schools. The Sask Party government's Education minister has now created yet another classification of independent schools, what he calls "certified independent schools" that will only serve to siphon away even more education dollars that should be invested into our public system. This is the opposite of what Saskatchewan people want, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government loves to tout their growth-that-works-for-everyone mantra. They love to brag and bluster as the Premier was up on his feet just doing earlier this morning about population growth here in our province. Yet when it comes to funding the public services that Saskatchewan people rely on, services like public education, this government chooses again and again to starve the people of our province of the essential funding and supports that they need.

More people with less services, this is not something to gloat about, Mr. Speaker. It is in truth an abject failure by those in power to make crucial investments in the people of Saskatchewan as well as in our province's economy, Mr. Speaker. Rather than facilitating growth that works for everyone, this government is in reality choosing to facilitate growth that

only works for and benefits the few — growth for the privileged, growth for the wealthy, for the corporate elite, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this government is sitting on over a billion-dollar surplus. More than a billion dollars that they are hoarding while average Saskatchewan people are left to fall further and further behind while our kids' futures, their educational opportunities are chronically neglected by this Sask Party government — over a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. They claim they will be using this surplus to pay down a fraction of their enormous levels of public debt, record drunken-sailor-like levels of debt that this government has amassed over the span of their 16 years in power, Mr. Speaker. Let's not forget that.

And what do they have to show for it, Mr. Speaker? Where did all the money go? All the money that this government raked in during the resource boom that began as they came in to power here in Saskatchewan, who has it benefited? All the windfall resource revenues that we see now as a result of the tragic war in Ukraine, Mr. Speaker, who is this wealth benefiting?

Average Saskatchewan people have not meaningfully benefited from our province's wealth under this government, Mr. Speaker. We certainly have not seen that money adequately invested into our public systems or institutions, which continue to be cut to the bone by this greedy, privatization-loving, and corrupt government, Mr. Speaker. Some . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — It's unparliamentary language what you were calling the government as corrupt. That's unparliamentary language. I'm going to ask you to apologize and withdraw. And I'm going to ask you to control your language when it comes to that in the future please.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize and withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member again.

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, some people are getting rich for sure. Mr. Speaker, a select few have benefited, but average Saskatchewan people, they're being left to fight over the measly scraps by this government. Mr. Speaker, it's shameful.

Now moving on to our post-secondary sector here in Saskatchewan. As the critic for Advanced Education, I have been calling on the Sask Party government to open up their multi-year funding agreement with Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and adjust the zero per cent increases that await institutions over the next two years. This agreement, Mr. Speaker, was signed by the Sask Party government and post-secondary institutions before we saw record inflation hit. Its terms and conditions were agreed to before anyone had any conception of how hard-hitting this inflationary crisis would be, Mr. Speaker.

The fact is, this multi-year funding agreement can be amended with mutual consent of the parties, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Advanced Education knows this. He knows very well that he has the ability to open up this agreement and make fair adjustments to the zero per cent increases institutions are set to receive and suffer under in the coming year.

But did he and his government do so with their recent budget, Mr. Speaker? No, they certainly did not. We saw not one penny for operational funding increases for our province's post-secondary institutions, Mr. Speaker. Not one red cent.

Growth that works for everyone though. Tell me, Mr. Speaker, how is it fair that our post-secondary institutions should be denied necessary operational funding from a government that is awash in over a billion-dollar budget surplus. How is that growth that works for everyone? Obviously it is not, Mr. Speaker, just some lazy, hollow mantra that no one is buying.

And, Mr. Speaker, who will be left to pay the price for this government's stinginess and stubborn refusal to invest in our public post-secondary sector? Who do you think will be on the hook? It will be our students and their families, Mr. Speaker, without a doubt. Tuitions will be hiked yet again, as our institutions continue to be starved of operating funding by this backward Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, here in Saskatchewan, post-secondary students pay tuition rates that are some of the highest in the entire country. Tuition fees for Saskatchewan undergraduate students increased by a staggering 44 per cent in 10 years under this Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker — 44 per cent. And on top of that, aside from the Maritimes, Saskatchewan has the lowest rates of graduate retention after one year and as well, the lowest rates after five years of graduation.

So again, Mr. Speaker, how is this growth that works for everyone? I ask the minister, how is that growth that works for everyone?

Mr. Speaker, treating public education as a cost rather than an investment is the exact opposite of growth that works for everyone. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I will now move the following motion:

That the Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for its failure to deliver adequate funding for public education.

I so move. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the member for Saskatoon University:

That the Assembly condemns the Sask Party government for its failure to deliver adequate funding for public education.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the record, I will not be supporting the motion put forward, surprisingly enough. I do want to say some thank yous. And it's interesting, you know, we hear doom and gloom and negativity from the other side.

The teachers. Thank you to the teachers. Thank you to the school divisions. Thank you to the parents and the kids for how they have adapted through some tough years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, it's quite amazing how we can't look at the positive. I love looking at the positive and so do the members on this side, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My schools in my community are very close to my heart. I've been proud to be a mentor at one of the schools for going on nine years now. And some of the visits in the schools, many of the conversations with teachers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not all doom and gloom at all. We've had some great conversations. I've had some great opportunities to even speak to the kids in the schools, and it's been very beneficial, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've spoke about different things in the community. We've spoke about how these children can do or be whoever they want with working hard, working smart, and working honest, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm proud of our teachers, our school divisions, and all the people surrounding supports in our schools.

I've been able to be involved with some Christmas events at schools as well, most recently this past December, which is really good. We're so happy to be back and doing that again.

One of the things that I noticed the member from Eastview spoke about a while ago, and now I heard it disturbingly again, his suggesting that we shouldn't be allowing fundraisers in our communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't understand this at all. I mean, fundraisers have been going on since I was a kid. There was fundraisers in school. This is a common thing to be doing. And that is a long time ago. Thank you to the member from Kindersley for pointing that out. But these are things that have been going on for a long time.

And I will say just a couple things in my community because I do like to localize and talk about some things in Riversdale. One of the local business owners, a number of years back . . . I think it was a little over 10 years back. There was a fire in one of the playgrounds at the school, and one of the local business owners stepped up, no problem, and wrote a cheque for that playground to be rebuilt. This is an idea of a fundraiser or getting private donations to help make a school or a district better. I don't understand why they are opposed to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:30]

In fact even right now I'm working with one of the schools that I work with quite a bit, with the principal who's just done an amazing job at bringing classrooms, kids, parents, and community together, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we are working on a fundraiser to build their playground and upgrade it. And again, I just can't understand why we go to this narrative that raising money for our school divisions or for our students is a problem.

As I've said before, I really have enjoyed being a mentor and speaking in the schools, and I look forward to doing a lot more of this in the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Most people know I've worked with kids for many years of my life, and this is a very, very important thing to me. That's why I'm very happy to be speaking to this motion, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well I know everybody's been waiting for it, and apparently now my tag line has been catching on. But the area of Pleasant Hill, King George, and Riversdale have been waiting for a school or a renovation since 1997. Mr. Speaker, 1997. I know that that's when they first requested school renovations or a new school. And I might add that was under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Well here it is. It's another great day in Riversdale, Mr. Speaker. This time it's a new school in my community to replace three old schools. The area is so excited. The money is allocated. In fact Princess Alexandra School has already been knocked down with preparations and plans under way to get construction started soon. And I'm really excited for that announcement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Interesting thought: the NDP government budget . . . I was doing a little bit of research on this and thankful some of the staff were helping with that. In 2003-2004 under the previous NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the total of education funding, the total of education funding was just over \$500 million. And even if you take into account inflation, which I, you know, I thought I'd inject it into an inflation calculator, that's just over 700 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The school division 13 which represents my area and surrounding area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course one of 27 school divisions, is funded to the tune of over 260 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's a third of the entire NDP budget in 2003-2004. And there's 27 school divisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I'm not sure if they really paid close attention to the budget, very well looked at the budget. But we are spending over \$2 billion, in fact, in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an increase of almost \$50 million. And if you were to go back to 2003-2004, that's almost 10 per cent of their entire education budget as an increase this year.

This is not a ballpark number, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're using real numbers here. And I think that the member from Regina Rosemont should let that sink in, because you know what, this actually is growth that works for everyone. I need to remind the members opposite of the Statistics Canada report, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Highest per capita funding for primary and secondary education among the provinces. Did we hear that? Highest per capita funding for primary and secondary education among the provinces. That's 24 per cent, 24 per cent above the provincial average.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, under the NDP, they closed 176 schools, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's one per month for the entire time they were in government. You know what we have done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order, please. Pardon? I'll call order, and please let some of the members speak. Some heckling is fine, but you can't go on and on while he's trying to speak, please. Thank you.

Mr. Friesen: — Mr. Speaker, that's 176 schools closed in the 16 years that they were in government. That's one per month, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Since 2007, between new schools and capital renovations, we have done one major new school or a capital renovation every two months since we've been elected, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And yes, I don't know where the negativity comes from over and over again, but that to me is something that I am happy to be part of. And I'm happy to be part of this, absolutely.

We've also, since we've been elected, created the preventative

maintenance and renewal program, Mr. Deputy Speaker, another program that did not exist under the NDP.

There are many reasons why I and the majority of the province are happy that the NDP are not in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We talk about many reasons that we are happy. But I will say that education and funding of education is one of the biggest and most important things.

And I'll agree with the member from Saskatoon University. It is very important. So I will say that I am so happy that they are not in government controlling our education funding, putting it back to where it was in 2003-2004 where I spoke of earlier. And I am proud to be part of this budget.

So I will not be supporting the motion put forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I am very proud of the budget that we have put forward, our Minister of Education has worked very hard on. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to this motion condemning the Sask Party government for its epic failures to properly fund public education in the province of Saskatchewan.

We have condemned the 2023 budget, as it relates to education funding, for good reason. It falls well short, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It doesn't keep up with inflation when it comes to operational funding. Per-student funding was just over 14,000 in 2019 through 2020, compared with 15,314 in 2015 to 2016. And that was just before a \$54 million cut to student supports in 2017. So this government is moving in the wrong direction, and this budget will represent further cuts to classrooms that just can't afford to skim any more fat.

Our kids, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they deserve so much better. We need substantial increases and investments in education so they can succeed. It's bad out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's bad out there. If you talk to the teachers on the ground . . . My partner's a teacher in Imperial Community School in Regina. It's bad out there and it's getting worse.

Between 2007 and 2018-19, the number of students requiring intensive supports has jumped by 38 per cent. There is one psychologist for 2,822 students — one psychologist. One speech-language pathologist for every 1,345 students, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One social worker for every 2,900 students, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not good enough and it's moving in the wrong direction.

The minister is fond of cherry-picking stats from StatsCan and using per capita funding figures that falsely suggest things are better than they are. These numbers do not reflect the actual classroom experience here in Saskatchewan.

And it's a shame, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that many school divisions have to set up charity funds and bottle drives to meet their most basic needs in the classroom.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers'

Federation] president has this to say about this budget: “Saskatchewan students are losing out with this budget.” It’s not just us that have condemned this budget when it comes to public education. It’s really difficult to find a single voice that will endorse this budget when it comes to public education.

The SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] president says, “This budget contributes to the erosion of the publicly funded education system.” This is their legacy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They’re contributing to the erosion of the public education system. And this isn’t coming from us; this is coming from the president of the SSBA.

The CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] education Chair has this to say: “I’m afraid our members are not going to be able to afford to work in the school system.” CUPE Saskatchewan president says, “The only growth this budget brings is growing privatization, growing hospital wait times, and growing classroom sizes,” Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Statistics Canada actually says Saskatchewan is eighth in per-student operational funding. So the members opposite want to talk about 2003? We were once first when it came to operational funding per student in the nation, and that’s where we need to return to again. We’ve gone from the very best numbers in terms of operational funding and per-student supports in the nation to nearly last. To nearly last, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Those are the facts. Those are the numbers. That is from StatsCan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Three hundred fewer teachers than in 2021, with 3,800 more students. These trends are both incompatible, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Schools don’t have enough physical education equipment for all the kids in their overflowing classes. One teacher took 32 students snowshoeing but only had 30 sets of shoes. This is a regular reality in classrooms. Some teachers say they can’t get enough chairs and desks or they don’t have the space in their classroom to actually have the number of desks that they need, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

School divisions are already reporting with this latest budget that it puts them in a bind. Witness yesterday’s comments from Regina that they are dealing with students that aren’t being funded. Saskatchewan Rivers anticipates its budget shortfalls at 1.8 million. Why force these difficult decisions on divisions, teachers, health care workers when this government is sitting on a \$1 billion surplus, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It makes no sense.

And when we look at our rates of out-migration, our labour shortage, our jobs growth numbers, where do they think skilled labour comes from? How are we going to kickstart this economy that so badly needs it, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It’s through educating a skilled workforce through our public education system.

Chinook School Division: “There are no more efficiencies to be found.” On this budget, they had to say that it “will not offset the anticipated inflationary costs and will contribute to the increasing funding shortfall for the division.” So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that means more cuts.

And I wonder how the members for Cypress Hills and Swift

Current feel about that. The SSBA put out a news release, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about this budget, saying, “The education funding allocated in last month’s 2023-24 provincial budget will not be enough to maintain the current operations of Saskatchewan’s 27 school boards, which are now uncovering the local financial implications” of this budget. And it’s not good, Mr. Deputy Speaker, despite the spin that we hear over and over from the members opposite.

“The reality of this budget is becoming much more alarming as the detailed analysis happens,” said the president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, a non-partisan organization representing all boards across the province. “The funding for school operations falls short on many fronts.”

This is extremely concerning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And unfortunately as we see, this is the legacy of this Sask Party government. They love to talk about when the NDP was in power. We were first. We led the nation in terms of per-student funding. And we are now back of the pack. Back of the pack, as we are on so many fronts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[11:45]

Per-student operational funding has decreased by 14 per cent between 2013 and 2020 under this Sask Party government. Only Alberta has more cuts to education. And as I said, we have fallen from per-student funding being leading in the nation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to being eighth in the nation. Education fell from 20 per cent of overall expenses in 2016 to only 19 per cent by 2022.

And that tells you all you need to know about the way that this Sask Party government prioritizes education. They see it as a cost to be managed and not investments in the future of this province. They’re giving more and more money to independent schools while the public school system falters, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it’s just as bad in post-secondary education. We will see another tuition hike, mark my words. Two, three, four months down the road, those tuitions are going to go up yet again. That is this Sask Party government’s legacy when it comes to public education.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it’s no surprise to anyone that I will be supporting the motion moved by the member from Saskatoon University condemning this Sask Party government for its failure to deliver adequate funding for public education. Thank you.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it’s great to be in on this debate today. And obviously I have to say that I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk more on the personal aspect of exactly what’s been going on, a lot of it being right in Carrot River Valley. Our daughter Gina is a schoolteacher. And Gina wanted to be a schoolteacher right from grade 9. Actually she, for work experience, she went over to the elementary school and helped right from grade 9. All the way through school, she said she wanted to be a schoolteacher. She worked hard, very hard, to keep her marks high so she could go to the U of R [University of

Regina] because the U of R was known as having the best teachers college in there. So she worked very hard to go through there. So she went and she convocated, moved out, and went into a teaching career, like I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm very proud of her. She actually finished off her Masters last spring. So she's been moving ahead and working hard in her teaching profession, and she's now vice-principal out at Milestone. So you know, this is a good thing.

Could you imagine, could you imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had this all happened during the dark days of when the NDP had the government here in Saskatchewan. Like she could have gone out as a schoolteacher and she had worked at a school for a month, and then they'd say they're closing that school down. So she'd go to the next school and she'd work there for a month. Then they'd close that school down, then she'd have to go to another school, and they would close that one down, month after month after month.

Mr. Speaker, you take a look at what's happening now, with the amount of schools that we are building, with the amount of kids that we have who are going from the increase in the population within this province.

Mr. Speaker, you know, and I remember my son Morgan when he went over to Porcupine Plain when he was playing for the — I have to bring in the Wildcat — the Wildcat basketball team. And we went over there and it was melting. We got into the school. There were 5-gallon pails — 5-gallon pails all over the school, even in the gym — catching the dripping water coming through the roof, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That school was in disastrous shape.

Mr. Speaker, one of the very first new schools that we built was in Porcupine Plain. And I can still remember going to the opening of that school. What a fantastic school. And you know, I don't know what, they didn't have buckets all over the place catching water anymore, Mr. Speaker.

We can talk about these things, these investments that this government has made into our schools. You go to Hudson Bay; that was another one. That's right in the Carrot River Valley constituency. Hudson Bay school had black mould in it. Had it for years. What did the previous administration do? They just ignored it. They hoped people wouldn't get sick. They didn't care about the students, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This government went and built a new school there, and a wonderful school. And I was very happy to see at the time, you know, Weyerhaeuser, who was shut down under the NDP, was back up and going, donated \$500,000 to the Hudson Bay school when they were building it. Great job.

Okay, let's move over to Carrot River. Carrot River school, a portion of the Carrot River school was condemned for years. The gym in the Carrot River school, it was condemned years ago. The NDP government actually went out, but what did they do? All they did is they replaced or built a new gym onto the school. They forgot about the rest of the school that was condemned.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? That new school is going to be open in January of '24. That new school is going to be opened, another

nice new school. And luckily, Dunkley Lumber donated a million dollars towards that school.

We have people out there that are really, really looking at our education system. Mr. Speaker, brings us back to under the NDP, former member Berny Wiens, when he was asked about closing schools he said, well it's easier to close them than to fix them. That was the attitude. That was the attitude of the NDP back in those days.

Mr. Speaker, just think, our daughter Gina, who worked so hard to be a schoolteacher, under that previous administration probably wouldn't have had a job because, if I remember right, I do believe that the NDP fired 750 teachers along with closing down 176 schools.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that believes in education and believes in moving forward. And you know, a 6.7 per cent increase in the budget for the education system this year, that's absolutely a fantastic number.

The other thing too that this government implemented, this year they're putting 50 million into preventative maintenance. Now under the previous administration if there was a problem they always had to go begging to the government. If they had a problem with a boiler or a problem with something like that that wasn't there, they had to go back. They had to go back and beg to the government to be able to give them some money to be able to fix it. Now the school divisions have that money sitting there. They can go back there and if they've got something, an emergency coming along, they can fix it.

Mr. Speaker, you know I'm just never going to get through all of this stuff here. But I'm going to start out by just talking about just some of them because I won't get through all of them, of the capital work we are doing this year.

4.4 million to begin planning on five new major school capital projects, including a new kindergarten to grade 12, K to 12 school to consolidate the elementary and high school in Carlyle; a new K to 12 francophone school to replace École — my French isn't very good — Valois in Prince Albert; a new francophone elementary school in Saskatoon; renovation and expansion of the Greenall High School in Balgonie; and renovations to Campbell Collegiate in Regina.

\$115.7 million to support 20 ongoing major capital projects to build 15 new schools and renovate five existing schools, including a new joint-use facility with two elementary schools in Regina to replace Argyle and École St. Pius elementary schools; a new K to 12 school to replace Blaine Lake Composite School; a new K to 12 school to replace and consolidate the elementary and high schools in Carrot River, which I just mentioned; a new K to 12 school to replace and consolidate the elementary and high schools in Lanigan; a new elementary school to replace Ducharme Elementary School in La Loche; a new elementary school to replace Princess Alexandra, King George, and Pleasant Hill elementary schools in Saskatoon; a new joint-use facility with two new elementary schools to replace Sacred Heart and St. Mary, Empire, and Westmount schools in Moose Jaw; a new joint-use facility with two elementary schools to replace St. Peter, St. Michael, Imperial, and McDermid elementary schools in Regina; a new elementary school to replace St. Frances Cree

Bilingual School in Saskatoon; a new francophone elementary school in Regina; a new joint-use facility with two elementary schools in Regina's Harbour Landing neighbourhood; renovations and additions to Holy Rosary High School in Lloydminster; renovations and addition to John Paul II Collegiate in North Battleford; renovations to Yorkton Regional High School; and renovations and additions to Athol Murray College of Notre Dame; and 11.3 million for minor capital renewal projects in Delisle school division to address structural repairs and renovations to prolong the life of the province. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the things.

I will not be supporting this motion, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am honoured to rise to participate in the 75-minute debate today on what I think is quite an important topic and something that the members opposite should be thinking very carefully about in terms of the future of our province, Mr. Speaker.

We know that education is an indicator of so many things. It's an indicator of how well people are going to do in life. It's an indicator of how healthy they're going to be. It's an indicator of whether they will commit crimes later in life. We know that education is one of the core pieces of the fabric of our society.

And this is one of the core values that I hold close, but it's also one of the core values of the New Democratic Party and the NDP in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And this is what sets us apart from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite have presided over 16 years in government and they have presided over the degradation of the public education system. And this is without question. And what they're doing here is they're taking people for granted. They're assuming that people do not care about the public education system, don't value the education system. And they're wrong, Mr. Speaker. They think people aren't listening, and they are dead wrong about that.

People are listening. We have seen rallies in the streets. We have seen organizations created in direct response to this government's lack of action and their heartless cuts to the education system. They are speaking and this government needs to listen. And I dare say, Mr. Speaker, we are going to see more of that. We know, even this month, we are going to see more of that. It's been publicly advertised. Folks are coming to the legislature to voice their disapproval of this government, and they need to be listening.

Mr. Speaker, I started running for election around 2014 originally. Day one on the doorstep, my very first time going door knocking, I heard about education. I heard about concerns with the public education system, how this government was not taking education seriously. And I heard from parents who were deeply concerned about the lack of supports that are available to their kids in the classroom.

And I was no stranger to education issues. My partner was going to school at the time to become an educator. He's since

completed schooling and became a teacher. I've spoken about that before in this Assembly. And what that means is not only that I see his day-to-day perspective, but that I am in circles of teachers and educators and administrators and support persons.

[12:00]

You know, these are the folks that I spend my time around a lot of the time, are teachers, are folks who support the education system, who have direct experience with the education system. A lot of my friends were teachers and a lot of them still are. So in many social gatherings I have the opportunity to hear from teachers. And it is some of my closest friends, so it does mean a lot to me to be able to speak to the issues that exist within the education system.

Of course while I was running, I wasn't successful in 2016. And then there was a by-election in the same riding in 2017. And there were devastating cuts in the 2017 year to education in the springtime, and all I heard about from folks as I door knocked in my riding were those cuts. And of central focus to people on the doorstep, the thing that they felt at home . . . And I think this is important, because in a lot of cases it can be hard for people to make the links between, you know, what's going on at government in the big picture and what's going on in their daily lives.

In this situation, Mr. Speaker, it was crystal clear that the government's cuts to education were making a direct impact on people's lives. And I heard from parents who were talking directly about the EA [educational assistant] supports that their child had that were being pulled away, about the cuts to teacher-librarians. You know, we don't have a teacher-librarian at our school anymore. They only come, you know, for a half day a week and they're running between schools. There's no continuity. There's no one to do the work that the teacher-librarian used to do. It's now once again falling on the backs of other teachers and other support staff to do that work.

In one fell swoop, school boards were forced to make those decisions in a snap. People who had had jobs for years in a situation where they're now having to compete with their fellow employees to see who has enough seniority to stick around, being rearranged into all these different positions, cuts to shop teachers, cuts to home ec teachers. Our understanding of school from when we were kids is so much different from what school looks like today. And a lot of that is in part due to this government and their choices. Cuts to educational assistants, Mr. Speaker, the folks who provide extra support to students who need it.

And I met a lot more people on the doorstep who were experiencing these situations as well. I remember speaking to a teacher who was just flatly losing her job and didn't have anything nice to say about this government. And since then, Mr. Speaker, when I'm on doorsteps the thing I hear is, of course I'm going to support you guys; I'm a teacher.

This is the reputation this government has in education, Mr. Speaker. I was speaking about education my second day in this House in 2017, and here's what I had to say:

People are frustrated with cuts to education. I heard from parents who were trying to figure out how they were going

to get their kindergarten-aged kids to school because of cuts to the school bus routes. I heard from parents who were concerned about us putting [public] schools on a P3 credit card and future debt we will have to deal with. I heard from teachers who were concerned about the lack of EA assistance they were getting in the classrooms, and repeatedly that . . . these budget cuts they were being asked to do more with less . . . We should be viewing education as an investment not an area . . . we can trim the fat.

And the same was true for post-secondary cuts in 2017, severe cuts, where the medical school was in danger of losing its accreditation, universities speaking out, rising rates of tuition. My colleague from Saskatoon University talked about us having the second-highest tuition rates in the country, alarming tuition rates for international students, cuts to electives, fewer instructors, bigger classes, more online delivery models, more stress for the instructors. And the medical school was begging for support in supplementary estimates that year. And that was after a decade of boom. In the past five years, their record hasn't gotten any better.

This year, a 2.5 per cent increase does not keep up with inflation. We're hearing already about all the cuts that need to happen. And this is despite the fact that we have record resource revenues in this province, Mr. Speaker. Shameful, completely shameful. And folks in the education sector were expecting so much better, and the people of this province were expecting so much better from this government. Despite the fact that teachers, school boards, the SSBA, the STF, all of these organizations have been reaching out, communicating with this government about growing class-size challenges, growing complexity challenges that teachers have to face today, they get nothing from this government.

And you know, teachers have been through a lot throughout the pandemic. Students have been through a lot throughout the pandemic and are just trying to get by and figure this out. And this is the thanks they get, Mr. Speaker.

This government will talk about the claims around the new schools that they've built, schools that were on a P3 [public-private partnership] credit card, Mr. Speaker. While companies are making a profit, details of those arrangements, still unknown to the taxpayers.

Schools that were at max enrolment immediately needing portables, immediately needed portables. They couldn't open the windows for a year in a school. You couldn't put things up on the walls, Mr. Speaker, in a year. Purpose-built science labs being used as overflow classrooms, challenges with communities being able to use these spaces — this is their record, Mr. Speaker. Their record where some school divisions now have to set up charity funds and bottle drives just to meet the basic needs, in a year of record revenues, Mr. Speaker. It's completely unacceptable. Three hundred fewer teachers than in 2021 with 3,800 more students. You do the math on this. We don't have enough equipment. People are speaking out across the board about how this government needs to do more.

And, Mr. Speaker, when the NDP was in power, we led the nation in per-student funding. We can do it again. Thank you.

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

Mr. Goudy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to be able to rise and enter into the debate from the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon University. It was interesting when she was running for her seat. I had done some door knocking in that constituency as well and, you know, it was interesting knocking on some of the doors. I came across one door, Mr. Speaker, and it's . . . I hear quite often that different ones would say there's not enough funding, it's not adequate funding. But it's interesting to actually sit down and have discussions.

And so came to one door, and a lady answered the door, and I said who I was and I was here knocking for the Sask Party. And she just kind of rolled her eyes and she said, oh boy, let me get my husband. And so I said, okay. And so her husband comes to the door and it turns out he works for the Saskatoon school division there, and the wife had told me he was going to be quite upset about lack of funding. And this was . . . what year was that? 2019, 2020. And so it was interesting. We started that conversation, and he was on the offensive a little bit that, you know, we need to increase our funding. It was interesting that after we had talked for 15 to 25 minutes, the tone change and the understanding.

So I think one of the issues that most people in Saskatchewan may or may not understand is that the provincial government give an envelope of cash, of money to the school divisions. And the members across the way, they understand that. Sometimes they expect the government is holding back funds for salaries or holding back funds for this or holding back funds for that. It's interesting that an envelope of money is delivered to the school boards to distribute and to use how they would see fit.

So by the end of that conversation there was a different tone. And you know, I would challenge the members across the way again. I know it's important to be the critics for all the different ministries, but it is also important to be fair in discussions that you have with your constituents.

So they talk about the friends that they have that work in education. Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have a number of members here that in our past were trustees in school divisions, and I know there are some on the other side as well. And we understand the challenges and the innovation that has to be a part of education.

We've grown our budget since I've been in this government from 14.6 billion to \$19 billion, and there's been increases in all sorts of ministries along the way. And there's costs that we as a government have worked hard to work through in our budgetary process. So to hear them say that it's inadequate funding, when I talk to my school board Chair of my constituency and I ask, so we're hearing a lot of conversation from the members across the way, and how is the funding? How are things going this year in the North East School Division?

And to hear the two different perspectives is interesting. You know, to hear from the board Chair that I respect — the board that I used to sit on — share with me that, yes, it's always tight. It's tight in every ministry. Nobody is sending back money to the government saying, hey you gave us too much this year. Everyone is doing the best with the dollars that they have.

And so I would challenge the members across the way. To say

that it's inadequate funding is something that I definitely won't support, because what I'm hearing from back home . . . I've got a daughter. You talk about family members. She's in the education college here in Regina. And she's excited. She's looking forward to being a teacher at some point, and she'll work hard.

And you know, one of the exciting things that is being done that maybe the members across the way could encourage and support and let some of their constituents know, some of the innovative things that are going on in Saskatchewan today . . . And last night there was a meeting together with members from SADA [Saskatchewan Automobile Dealer's Association], and everyone had an opportunity to come out and hear what some of our businesspeople in Saskatchewan, the automotive dealers of Saskatchewan coming together. A memorandum of understanding is being put together on that whole CADA [Canadian Automobile Dealers Association] career piece that our government is working on on this side of the House.

So how can we help our kids find the place that fits them in the economy of Saskatchewan? So here were some business owners from across the province shaking hands and being very happy with the direction that the Saskatchewan government is taking with our Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation. We will be able to do some of the innovative things that will be, I believe, Mr. Speaker, followed up by other jurisdictions across North America. When they see some of the innovative things that we are doing in Saskatchewan, they won't be saying, boy, that's inadequate funding that the Saskatchewan government is giving for their Education ministry, but that is the kind of dollars that are needed.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that all of us as trustees in the past and trustees today have to deal with is our facilities. And it's interesting to hear the members across the way not want to include those dollars in, you know, per-student funding. But buildings are very important that our children go to school in. And one of the things that I always saw as a trustee, Mr. Speaker, was keeping on top of facilities is very, very important. Some of the buildings that would have a 50-, 60-year lifespan when looked after, we're finding that these are well-built, solid facilities.

I do know that the school that I grew up in, Brunswick School in Melfort, Mr. Speaker, my last child interestingly enough is graduating from grade 6 this year. So Brunswick School . . . And it's a building just as beautiful as it was the day that I attended grade 6 and graduated myself, Mr. Speaker.

So I really would challenge the members across the way to, rather than say that it's inadequate funding, to work with your trustees, to work with your board Chair, to work with the people in your communities and your constituencies to see how can we have innovative ways of moving forwards in applying these dollars that we all as divisions received in a package that we could spend as we saw fit.

And so I know that the member from the North has different issues that they face as schools that we do there in Melfort, which is different than they face in Saskatoon and Regina. But Mr. Speaker, I really believe that they're doing a great job and have continued to do great jobs each year, spending those dollars that

are allocated to education.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that also may not be really highlighted to the people of Saskatchewan is that when we send out those dollars to the divisions, approximately 80 per cent of the money is to salaries. And that's tough, you know, when you have family members working in the school division. I have a family member working there. I have many nieces and nephews as well, Mr. Speaker. And I would say that we all would love to see more money for every ministry.

[12:15]

But on this side of the House we have to balance the income with the expenses. And I'm very proud of the budget that our Minister of Finance and the treasury board worked very hard together with the other ministries because we've got some . . . The minister is sitting here nodding his head in Environment, and they'd like to see more money for the Environment ministry. Absolutely they would. We've got the Minister of Advanced Education. Is more money needed? There's always . . . As Rod Gantefer had said, "There's two miles of fence, and just a mile of paint."

And so, Mr. Speaker, it's not, I believe, inadequate funding that our schools and our teachers and our administrators are facing. I think the funding, according to the Stats Canada numbers, is actually the highest per student across the nation for the provinces. And so, we can say no it's not, but the fact is that it is. Stats Canada say, Saskatchewan, you are putting more money per student into education than any other province in Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to at some point find a benefit of the 6.7 per cent increase to education. We need to at some point pull together as a province, rather than apart, and encourage the stakeholders in our communities that this government does care about education. We do care about the students, and we do care about the economy of Saskatchewan, which the education sector is a very important part.

And so as we move forward to some of the innovative things that are going on in Saskatchewan, I would, you know, not condemn the Sask Party government, but I would commend the Education minister and the Finance minister and the treasury board for doing such a good job of balancing income with expenses with providing adequate funding for education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina University — both members from Regina University.

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A pleasant surprise to find myself on my feet today. I thought I was just dipping my toe back in water coming in the building, but here I am with the opportunity to talk on one of my favourite topics — education.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to begin of course by thanking the students, the parents, the teachers, all the education workers, everybody in the sector who's doing their best, whether it be to graduate, to support their children, or to help their students in their school divisions. And I'd also like to take a moment to recognize the locally elected, autonomous boards in Saskatchewan that are currently meeting in Saskatoon right now,

the SSBA, and again, on this side of the House, reaffirm our support for those locally elected, autonomous boards here in the province.

We all know that community voice and that local autonomy is important, not just for the autonomy of local communities, but also to outcomes. The research shows that the closer the community is to assisting and making decisions in their schools and their educational settings, the better student outcomes actually are, and the better those funds are spent.

So let's talk about those funds, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because let's talk about the reality. The reality is that in this year's budget, in that 2.5 per cent that's being celebrated, that money contains funding that was announced last year. Inflationary supports, supports for increased population — that has been rolled into this year's funding. The members opposite mentioned PMR [preventative maintenance and renewal] and how great it is. That's wonderful. In this year's budget, you cut PMR funding as a percentage. Transportation support, also down in this year's budget.

And you know, we want to talk about capital, those capital projects that have been announced. Shovels need to hit the ground, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there needs to be boots on the ground. But with the increased costs of material, increased costs of labour, applications of things like PST [provincial sales tax] to construction labour, these projects are delayed, and the cost continues to grow. Mr. Speaker, in Harbour Landing here in Regina, there's not even a land transfer agreement for the school that was announced back in 2018.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I want to take a minute to recognize some of the comments made by the member from Riversdale who wanted to talk about his local schools and the schools in his community, which is great. Well, Mr. Speaker, the local school divisions in his constituency, \$2 million short, Saskatoon Catholic. Saskatoon Public, down \$4.5 million. That's the shortfall that Saskatoon Public is reporting. And their board Chair is quoted in the newspaper as saying she wept when she had to vote for this year's budget. Those are the schools in your community.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we want to talk about, even if we accept the government numbers, the government spin on this, that 2.5 per cent funding is the increase that's been seen in the sector this year. Next door in Alberta, they saw an increase of 5.2 per cent for education funding. And to the east, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, 6.1 per cent increase in funding. So why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are students in Saskatchewan worth so much less to their government?

And we know why. We saw it in 2017 with the \$54 million cut. Education is the first place that these guys go to cut. And we've seen it this year, Mr. Speaker, with a billion-dollar surplus, it's the last place they go to invest.

And we want to talk about holding back funding. The member for Melfort mentioned it. You haven't funded the CBA [collective bargaining agreement]. And guess what? Coming out of COVID with some of the wild choices your Education minister made around things like extra-curr, it is going to be an expensive contract. It's a billion-dollar contract that has not currently been

funded. Shame, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute period for questions and answers will begin. I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On this side of the House, we believe in parental involvement in the education of their children and the importance of parent choice in how their students are educated. And that's why we're incredibly proud to offer so much choice here in Saskatchewan, and we will continue to defend parents' right to choose in education.

To the member from Saskatoon University: do you support parents' rights, having a choice when it comes to their children's education, and do you support parental involvement in education in their child's school?

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, what we do support on this side of the House is strong, publicly funded education for the people of our province. That's the choice that students and parents are looking for is strong support for public funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. Does he think it's okay that the students and teachers and parents in his riding have to fundraise in order to have proper supports in their classrooms?

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know what? I can't believe we're talking about fundraising. This has been going on forever. This is a great thing. Fundraising for our communities happens with local business owners, happens with constituents that get involved. We would not have the Gordie Howe expanded complex in my constituency if fundraising wasn't involved.

What are we supposed to be doing? Are we not, as people in our community and small businesses volunteering and donating in our communities, are we not supposed to be doing this? This is a great thing. Our people, our constituents love to be part of the community. And you know what? I am fully supportive of the investments that we put into my constituency.

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

Mr. Dennis: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The opposition continues to be critical of our move to provide online education to students across the province on our Saskatchewan DLC [Saskatchewan Distance Learning Corporation]. To the member from Saskatchewan university: does the NDP not believe that all students in Saskatchewan should have access to all courses be

offered online in Saskatchewan, regardless of where they live?

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite, of course we believe that students should have access to every course, no matter where they live. But instead of spending more and more money on another project like this, we should be sinking this money into operational funding for our public schools on the front lines, for our teachers and students in Saskatchewan, for in class.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening very closely to the speeches and was quite perturbed by some of the things I heard from the members opposite there. Perturbed, yes. Why is the member for Melfort blaming school divisions for his government's failures to adequately fund education?

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

Mr. Goudy: — So I don't understand how you would have come away from my comments that I'm blaming school divisions. The debate was based on our lack of funding, is what you're saying. And since it's over-funding, it's not the fact that they are the problem. We're the ones who are taxing and providing the dollars for education, and those school divisions are doing a great job in managing those dollars. And that is what I had said, that that envelope is for them to spend accordingly.

And my school board Chair had agreed that, yes, the funding this year was adequate, and we have applied that in a good way. I don't know how you would have felt that I was blaming the school divisions for, you know, any of the problems that you are saying that we are facing in education today.

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

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This year alone the budget allocates 147.3 million in funding to begin planning eight new school infrastructure projects in Carlyle, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Balgonie, Regina, Kelvington, and Medstead. And that's on top of the 15 new school builds and seven renovations that are under way in Saskatchewan. That's already more than the NDP built in their time in government, not to mention the many new schools and education projects that this government has built in the last 15 years.

To the member from Saskatoon University: how many new schools were built or major renovations funded under the NDP government?

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, in our time in government, built many, many schools in this province. What I will say, what I will say to the member opposite and his government, who like being Bob the builders over there and

building schools and not providing enough funding for adequate teachers, for adequate educational assistants and per-student funding, maybe spend a little less time building, building, building empty buildings and spend more money on teachers and students in this province.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Why thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You know, we've seen this government has a real focus on centralization of control and authority, believing that they should be the ones making all decisions instead of local communities, Mr. Speaker. We've seen it in health care. We've seen their attempts in 2017 in education, and people are afraid again.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Riversdale: can you commit on behalf of your government for the full ongoing support for democratically elected, local, autonomous school boards?

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I find it interesting that the member from Regina University is bringing this question up again. We've discussed this in a previous 75-minute debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Our school divisions do a great job. That is why we work with them to provide adequate funding to our schools in this province. Our school divisions . . . As a government, we do not micromanage. We do not. So we have let our school divisions make some decisions in their area, and we're going to continue to do so.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to add, our school divisions have put together a great plan to build a new school in Saskatoon Riversdale, which you may not have been listening to my speech but it is very exciting. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Year over year, records in funding for the education sector from this government. We continue to invest in our young people's future, their schools, and their classrooms. But the members opposite continue to drag down our economy and our education sectors, down without a plan.

To the member from Saskatoon University: how much, how much is enough for funding in your opinion? Give us the number. Get your calculator out and let's hear it.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member opposite: what has been called for in this budget and what was very much not realized was 5 per cent increases to keep up. We saw half of that from this government — not nearly enough invested into our schools, invested into our teachers, our staff, and our children. Thank you.

[12:30]

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is for the member from Saskatoon Riversdale. Why is your government funding private colleges while you oversee cuts to maintenance funding, cuts to per-student funding? Is it good enough for you that we have gone from providing per-student funding first in the nation to back of the pack at eighth in Canada?

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

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you for that question. And I'd like to remind the members opposite that we have the highest per capita funding for primary and secondary education among the provinces, 24 per cent above the provincial average and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Boy, she can sure speak from her seat, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am proud of what this government is doing here. I am proud of the budget that was put forward, and I will stand by what we have done for education. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The 75-minute debate period has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Saskatchewan-First Policies and Legislation

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Ms. Young.]

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's economy is doing exceptionally well. In fact the Premier earlier referred to it as "scorching hot." We've had numerous member statements and news releases in the past few months extolling the trade, employment, wholesale, and retail numbers that proves that the business and community leaders in the province have confidence in their role. That confidence is unshaken despite the barriers put up by the federal NDP-Liberal coalition determined to destroy the golden goose that is Western Canada.

That is why we are working hard to give us the opportunity to maximize our potential in this great nation. Industry, large and small businesses, ask their governments for a few core principles that provide the pathway to success. They ask that we provide a stable, predictable regulatory environment; safe and fair working conditions; infrastructure to support growth; well-grounded environmental stewardship; and excellent relationships with domestic and international customers and partners.

Mr. Speaker, these asks apply to each level of government. And when they work together, it is a well-oiled machine that builds trust and confidence. Of particular note, most businesses and certainly industry players, given the conditions mentioned earlier, would like a government to essentially allow them to do business. Business and industry of all sizes can have confidence that our government is playing its role in laying the groundwork for success and that we understand the importance of getting out of the way sometimes to let them be the best that they can be.

It's been well canvassed by my colleagues in previous debates on this matter that Saskatchewan businesses, along with those in neighbouring provinces, feel an extraordinary burden of what I would describe as troubling, almost negligent legislative and policy direction from the Trudeau-NDP coalition at the federal level.

We could easily revisit the arguments that I've previously put forward around Bill C-69, commonly referred to as the *Impact Assessment Act*, which was and continues to be widely criticized as being flawed from the start, as well as suffering literally hundreds of amendments along its flawed journey. This Act has well-documented impacts on Western Canada businesses specifically. The no-more-pipelines view of the federal ministers and Prime Minister are naive at best and, frankly, an egregious attack on Canadian industry and the Canadian labour pool in favour of foreign oil.

We could also revisit Bill C-48, the *Oil Tanker Moratorium Act*, which has another specific attack on the Canadian oil industry, resulting in demonstrably negative implications to industry in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and to a certain extent, BC [British Columbia]. We've seen further far-reaching legislative measures from the Liberal-NDP coalition that can only be seen as punitive to Western Canada and specifically to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have the methane reduction regulations, the clean fuel standards that are negatively impacting industry and consumers alike through extraordinary and, again, punitive cost and regulation. Mr. Speaker, the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*, more commonly referred to by everyone on coffee row and households across the province in words that could not be allowed in this Chamber.

We'll just refer to the carbon tax which the federal minister continues to refer to as a price on pollution, but we all know that it is nothing less than an attack on provinces, seen to be petulant children. Let's not lose sight of the fact that GST [goods and services tax] is charged on carbon tax, adding to the cost-of-living issues we deal with daily.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are well aware that Trudeau is propped up and in government because of the NDP support and, rest assured, the relationship between the provincial NDP and their federal counterparts is not lost on them. Everyone knows that a membership in one is an endorsement, through membership, of the federal party's position.

From a broader perspective, certain legislation has and will have intended and unintended consequences that we should be concerned with. I previously discussed with colleagues my concerns around Bill C-235, *An Act respecting the building of a*

green economy in the Prairies. I'm particularly disappointed that this Act was brought forward by a member from Winnipeg. But even the title, even the title is at best a reflection of the central Canadian attitude that we need to be fixed by the centrist elite.

I refer to this bill as perhaps one of the most innocuous pieces of legislation in this forum but with the potential for enormous impact, depending on how this Trojan Horse is used by a vindictive federal government.

The issues around the *Firearms Act* have been well canvassed as another example of federal overreach.

Mr. Speaker, I would note some specific observations from my layman's review of the Supreme Court decision respecting the challenge to the *Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act*. I believe that the Supreme Court ruling is a clear indication of the court's politicization in its judgment.

Of particular note I want to refer to a position put forward through British Columbia's intervention that I believe is the crux of our dismay in current federal policy, but even more reflective of broader, more than a century-old failure in recognizing the value of co-operative federalism.

British Columbia intervened in the Supreme Court case and one of their arguments was externality, that a jurisdiction will enjoy the benefits of production without paying the cost of pollution. Again this argument should be used in reverse: that all non-producing provinces enjoy the benefits without sharing what they refer to as the cost of pollution. This could be particularly true for Eastern provinces.

They further argue that internalizing the price is appropriate, thus provinces that produce the greatest benefits for Canada through agriculture, forestry, mining, oil and gas, etc. provide a social transfer of benefit to those that produce the least for Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I began by stating that Saskatchewan's economy is doing very well, and it truly is. Imagine for a moment what we could do without the NDP-Liberal coalition in our way.

Mr. Speaker, the motion before us today is, and I quote:

That this Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan's implementation of Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation [to defend our constitutional rights], and that we demand the Trudeau-Singh coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan and Canada's . . . [resource and energy industries that employ hundreds of thousands of workers across Canada].

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 27, it is my duty to advise the Assembly that this item of business has been previously adjourned three times and that every question necessary to dispose of the motion will now be put.

It has been moved by the member from Lloydminster:

That this Assembly supports the Government of

Saskatchewan's implementation of Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation, and that we demand the Trudeau-Singh coalition Government of Canada end policies that would constitute an attack on Saskatchewan and Canada's economic growth and energy production, including but not limited to the federal carbon tax, the clean fuel standard, Bill C-69, the clean electricity standard, and the fertilizer emissions cap.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

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

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:41 until 12:42.]

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member for Lloydminster. All those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas — 35]

Moe	Reiter	Merriman
Harpauer	Morgan	Duncan
Tell	Wyant	Makowsky
Marit	Bradshaw	Kaeding
Cockrill	Eyre	J. Harrison
Carr	Hindley	Skoropad
Buckingham	Fiaz	Lambert
Dennis	Kirsch	Ottenbreit
Francis	Steele	Bonk
Friesen	Grewal	Nerlien
Goudy	Keisig	Lemaigre
Jenson	D. Harrison	

[12:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — 5]

Mowat	Wotherspoon	A. Young
Conway	Bowes	

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 35; against the motion, 5.

The Deputy Speaker: — I declare the motion carried. I

recognize the House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:47.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for
The Global Transportation Hub Authority

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