



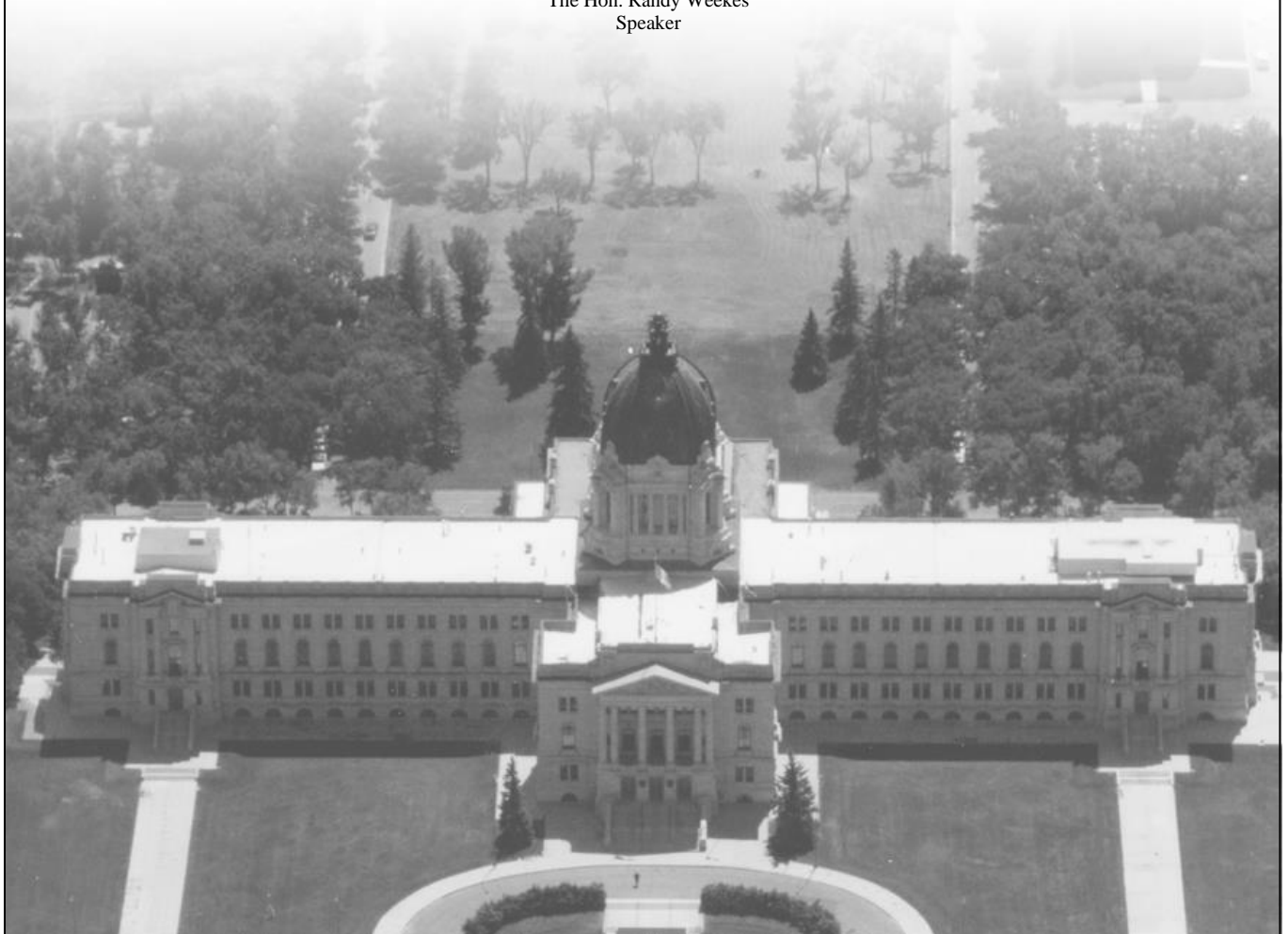
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th 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)	Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)
Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)	Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)	McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)	McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)	Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)	Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (Ind.)	Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)	Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Skoropad, Dana — Arm River (SP)
Hargrave, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (Ind.)	

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 44; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Independent — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang
Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel — Kenneth S. Ring, K.C.
Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister of Post-Secondary Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for 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. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'm very pleased and honoured today to introduce in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, the chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan, Grit McCreath.

Mr. Speaker, while I've had the great pleasure of working with Madam Chancellor as the Minister of Advanced Education, I first met Miss Hildebrandt at Grosvenor Park School, where she was one of my elementary school teachers. Now, now, Mr. Speaker, having a couple of Wyants, Wyant boys go through Grosvenor Park School, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure she felt sorry for our long-suffering mother, and quite surprised that any of us really ever amounted to anything, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Grit is here with us today. She's an educator, having spent 30 years in public education, Mr. Speaker, and she's a writer. She co-wrote the best-selling book *Waskesiu and its Neighbours: A Casual Illustrated History* in 2008.

For nearly two decades Chancellor McCreath has served the University of Saskatchewan as a member of the Senate and the Board of Governors, and in 2015 she was named the first honorary ambassador to the university.

The chancellor was honoured in 2016 with the University of Saskatchewan Alumni Achievement Award for volunteerism, philanthropy, and public service; and on National Philanthropy Day in 2018 she and her husband, Scott, received the University of Saskatchewan Honoured Supporter Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Mr. Speaker, in 2019 Chancellor McCreath was named a recipient of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit and recently received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal.

Grit and her husband, Scott, have teamed together on many projects, including the Indigenous Scholarship at Edwards School of Business, the new active learning classroom in the College of Education, and they continue to fund numerous initiatives for their alma mater. And they currently serve as campaign cabinet for the \$500 million campaign at the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, Grit and Scott have contributed over a million dollars to the University of Saskatchewan over the years, Mr. Speaker, starting with a modest contribution of \$15. I understand 53 years ago, Mr. Speaker, when Grit and Scott couldn't decide what they were going to give each other for their first anniversary, they decided to make a donation to the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, which just shows the commitment and support that this family has for this great institution.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the Assembly to welcome a remarkable woman to her Legislative Assembly, Grit McCreath.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Advanced Education opposite and welcome Grit to her Assembly. And what an impressive list of accomplishments and service to this province that was just listed. What a wonderful welcome from that minister. It's truly an honour to have you here with us today.

Many of us on both sides of this Assembly have benefited from your service as someone who attended, earned a Bachelor of Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — Best eight years of his life.

Mr. Love: — Best eight years of my life. It only took me two, but that's okay. You know, I just want to thank you on behalf of the opposition for your generosity in terms of your time, your service, and all the gifts that you provided to the College of Education, Edwards School of Business, all of your service to the university and to the people of Saskatchewan.

On behalf of the opposition, I thank you. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Grit to her Assembly.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in the east gallery, I'd like to introduce Cody Lockhart. He's a Saskatchewan Rivers constituent who is a cattle rancher, raises a nice herd. He resides there with his wife and his three young daughters. He's a volleyball coach for one of his daughters, and he's also serving the RM [rural municipality] of Canwood as a councillor. So thank you. Thank you, Cody, for your service. Please join me in welcoming Cody Lockhart to his Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood . . . Saskatoon Willowgrove, sorry.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — I haven't been here long enough, I guess. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask 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.

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure today I introduce to you, in your gallery, two individuals that are here on behalf of Advocis, the governing body for financial planners.

Curtis Kimpton is a resident of Saskatoon. I'll have more to say about Curtis. And joining him is Ed Skwarek. Ed is the legal counsel for Advocis. He comes to us from Oakville, Ontario, and I hope that he enjoyed his time yesterday and today with the hospitality given by the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say a little bit more about Curtis Kimpton, a wonderful community-builder from the great city of Saskatoon. He recently won a national award from Kinsmen Canada. Curtis and his wife, Candace, who's also a Kinette and has done great work, they're friends to members on both sides of the Assembly.

Very recently Curtis was involved again with TeleMiracle. He invited all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to come and have a behind-the-scenes tour of how TeleMiracle operates, and he does so much. And this year was a special year for him because his daughter performed at TeleMiracle as well.

I want to thank him and I want to tell a quick story about Curtis as well. Very recently I was at the King of Kovbasa fundraiser in Saskatoon, the big Ukrainian event. They had a wonderful, wonderful live auction item there. They had a flag from Ukraine that was actually signed by soldiers on the front line and they had their crests and their patches. Curtis was the successful bidder of that flag. He has it sitting in his office, and it's a great conversation piece for people.

Today is a special day. We're going to be awarding the volunteer medals. And, Mr. Speaker, I would say Curtis is possibly a future recipient of the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. I'm a little biased, but there you go.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want you to help me and all members welcome these two individuals: Ed to our Legislative Assembly, and Curtis to his Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the member opposite in welcoming and recognizing Curtis and Ed to the Legislative Assembly. Curtis and Ed, first of all thank you for the advocacy that you do with Advocis in the financial services sector, ensuring that families in Saskatchewan are safe and supported in all their financial decisions. Appreciate the ongoing dialogue that both sides of the House have with your organization ensuring that that goal is met.

And like the member opposite, I also want to, on behalf of the opposition, thank you, Curtis, in particular for your volunteer work throughout the province, particularly with TeleMiracle. We very much appreciated the opportunity to tour with you, TeleMiracle this year. I understand you are a multi-generational family of Kinsmen and it runs deep in your blood.

I fully support the member's bid for you to receive a volunteer medal in the future. I don't think this House can thank you enough for the work that you do and your family has done for the province, so thank you again. And I ask that all members join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would also like to join with the Minister of Advanced Education and the member from Saskatoon Eastview in welcoming Chancellor Grit McCreath to her Legislative Assembly. In a previous life as an arts and culture fundraiser in Saskatoon, I had the great honour of meeting Grit and her husband, Scott, and witnessing the absolutely amazing contribution that they have made to their communities in Saskatoon.

As well, as a graduate of the College of Education, before I had met them I had seen their names on the walls of our college at the University of Saskatchewan. I'm so thankful for all the work that they have done to contribute in those capacities.

I have to credit the inklings of my political career to the opening of the fantastic *Canoe* exhibition that they hosted at Remai Modern because it was at that opening exhibition that I was introduced to one Joy Crawford, a stalwart organizer within our party, who we exchanged cards at that opening exhibition and forever will kind of be the history of how I got into this work.

And so I want to thank here again, thank you and your husband for all the work that you do in our arts community in Saskatoon. And I just want to make a very warm welcome to you to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday at budget day we had several board Chairs and trustees join us for budget day proceedings, and I see that we have a school board trustee with us here today. So I'd like to welcome Christa Willems and her husband, Salton, to the legislature. Christa is a board member for Prairie Spirit School Division, a children's book author as well, and it's pleased to have good representation like her and many others on the Prairie Spirit board and many of the other school boards around the province. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Christa and Salton to their legislature.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce two very important people in my life: my wife, Meagan; and my little guy Bennett up there. They joined us here for budget yesterday. And Bennett has just started to learn to point and clap and bang the table, so I worry that he's been watching too much of the legislature every day. But I see that he's throwing his shoes around the gallery so let's, as members, let's not take any lessons from him today. Let's keep our shoes on. But I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming my beautiful wife, Meagan, and my lovely little guy Bennett to the legislature today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Eastview.

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join the minister opposite in welcoming Christa to her Assembly. And I want to thank Christa and all trustees in Saskatchewan who work around board tables year-round, working in the best interests of our students, our school communities, sometimes making decisions that are tough, sometimes making decisions that they feel great about.

And I know that that work of being a school trustee is so important in providing that local voice and having those locally elected people who have the resources and the ability to do the work that's so important in the functioning of our 27 public and separate school boards. So I would like to join with the minister, thank Christa for her work, and invite all members and join me in welcoming Christa to her Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Arm River.

Mr. Skoropad: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just to join with my colleague, the Minister of Education, in welcoming the most well-behaved person in this Assembly, Bennett Cockrill, to his legislature here. You know, I don't think I've ever met a more well-behaved child in my life, so much so that I bug my colleague and I say, you know, I've never heard him cry ever. You won't hear him today. And I'll tell you, even one time I challenged him to FaceTime me from home if he ever cries, which he did and he wasn't crying; he was just, you know, purring. And so to that I don't know whatever you're doing keep doing it. But I'd just like to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

[10:15]

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to present this petition calling for recognition of the Timber Bay residential school as a provincially run school.

We, the undersigned residents of Canada, wish to bring to your attention the following: survivors of the Timber Bay residential school have been denied the Indian residential school settlements that other sites received on the basis that the school was run by the province of Saskatchewan rather than operated by the federal government; the province of Saskatchewan oversaw 2,000 children attend the school in Timber Bay which operated between 1952 and 1994; Timber Bay residential school is the only residential school in Canada with an open RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigation surrounding historical crimes.

I'll read:

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

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

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; that the federal Liberal-NDP government was politically motivated issuing a carve-out for the home heating oil; and that the Government of Saskatchewan decisions to not collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to the drop in inflation; further that despite the decision to not charge the carbon tax on the home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay the tax out of the pocket at the pumps, grocery stores, and much more.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately suspend the carbon tax across the nation of Canada and acknowledge its significant impact on affordability and inflation in Canada.

The below undersigned resident of Yorkton. I do present, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to be on my feet again today to present a petition to this Assembly calling for the funding of fertility treatments for people here in Saskatchewan. Another budget has come and gone, and families across Saskatchewan who struggle with fertility will continue to do so at great cost to themselves, Mr. Speaker. As has been canvassed in this Assembly, this is a medical condition. This is not something anyone chooses, Mr. Speaker, and despite public health care being a right, there is no funding for those struggling here in Saskatchewan.

And right now, after the moves made by BC [British Columbia], Saskatchewan is one of two provinces that provides no support to individuals struggling to build and grow families here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It would be a shame for us to find ourselves as the only province that does not provide that support to those desperate, desperate for sweet little babies and children to call their own.

With that, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to cover the financial burden of up to two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today are from Tisdale and Star City. I do so present.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present our petition calling for the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to fix the crisis in health care.

The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that there were 951 health care closures across rural Saskatchewan between August 2019 and July of 2023. We've talked in this Assembly about the loss of rural nurses in this province — 21 per cent in the last six years. That's 474 rural nurses that aren't in communities in this province any longer.

The 400 of those closures were to Saskatchewan emergency rooms. And we still continue to see women across this province having to go outside of this province to get breast health care. My office is inundated with emails and phone calls from women desperate to get the care once they have found a lump in their breast. And we saw in the budget nothing to change that yesterday for in the immediate term for those women who are so desperate to get that care.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately address the short-staffing crisis in health care and work with health care workers on solutions to improve patient care.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in . . .

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet to again present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to adequately fund education.

Budget year after budget year, we have seen cuts to the classroom. Election year after election year, we see promises made and then promises broken. We see ourselves now at a historical juncture with this labour dispute — the cancellation of extracurriculars, the loss of Regina Optimist Band Festival, Skills Canada Saskatchewan Provincial Competition — because of this government's intransigence and inflexibility.

I was a student athlete myself, Mr. Speaker. I'm helping out coaching basketball in the system today. I see first-hand what these extracurriculars mean to these kids. The heart and soul these teachers put into extracurriculars — not because they're required to, but because they choose to — 100 per cent volunteer-based. They give of their time freely because they want to, because they choose to.

But what we've seen from this government year after year — cuts, disrespect. Disrespect to these teachers from a government who would sooner fund a billboard campaign attacking them than to send the one impasse issue to a neutral third-party arbitrator so kids can get back into the classroom so we can let them play.

With that I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer, call on the government to adequately, sustainably, predictably fund education so that students can

get the supports they deserve.

I do so present.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to the Government of Saskatchewan to protect Duncairn Reservoir Migratory Bird Sanctuary from expansion of irrigation.

The undersigned residents of the province wish to bring to your attention the following: that water is a valuable resource to be used for the benefit of all people of the province; that the Swift Current Creek basin has had a moratorium on new water allocation since 1981 due to supply constraints in the Southwest; that Duncairn Reservoir was designated a migratory bird sanctuary in 1948, covered by the migratory birds conservation Act protecting migratory birds, their nests, and management of those areas.

Also the Provincial Auditor has pointed out that the Water Security Agency has not taken sufficient steps to monitor and enforce licensed water users; that effective monitoring of water allocations and uses is key to Saskatchewan having a sustainable supply of water available; and last that the proposed expansion of irrigation would pose a significant threat to the fish and migratory birds.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to protect Duncairn Reservoir Migratory Bird Sanctuary from any proposed expansion of irrigation.

This petition is signed by the constituents of Cypress Hills. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize March 21st as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

This day is observed annually on the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, in which police in Sharpeville, South Africa opened fire and killed 69 people and injured over 180 others at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid pass laws in 1960. The massacre drew international attention to the brutality of apartheid and the urgent need for global action against racial discrimination. Since its establishment, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has been a vital part of the UN [United Nations] mission to end racism and promote diversity, equality, and justice.

Racial discrimination is still a significant problem that impacts countless communities across Saskatchewan, Canada, and the world. And we must stand united in speaking out against all

forms of discrimination. I hope all members will join me in recognizing this day and committing to the elimination of racism and racial discrimination. Miigwech, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government's Fiscal Management

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, Premier Moe's Sask Party government has demonstrated a concerning lack of fiscal responsibility and prudent management of the province's finances. Their mismanagement has resulted in the wreck and neglect of our province.

During his six years this Premier has presided over a staggering \$14.8 billion increase in Saskatchewan's public debt. With this budget's projected deficit, it puts the Premier over \$15 billion in new provincial debt. His spending dwarfs the \$7.4 billion rise in public debt over his predecessor, Brad Wall. Shockingly, this Premier's tenure has even surpassed the 8.7 billion surge in debt during the 1980s under Grant Devine.

This Premier has doubled the provincial debt during his tenure of just six years. His spending and mismanagement is just like the Trudeau Liberals, where they doubled the federal debt in nine years. The Saskatchewan people deserve a fiscally responsible, transparent government, accountable to its constituents.

The Sask Party management of this province has failed the Saskatchewan people and must be removed.

The Speaker: — I'd just like to remind the member to refer to members by their title or their constituency.

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

World Water Day and Importance of Source Water Protection

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow marks World Water Day and the theme is Water for Peace. Around the world, water can create peace or it can cause conflict. As climate change impacts increase, including here in Saskatchewan, drinking water, recreational water, and water for industry will all be affected.

We are seeing examples of both peace and conflict here in Saskatchewan. Most residents in Saskatchewan are fortunate to enjoy the peace of having a reliable, safe source of drinking water, but we also have conflict. At the end of February, Saskatchewan had 216 precautionary drinking water advisories and emergency boil orders. Some orders are for breaks in water lines that are fixed quickly, but some communities have had PDWAs [precautionary drinking water advisory] going back as far as November 2005. One community has had an EBO [emergency boil order] since 2015.

As the Water Security Agency critic, I regularly hear of conflicts over water. Saskatchewan people recognize the importance of source water protection, wetland conservation, and compliance and enforcement of existing regulations meant to protect source water and avoid conflicts in our communities.

The risk of flooding and drought increase here at home. We need to work together on solutions for all water users and remember that . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Upcoming One-Day Basketball Tournament in Moose Jaw

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge and thank Roger Morgan and Dave Sandomirsky and the response of the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association, despite the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] leadership cancelling Hoopla.

This coming Saturday, Mr. Speaker, high school students from across Saskatchewan will be coming to Moose Jaw for a one-day basketball tournament, many of whom for the last time.

Over the past week, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to meet with many of these students, and they told me that they felt like their hard work was going to be wasted. Mr. Speaker, as a youth sport coach myself, I know that these student athletes dedicate thousands of hours preparing and training for their sport.

[10:30]

It was disappointing that the STF not only followed through with their attack on students, Mr. Speaker, but they disrespected the numerous hours that parents, volunteers, and small businesses in Moose Jaw spent getting ready for this weekend's tournament.

Mr. Speaker, I want to again thank the SHSAA [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association] along with the community of Moose Jaw, the volunteers, the parents, and the coaches for finding a way to let the kids play.

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

Double Down for a Difference on World Down Syndrome Day

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 21st is internationally recognized as annual World Down Syndrome Day and has been since 2012. The date being the 21st day of the third month was chosen to signify the uniqueness of the triplication of the 21st chromosome, which causes the condition. And this year's theme is Double Down for a Difference.

Early in this government's mandate, we prioritized people with disabilities, and after extensive consultations, conversations, and collaboration, we proudly introduced the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we increased SAID by 3 per cent. That is the second year in a row we have increased funding to SAID.

As a parent with a daughter with Down syndrome, I am incredibly proud of the programs and supports we offer to individuals with disabilities. And I am incredibly proud of my daughter and her achievements. She makes my life better.

A strong and healthy economy should be something that

everyone benefits from and why growth works for everyone. Mr. Speaker, we can all help by supporting Ability in Me's fundraiser this Friday in Saskatoon and double down for a difference. My family will be attending, and I hope yours will too.

I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing March 21st as World Down Syndrome Day and to wear mismanaged socks today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for the Provincial Budget

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday's budget announcement has a lot of people excited about the future of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read some of the reactions we've been getting into the record.

Brianna Solberg of CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] said:

Holding the small business tax rate at 1 per cent rather than increasing to 2 per cent this year as previously planned will help small firms with the opportunity to reinvest in their businesses, hire new staff, increase wages, and pay off pandemic debt.

Randy Goulden, the president of SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] said, "Overall, SUMA is very impressed with the budget." The president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association said, "This is a better budget for education. It does provide a path forward for some stability in the education sector."

Tania Vrionis, the CEO [chief executive officer] of Ovarian Cancer Canada, said, "We are honestly thrilled to see such incredible investment into women's health, in particular the 1 million commitment to ovarian cancer research." Ray Orb, the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] president, said, "We feel items in this budget go a long way to support our RMs and the people who live in rural Saskatchewan."

Mr. Speaker, our partners in health care, municipal governance, education, and women's health agree that this budget will deliver on what matters most to our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Comparing Provincial Population Numbers

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member for Regina University challenged us to present her with information and back up our claims that Saskatchewan lost people under the NDP. The member asked for factual evidence on population decline under the NDP.

We've seen over the years the challenges that their research department has, so here's the evidence from Stats Canada. Population in Saskatchewan, 1997: 1.01 million. In '99: 1.015 million — that's fewer people than two years previous. In 2000: 1.008 million — that's still fewer people than the year

before. In 2001: just barely 1 million people — again, fewer people in Saskatchewan. A year later in 2002: 996,807 people. In 2003: 996,386 people — fewer people. Sadly, by 2006: 991,231 people.

For the members opposite, the math — regular math now, not NDP math — shows the decline of tens of thousands of people. That's the NDP record.

But brighter days appeared in 2007 with the election of a growth-friendly Saskatchewan Party government. We've attracted over 30,000 people in just one year, and we're happy to compare our record to the NDP's any day of the week.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provincial Budget, Cost of Living, and Affordability

Ms. Beck: — The provincial budget is 92 pages long, 92 pages, Mr. Speaker, but not one single page contains any new relief measures for people in this province struggling with the cost of living. Not one. Mr. Speaker, why is this tired and out-of-touch government delivering nothing new to help Saskatchewan people who are struggling to make ends meet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the Leader of the Opposition, maybe all members of the opposition to go back and actually have another look at the budget. The over \$2 billion in affordability measures that are present and current in each and every budget were reaffirmed in the budget that was delivered by our Deputy Premier yesterday, continuing to ensure that 112,000 people in this province — low-income families, many of them — are not on our provincial tax rolls at all, Mr. Speaker.

There are a number of other incentives that continue in that budget, affordability measures, Mr. Speaker, but I would just list one. And it has to do with low-income families that may have found a time when they're on the SIS [Saskatchewan income support] program here in Saskatchewan and may find a job. There was the Saskatchewan employment program, \$17 million added, to transition people back into the workforce, transition them and their family to a better opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

As often this government, with the affordability measures that we bring in place are targeted, Mr. Speaker, with a specific target on those families, those low-income families and improving the opportunities that they have and improving the opportunities, obviously, that their children will have.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, let me make it real clear for the Premier. If there were people in this province struggling before the budget and there's nothing new to deliver cost-of-living relief, they're going to continue to struggle after the budget.

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing new at all, and the Premier and his whole tired and out-of-touch government must think that

everything in this province, everyone in this province is doing just fine. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that tells you everything you need to know about how tired and out of touch this Sask Party government has become.

Mr. Speaker, the question is simple: why is there no cost-of-living relief in this budget?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I was going to . . . I'll get a little more specific for the Leader of the Opposition. But turn to page 75 or 76 of the budget, Mr. Speaker, and the comparisons between cities across the nation are in there on the affordability measures. And I often stand on the floor of this Assembly, as does the Deputy Premier and others, and talk about Saskatchewan and cities and communities in Saskatchewan being some of the most affordable places to live in the nation. And all of that information is present for the different, for the different income categories for comparisons with cities across the nation, Mr. Speaker.

And so I would encourage all members opposite and the Leader of the Opposition to look at page 75 and 76. The fact of the matter is, is we are able to continue to be one of the most affordable places in Canada to live while we made a record operational investment in our education system, of which Saskatchewan people have asked for, Mr. Speaker.

All the while we've been able to make a record investment, over 10 per cent, in our health care system, Mr. Speaker, in the operations of our health care system and building new hospitals, unlike the members opposite who closed over 50 of those facilities in our rural communities, up to and including Regina.

And alongside that a 14 per cent increased investment to our municipalities through a municipal revenue-sharing program. It was asked for while there was an NDP government here. It was never delivered. It was delivered under this government and is not present in any other province across the nation of Canada.

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

Ms. Beck: — Okay, Mr. Speaker, quick look at that page and it shows that people in this province are paying an average of \$1,500 in additional PST [provincial sales tax], thanks to this government, and they're also still paying the gas tax.

This Premier, this Premier has lost the plot. People are struggling, and I can't tell if he doesn't care or he simply doesn't understand that that's the case. But here are some facts for them, Mr. Speaker. This morning Angus Reid released new numbers on the cost-of-living crisis that people are facing, and it shows that almost half of Saskatchewan people report that they're worse off this year than they were last year. That's higher than the national average, Mr. Speaker, and it's amongst the highest reported rates in the country.

Why, why is this tired and out-of-touch government doing nothing to help those who are struggling in our province today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, it's understandable that, I think,

all Canadians, in fairness, are struggling through affordability challenges that are present in our nation — and to some degree, even beyond our nation — but most certainly in our nation due to many decisions that have been made on the taxation front, that are pushing up the inflationary costs for families, at the federal level. And I would remind everyone in this nation and this province that the federal government we have today is a minority Liberal government propped up by the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, back to pages 75 and 76. In virtually every income category but one, Regina, Saskatchewan, is ranking first as the most affordable city in Canada to live, Mr. Speaker. And what we saw yesterday was a balance in preserving that affordability in our province with record investments in our classrooms, in our health care system, and record investment in our communities.

That contrasts very much with what we would see from the NDP, Mr. Speaker, when they closed hospitals, closed schools, fired teachers, fired nurses, fired doctors, tried to nationalize any industry that they couldn't tax into submission in this province. Mr. Speaker, what you have here as we enter an election year is a government that's focused on classrooms, care, and communities versus an opposition that's focused on closures, chaos, and crashing our Saskatchewan economy.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it is more than a little pathetic that on the day after a budget, that's all you've got to defend.

With this budget, the Premier had the chance, the opportunity to show that he gets it just a little bit — what people in this province are going through — that he's listening, that he understands the needs of Saskatchewan people. But, Mr. Speaker, he blew the chance with that budget. Not one thin dime of relief for Saskatchewan people. And again it shows just how tired and out of touch this Sask Party government has become.

Mr. Speaker, it's time for a change. How can the Premier defend this budget that offers no relief at a time when so many Saskatchewan families are struggling?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, that change occurred in 2007 when we quit closing hospitals and firing nurses and doctors, and we started building hospitals and hiring nurses and doctors. That change occurred in 2007 when we quit closing schools — 176, one a month under the members opposite — and we started building schools and hiring teachers. And I think that was reinforced yesterday, Mr. Speaker, with a budget that had record operational funding going directly to our school divisions, directly into our classrooms across this province.

All the while, able to balance that with the affordability measures that put our province as one of the most affordable places in Canada to live. All the while, Mr. Speaker, preserving our debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio of about 14 per cent, second in the nation of Canada. By comparison, in 2007 under the NDP, our debt-to-GDP ratio was 28.1 per cent, Mr. Speaker — 28.1 per cent.

We are a government, Mr. Speaker, and a party that is committed

to investing in our classrooms, investing in health care, investing in our communities, versus the members opposite that are only focused on closures of our health care facilities and schools, creating chaos in our communities, and crashing the Saskatchewan economy.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, if that Premier was proud of his budget, he wouldn't be up here the day after with that sort of blustery filibuster in question period. Best work of fiction, Mr. Speaker, is what this thing might get nominated for this year.

Mr. Speaker, as I got this work of fiction yesterday, I went through page by page by page. I flipped all the way to the end. I was looking for what relief might finally be there for Saskatchewan people. I got to the end and there was nothing. And you know, I wish I could say I was surprised, but I wasn't. Because Saskatchewan people have learned that they can't expect much from this government but more costs, Mr. Speaker, a government so out of touch with that reality.

[10:45]

Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party choosing not to help people who are struggling just to make ends meet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, we're choosing to keep a number of measures in place in this budget and going forward to make Saskatchewan one of the most affordable places to live in Canada, quite frankly.

Because of the indexation of our low income tax, a family of four will save approximately \$400 this year in income tax, Mr. Speaker. That's significant. Because of not charging the carbon tax on home heating, that is another one of \$400 savings for Saskatchewan people that is going to be implemented by this government, Mr. Speaker.

But I'm kind of curious, Mr. Speaker. He does a lot of criticism; the member opposite criticizes. They all do, quite frankly. And they want us to forgo the excise fuel tax. Mr. Speaker, so what is . . . How are they going to pay for that?

Mr. Speaker, are they going to go back to the days of the NDP where they simply didn't fix the highways? Because that money 100 per cent goes into fixing the highways. Or are they going to fix the highways and just reduce another budget like education or health care because they don't agree with those increases? Or are they going to run up the deficit . . .

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to cut the waste, mismanagement, and scandal of that government. I'd get into that list, but the list would be long and that would be more like a budget speech. So I'll stay focused on the fact that this government failed to provide any help, any relief for people that are struggling. Many families are breaking the bank just to fill

the tank, but this tired and out-of-touch government is offering nothing. Zero, Mr. Speaker.

Now Alberta to the west has offered relief; Manitoba to the west has offered relief. But Saskatchewan people are the only ones living on the Prairies who have received nothing in fuel tax relief. Why is that tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government offering no relief when both our neighbours to the west and the east are doing so? Saskatchewan people deserve nothing less.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I've already gone through this, but I would love to go through it again, because there's definitely a Manitoba envy by the members opposite. So I encourage them to take a look at Manitoba.

In Saskatchewan you can earn \$20,000 more before you pay income tax than you do in Manitoba — \$20,000. I'd rather pay the fuel tax than to pay tax on \$20,000 worth of income. The active families benefit for children, for families. There's a similar program in Manitoba, except ours is three times more. Introduced by our government, the children's drug plan, Mr. Speaker, isn't even available in Manitoba. And Manitoba has a PST that's one point higher. That member always complains about the PST. Well Manitoba's is even more.

But that's who he wants to look to and envy and come up with his ideas. What would he do? Borrow the money? I want to know. And he talks about a list of expenditures. It's a lot of bluster. Let's hear the list.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I'd urge the Premier, that member to look at a map of Canada. Saskatchewan has two neighbours — one on the west which is Alberta, one on the east which is Manitoba. Both of them have provided fuel tax relief. Two different governments, Mr. Speaker.

You know, this tired and out-of-touch government, well worse than doing nothing in the face of this cost-of-living challenge, they've only made matters worse. They've tripled the take now on the PST. They added the PST of course to children's clothes, to restaurant meals, used cars, food in grocery stores. They've hiked power bills time and time again.

The list of ways this government has made life more expensive is long. The list of ways the government has made life more affordable in this budget, well it couldn't be shorter — zero. How does this Sask Party justify their record of hiking costs while offering no relief for families across Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite doesn't want to recognize the advantage that Saskatchewan has by lowering personal income tax.

But even for the most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, in this budget there's an increase to the Saskatchewan income support program. This is the third year in a row that we have increased it . . . And

the member opposite wants to chant. This is the third year that it's been increased. This is the second year that we're increasing the support rate in our SAID program, Mr. Speaker.

And they certainly do not want to talk about the Saskatchewan employment incentive, Mr. Speaker — 17 million in this budget for that program. And that is a subsidy to low-income working families. If their income is low, we will subsidize that income. That's significant. That's helping the most vulnerable.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are struggling and they deserve more than tired spin like that.

Mr. Speaker, just look at the numbers from Angus Reid released this morning: 49 per cent of Saskatchewan people say they're worse off financially than a year ago. Now that's way higher than the national average, the second highest of all provinces in Canada. That's half of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, who are worse off financially than one year ago.

How does this out-of-touch government justify leaving people without relief when people are struggling more than almost everywhere in Canada?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — One thing I must say, Mr. Speaker: just because the NDP say it, doesn't mean it's so. There are a number of reports. It's not just us saying it. It's not just us saying it. There are a number of reports that state that Saskatchewan is one of the most affordable places to live in Canada and that's because of measures that this government has taken. If you combine housing, utilities, and taxes, we are the most affordable province in which to live, Mr. Speaker.

Let's not go back to the days of the NDP where we were not. If we do tax comparisons, it is a stark contrast as what we were paying in taxes, and that's why people were leaving this province in droves. And that's why they don't want to have those numbers out publicly either, of how the population declined under the NDP. Because they left this province because of the policies and the tax structure of the NDP.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, while that minister was providing a non-answer and spin — no answer to the challenge — I hear a heckle from a member, a politically tacky heckle about desperation. And the sad reality . . . You want to talk about desperation? It's Saskatchewan people who are feeling desperate. Angus Reid indicates that 6 out of 10 people, 57 per cent of Saskatchewan people are saying that it's difficult or very difficult to pay for food and groceries.

Those cabinet ministers can heckle all they want while 6 out of 10 Saskatchewan people struggle to put food on the table for their families, Mr. Speaker. You want to talk about out of touch? Exhibit A. Again higher than the national average, among the highest of the provinces. We have one member bellowing from the back, Mr. Speaker, who's said more in this question period

than he has from his feet his entire time in office . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — It's interesting that the member opposite that accuses us of blustering, blustered so long through his question, he never got to a question, Mr. Speaker. What he fails to say is that same Angus Reid poll, that says which party is to be most trusted to manage the cost of living. And guess what? It was this government; it was not the NDP. So I think his bluster is, you know, maybe ill placed, Mr. Speaker.

There are a number of measures in our budget to address affordability. Beyond a doubt the one thing that's driving up the cost of living more than anything, something that is a tax on everything, is the carbon tax. And those members opposite are all over the map on supporting, not supporting. It depends. But the bottom line is they support it. They support Jagmeet Singh — Jagmeet Singh, who won't even take a call from their leader — who supports the carbon tax. He's propping up Justin Trudeau. And that drives up the cost of . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister of Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Talk about tacky and desperate. This official opposition will stand up against that federal carbon tax every day of the week.

The people of this province are stressed and stretched. The Saskatchewan Party would know that — and they should listen — if they were listening to Saskatchewan people, but they've fallen so damned out of touch with reality, Mr. Speaker. People are choosing between groceries and rent. People are choosing between their kids' activities and their mortgage, Mr. Speaker.

This isn't an academic exercise. This is real life for real people struggling to hang on, that are working so damn hard to put food on the table — 6 out of 10 Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. How can this government dismiss that reality, bring forward a budget that offers no relief when 6 out of 10 families are struggling to put food on the table?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. For that member to stand in his place and say that day after day the NDP have been against the carbon tax, nobody in this province believes it. And you only have to look at their words, Mr. Speaker, where the member from Walsh Acres said his take on a carbon tax and climate change was "Spoiler: I'm in favour." The member from Nutana said, "It's no longer up for debate. We need a carbon tax in this country."

Mr. Speaker, the people in this province know that it's been one party that has stood against the carbon tax from day one. It's on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. And we continue to do so by taking the carbon tax off of natural gas for the people of this province, which has already seen a reduction in inflation. These members opposite cannot be counted on when it comes to standing up against the Liberal-NDP carbon tax. Only one party can, Mr. Speaker, and that's on this side of the House.

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

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government's latest liberal budget failed to offer any meaningful relief to residents struggling with the rising cost of living. Despite calls from Sask United to implement measures to help make life more affordable, they did not include any significant tax credits, rebates, or other financial support aimed at easing the burden on the Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to call on the government to cut their provincial carbon tax on fuel and cut the PST by 1 per cent across the board. Mr. Speaker, why won't the liberal management opposite cut any of these taxes?

The Speaker: — I'd just like to caution the member to refer to everyone by their proper titles, names, and party. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many there are, but the member opposite needs to tell the members of her party that she voted for every single budget up until this year. And who knows what she'll do with this budget, but she voted for every budget that we've had since she's been here.

Mr. Speaker, there is no carbon tax on fuel in the province of Saskatchewan. There is a fuel excise tax that's been there historically. It 100 per cent, under this government, is invested in fixing our highways.

So then my question goes to her is, the same question I asked the loyal opposition is, where would she find the money? Would she not increase the money that we put into health care? Is that where she would find the money that she's willing to forgo, Mr. Speaker? Or would she not put the money into education and allow for the pressures in our classrooms to continue? Mr. Speaker, where would she find the money? Or would she just not fix the highways? Although I know she's been at ribbon cuttings in her constituency and quite proud about the highways.

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

Government's Energy Policies

Ms. Wilson: — Excuses again, Mr. Speaker. If it spends like a Liberal, manages like a Liberal, and talks like a Liberal, it's a Liberal. Mr. Speaker, let me read this government quote from their budget: "The Minister of Environment has allocated 140 million to support clean electricity projects that accelerate our transition to a net zero emission electricity grid by 2050."

Mr. Speaker, last week the Energy minister wanted us to believe that the net zero agenda was all Ottawa's doing. Mr. Speaker, now that it's printed in the budget, will this government recognize it is funding the destruction of our energy sector with their net zero by 2050 agenda?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I

want to first off say that we are going to ensure that we're keeping the dollars that the people of Saskatchewan have paid in this province so that we can ensure that, one, we keep rates stable for the residents and the industries and commercial business, Mr. Speaker, that are operating in Saskatchewan and that are looking to expand or come to Saskatchewan.

[11:00]

But also, Mr. Speaker, what we're going to do is set aside dollars for what we are looking at doing when it comes to small modular reactors. What this budget does is set those dollars aside to begin to accumulate those dollars.

At the same time what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be opening a brand new natural gas power plant outside of Moose Jaw later this spring. We're planning for the new Aspen 377-megawatt natural gas power plant.

We are going to take an all-of-the-above approach when it comes to ensuring that the people of Saskatchewan have a safe and reliable power system, Mr. Speaker, and that is why we are opposing the clean electricity . . .

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to order question 3.

The Speaker: — Question 3 has been ordered. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order question 4.

The Speaker: — Question 4 has been ordered.

MOTIONS FOR RETURNS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Return No. 3

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I would like the Assembly to issue an order for return.

The Speaker: — Order for return.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF BUDGETARY POLICY (BUDGET DEBATE)

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to enter back into budget debate. It would be a greater pleasure, Mr. Speaker, if we felt that this budget hit the mark and met the challenges that families are facing across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I addressed the budget yesterday, and I spoke specifically to its failures, certainly the budgetary failures around having nothing for cost of living, Mr. Speaker. I spoke to the failed record of this government around health care and education, Mr. Speaker. And I spoke as well about the awful costs of the fiscal record and one that's, you know, full of mismanagement, scandal, and waste of this government, Mr. Speaker. I spoke as well about that economic record.

I have a few other areas that I just want to touch, Mr. Speaker, but ultimately I want to rise here today to just say, thank you so very much to the good people I represent for continuing to work together, for all the care and support and ideas and challenge that they bring, the ideas, the support, and the help, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank certainly our family. I'm pretty lucky to have a family, Mr. Speaker, that's so engaged and healthy. You just knock on wood on these things, Mr. Speaker. It was wonderful to have William and Stephanie here yesterday. Pretty lucky to have my parents still able to come into the crowd and so engaged in all this. Stephanie's parents as well, our extended families, Mr. Speaker, and I'm just so thankful for that.

I want to thank Jennifer in our constituency office as well for her good work and advocacy. I say this often: you know, when someone's coming into our office, they're coming at a time where they're usually dealing with something pretty challenging in their life, Mr. Speaker. And I just want to thank her for helping me and for us working together to make sure that we do justice to the advocacy that people need when they walk into that office, Mr. Speaker, that we hope to be able to find them the solutions. And often some of that advocacy as well informs the kind of system change that you want to bring, some of the need for a budget, Mr. Speaker, to respond better to the pressures and challenges that people face, Mr. Speaker.

I want to again just be thankful for all those that I work with in this Assembly here as well, this team here. A leader who is heart and soul and common sense, Mr. Speaker, who grinds it out and works hard every single day, taking nothing for granted, working to listen and learn and work with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. She's solid. She's smart, and she knows how to go out and find common ground that can find solutions that would make improvements in people's lives from corner to corner in this province, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank, you know, all those, Mr. Speaker, that I represent, through Normanview West and Prairie View, through Rosemont and Mount Royal, through Dieppe — Mr. Speaker, I identified off the top of my remarks today — for their level of engagement, care, and support. Pretty lucky even going into a budget cycle, for the number of folks that are a part of contributing ideas and thought and research and solutions, Mr. Speaker, that they hope to be acted on. I never take that service for granted, Mr. Speaker. I see how hard the people I represent

work, Mr. Speaker, and they expect nothing less in their representative, should expect nothing less in their representative, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank those other local folks that are elected as well throughout the community. Shanon Zachidniak on the city side, Jason Mancinelli on the city side for part of the riding, some school board trustees on the public side. There's one, Lacey Weekes, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if you've ever heard of her, but she's a very fine school trustee. As well, Sarah Cummings Truskowski, Mr. Speaker. Exceptional leaders in the communities in their respective ways.

I want to recognize all of the Catholic school board, Mr. Speaker. They're not elected for any specific area, but that entire board, which includes of course my sister, Mr. Speaker, who takes that role seriously and cares deeply about education. So I want to give all of them a shout-out too.

I want to just recognize all those that are working so hard through the community associations, Mr. Speaker, to enrich lives and to provide services and supports and to advocate for communities as well. I always find the volunteer hours are just incredible, the number of programs that are delivered. And these are the kinds of programs that make such a difference in people's lives, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the things I said yesterday — I had ample time to speak to the budget yesterday, Mr. Speaker — but you know, those are issues that are important to an entire province. Certainly know they're important to the people I represent. And it's beyond disappointing, but sadly not surprising, Mr. Speaker, at this juncture of this long-serving government this time that's grown so tired and out of gas, out of steam and out of touch, Mr. Speaker, that they failed to bring forward any cost-of-living relief, Mr. Speaker. Zero.

You know, lots of money being tossed around in here. These guys have never . . . have always found ways to spend dollars — too many ways — to often waste them and mismanage them, Mr. Speaker. And you'll see that in the debt tables here and the cost, Mr. Speaker. But not a way to step up in a meaningful way and take a little pressure off households across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Far too many Saskatchewan families are making those awful choices right now around how they're going to put food on the table, Mr. Speaker, those very tough choices about kids' activities. You know, activities that they know their kids love; they know they're important to them. But you've got to make some hard choices when it's the mortgage payment or it's food or it's these activities, Mr. Speaker.

It's one of the reasons I continue to really value all the roles of, you know, all those voluntary teacher-coaches and community members that coach and serve and deliver programs, Mr. Speaker. It's one of the reasons that I continue to really value being able to be involved as a volunteer coach myself with the Outdoor Hockey League, Mr. Speaker, because I recognize the tremendous barriers to sport, and certainly one like hockey, for many families. And we recognize how important healthy activity and team and that sort of positive environment and activity is to the people of the province.

But through all that, what I see is remarkable people, Mr. Speaker, working so damned hard to make ends meet, to build opportunity for their families, Mr. Speaker. And it just feels like they're up against everything when you've got a government like this, Mr. Speaker, that just couldn't care less when it comes to pressures around cost of living.

You know, we've laid forward measures that could have been acted upon with the gas tax and the PST, Mr. Speaker. There's multiple ways to go at this, but if you look at the gas tax itself, certainly our neighbours to both our west and the east, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta and Manitoba, they've acted on this front and provided relief. But nothing here, Mr. Speaker, and that's the biggest failure in this budget.

I did talk about just the fiscal record of this government and the gross mismanagement and the costs of that, Mr. Speaker. And you know, when I flipped through this budget, of course I didn't find any cost-of-living relief. I've identified that very clearly. What I did find was a pile of debt, Mr. Speaker, a whole bunch of it. It just gets stacked up through the tenure of this government.

And you know, when you're blowing through dollars, Mr. Speaker, in ways that are mismanaged, Mr. Speaker, in ways that are wasteful, it adds up, especially when you're running deficit after deficit after deficit as this government. And so any dollar that's deployed in a wasteful way, Mr. Speaker, in a mismanaged way is a dollar that's not being deployed in a meaningful way into the priorities of people's lives, into cost of living, into fixing health care, Mr. Speaker, into making sure our classrooms are supported and have the conditions that will allow students to learn and thrive, or to actually pay down debt, Mr. Speaker.

You know, the Premier was up looking at the budget book here today, and you know, I hope he read it, Mr. Speaker. But if I look at page 61, it identifies just the cost of all that mismanagement. Now we're talking \$100 million more in one budget year just to pay additional debt servicing charges, Mr. Speaker.

And that's the reality. Families know this better than anyone. People are carrying a mortgage and coming up for renewals, and they're looking, you know, at some horribly challenging situations when they look at the increases to interest rates, Mr. Speaker, and those impacts.

Well this was a government, Mr. Speaker, that blew through the dollars, didn't deliver in the ways that they should, Mr. Speaker, wasted too many of those dollars. And now they're right here, Mr. Speaker — of course 3 billion more in debt this year; record high in debt, 35 billion.

That Premier's doubled the debt, Mr. Speaker. And the price tag just this year alone as that debt starts to roll over — this challenge is only going to get worse — is \$100 million more to debt servicing charges, now up to over \$900 million on debt servicing charges alone, Mr. Speaker. And that doesn't include, you know, things like the P3s [public-private partnership], which only add to that, Mr. Speaker.

I want to identify something, Mr. Speaker. I mean if we've identified the economic record of that government being, I mean sadly, the worst in Canada . . . This is such an incredible province

with so much opportunity and people doing their part, businesses doing their part. But we have a government that's really failing, and their record is the worst in Canada by way of jobs and economic activity and investment, Mr. Speaker.

And if you crunch the numbers around quality of life or the GDP per capita, Mr. Speaker, if you look at what's happened during this period of time, is we've actually had a decline of \$2,400 per person in this province by way of GDP per capita, Mr. Speaker.

Now that's the first time this has happened since the Great Depression, Mr. Speaker. Now this is not something that's happened in provinces across Canada, Mr. Speaker. This is the record of this government, and this is a measure of quality of life, Mr. Speaker — \$2,400 less per person, per capita by way of the GDP, Mr. Speaker.

You know, like these guys will tout numbers opposite, and I think they have to understand that (a) they're failing on the numbers, they're failing on the results, but that this connects to people's lives. This government's delivering less economic opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And on top of that, Saskatchewan people are facing all of the costs, Mr. Speaker, and costs that have been made worse by that tired and out-of-touch government.

I want to, before I close, just identify what we, you know, are certainly continuing to push on these fronts just with respect to agriculture. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are needing better action to support producers in this world-class industry, Mr. Speaker, that feeds the world. We're all pulling for a late snow; we're all pulling for the moisture and the rains that will put producers in this province into a wonderful growing season, Mr. Speaker. But the reality right now is that we're really thin on moisture in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Really thin on moisture, Mr. Speaker.

[11:15]

You know, and a prudent government would take up calls from the agricultural community that have been made, and to work with agricultural producers in this province from grain through livestock, Mr. Speaker, through the commodity groups, and those on the ground that know the impacts, Mr. Speaker, those in SARM, and to work as a drought planning committee, an action team, Mr. Speaker, to be able to plan and be able to forecast and be able to measure, to make sure the supports are there in the best way they can if needed, Mr. Speaker. And for this government to reject the calls of agricultural producers from across Saskatchewan on this front is lazy, Mr. Speaker. And you know, to not actively plan on these fronts . . .

And the hope is that we're not into a drought. The hope is the rains come, Mr. Speaker, and that we have an incredible growing season, that crop insurance isn't tested in a real big way, Mr. Speaker, because we know it's in a challenged spot right now, Mr. Speaker. But we'd expect our government to plan on these fronts. Not doing that, it's sort of the approach we see of this government on so many fronts. It always costs more to deliver some sort of program in a hasty way in the throes of a crisis, Mr. Speaker, and those dollars aren't going to be deployed as effectively. The program is not going to be as effective as it can be.

And there's other measures that can be taken now to support our agricultural industry on these fronts. So I just see it as a government just sort of mailing it in, Mr. Speaker, often taking rural Saskatchewan and agricultural producers for granted, not recognizing the hardship and stress that those multi-generational ranchers and farms and producers are facing in those drought-affected areas, Mr. Speaker.

We'll continue to call, as well, for this government to step up and this is — goes hand in hand — is to build out a stronger backstop for livestock producers and to ensure some equity on this front. Crop insurance is, you know, an important program. Business risk-management programs are important programs. But it's past time that this government stepped up and made sure that there was equity and a solid backstop for the livestock sector in this province, Mr. Speaker.

You know, when you look at programs like the livestock price insurance program, Mr. Speaker, it's a good program. It's an important program. But they don't have equity on this front, Mr. Speaker. There needs to be the provincial and federal contribution on this front, Mr. Speaker, to premiums, to ensure equity, and then to drive up subscription to make sure that that backstop can be there for producers if and when they need it. And in the end, this allows us to manage risk in a better way across the entire province and to make sure we're there for those drought-affected livestock producers, Mr. Speaker.

You know, we see other areas as well where this government's just had kid gloves when it comes to dealing with some of the real powerful forces external to Saskatchewan that don't serve our agricultural producers' interests. And you know, I think of the out-of-province anticompetitive meat packers, Mr. Speaker, who act in a way that prevents fairness for livestock producers in Saskatchewan, who also act in ways that prevent more meat processing in Saskatchewan in a real viable way.

These are important things, Mr. Speaker, and we'd expect our provincial government to lean into the anticompetitive behaviours of the meat-packing industry, not roll over, Mr. Speaker, to these packers, Mr. Speaker. It's Saskatchewan producers that this government and that Ag minister should be representing, Mr. Speaker.

And then this ensures fairness for livestock producers when they're selling live cattle, Mr. Speaker, making sure there's fairness on this end. And it puts this province in a position — as we should — to bolster and grow an exceptional meat processing industry across Saskatchewan, both small and large operations that create economic opportunities across rural Saskatchewan, across every part of this province, present value for our livestock sector as well as jobs and economic opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

You know, another area that really should be acted on by this government . . . We hear all the rhetoric. We stand opposed to that federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, as this official opposition, and we'll continue to push on that front to make sure that we have fairness for Saskatchewan. This government, they make a fair amount of noise on this front, Mr. Speaker, but their rhetoric just hasn't delivered, Mr. Speaker. They just haven't been able to get the job done.

And nowhere is that more clear than the farm gate, Mr. Speaker.

Our agricultural producers are stuck with the consequences of that carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. You know, there's no place that it makes less sense than that on the agricultural front, Mr. Speaker, where producers are stuck with the tax on grain drying, they're stuck with the tax on all their inputs, Mr. Speaker. Yet they're doing their best in as sustainable a way as they can to feed the world, Mr. Speaker. And then they're stuck really with that price, Mr. Speaker.

What's incumbent of this government is to step up as well. We want that carbon tax gone, Mr. Speaker, but while it's there, it's wrong that producers are not receiving an offset and some compensation, Mr. Speaker, for their work as environmental stewards. Because producers across Saskatchewan play an invaluable role as stewards of the land and of sequestering carbon through widespread practice and innovation like zero-till, Mr. Speaker. And as I think of our livestock sector and those that are managing grass, Mr. Speaker, and wetlands and native prairie, Mr. Speaker, they're sequestering carbon and playing very important roles. And it's wrong that they're taking all the hits with the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, but not being recognized and compensated for their work as environmental stewards.

The same sort of lackadaisical approach of this government can be said about the need to continue to push to improve transportation performance, particularly on the rail side, Mr. Speaker, for all our exporters, but certainly producers and to ensure fairness.

And a government that's been asleep at the switch in acting on and enforcing the farm land security laws, Mr. Speaker, the Act where you have deals put together that break the spirit and intent of the farm land security laws, Mr. Speaker — foreign illegal land acquisition — but a government that sort of looks the other way, Mr. Speaker. And it's not in the interests of land owners in Saskatchewan and agricultural producers in Saskatchewan for that law to be simply skirted by illegal foreign acquisition, Mr. Speaker. I hear from producers across Saskatchewan. It's past time that this government acted. We've been pushing for years that there be a statutory declaration of beneficial interests attached to your . . . any land purchase, Mr. Speaker, that would ensure enforcement. You work with the Farm Land Security Board to make sure they have other resources and tools to act on this front, Mr. Speaker.

There's a lot more I could go on in this budget, but I'm looking at my good House Leader. And I think she's brilliant, Mr. Speaker, you know, especially when she's giving me the hook and saying, your time is up, buddy. But she's brilliant, Mr. Speaker. And so at this time I will, you know, wind up my comments.

I want to just say to the good people of Saskatchewan, those that I represent, thank you so very much. Please continue to stay in touch in all the ways that you do, and we will work to improve the future in Saskatchewan.

I have a motion . . . There it was. That was the problem. I had it on my desk. It was under a stack of notes. I thought it was on the left side of my desk; I couldn't spot it there, and it's difficult when you're up talking and you're looking for your note that you can't find. But I've got it right here.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I will move:

That all the words after “Assembly” be omitted and that the following be inserted:

does not approve the budgetary policy of the government because it fails to provide cost-of-living relief for families; and further

That the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont moved:

That all the words after “Assembly” be omitted and that the following be inserted:

does not approve the budgetary policy of the government because it fails to provide cost-of-living relief for families; and further

That the Assembly has lost confidence in the government.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to be on my feet to speak to the motion moved by my colleague, the Finance critic, the member from Regina Rosemont.

Before I get into my comments, I just want to give a shout-out and a thanks to Avery Beaudin, my constituency assistant over there on 5th and Elphinstone, bearing the weight of the world it seems like on some days. Things are getting really tough in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, and we see that each and every day in the casework that comes through our doors. And I wouldn't want anyone else kind of having those conversations, building those relationships, and doing that amazing advocacy for the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

I want to give a shout-out as well to Adrian Whitebear and Dagan Viala, my two practicum students who are joining me this season. They've been incredible resources to us in the office. They've been observing proceedings, learning a lot. It's been wonderful to work with them.

And always I want to thank my family — they're my backbone — my partner, Nick, a teacher who was out delivering bannock and coffee on the lines yesterday, and my two little boys, Lew and Éamon, who are the light of my life. And of course my parents, because it's all about the grandparents, Mr. Speaker. We literally could not get through a week without the help that they give us. And my brothers, my siblings, and my sisters-in-law.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, let's just chat about the budget here for a second. You know, this is an election-year budget, and given that, I was pretty stunned at some of the stuff we saw in here. A lot has been said about the fact that there is not a single red cent there in terms of cost-of-living relief for the people of Saskatchewan.

And it was very telling actually to sit through question period

today, Mr. Speaker, and hear that their talking points the day after this budget that they've been touting are the same as their talking points last week. They're talking about how many people they've gotten off the income assistance rolls. They're talking about the carbon tax.

They were talking today about the records of Lorne Calvert and Roy Romanow. I mean, it tells you all you need to know about how proud they are of this budget that that's where they need to go for their talking points.

You know, they are looking very tired over there. They're not looking that happy these days. And I don't know, I guess a lot has also been said about the fact that there's a bit of a brain drain over there. They're definitely losing some of their finest. I think those back benches are going to stay pretty crowded, but we're seeing the loss of a lot of heavy hitters over there. And I don't know if this budget is a reflection of that, but they really seem to have just phoned it in this time.

In terms of commitments that the Sask Party makes during election years, you know — if past behaviour is a predictor of future behaviour — it's tough to have confidence in some of the things that we see promised in this budget. In 2016, for example, we saw promises were made around no tax increases, around certain investments. And then 2017 brought the largest tax increase in Saskatchewan history. The year after the election.

Promises were made in 2016. The following year, promises are broken. The PST was expanded in untold ways: restaurant meals, grocery products, vehicle registration, insurance. And that was really probably the beginning of a lot of the affordability issues we see for Saskatchewan people today.

Again, speaking of cost of living and affordability issues, Mr. Speaker, completely shocking that we don't see even a college try at seeming like they're aware of how much people are struggling out there with gas, with groceries, with the cost of power and energy. Nothing in this budget for those families. We heard from the Finance critic a reference to this Angus Reid poll that shows 6 out of 10 Saskatchewan people are worse off this year than they were last year. They're struggling to pay their bills. They're struggling to put food on the table.

You know, when we look then to the following year, you know, I talked a bit about 2016; 2020 was another election-year budget. Promises were made in that 2020 year. The first thing the Sask Party did in 2021 — or maybe it was two budgets ago — they expanded the PST. When sectors were coming out of the pandemic, they increased property taxes by 8.4 per cent. SaskPower rates went up over 12 per cent. So again, 2020 promises were made. A year later we see what the Sask Party government did.

They have demonstrated through their behaviour that they don't value strong public services. Public education so students are well supported in the classroom. Ensuring that primary care is strong so that people can get a family doctor, can get access to that primary care that they need so that we can relieve the pressures on our emergency rooms.

[11:30]

And now we're seeing those systems falter after 17 years of this government. The problems in education, Mr. Speaker, the problems in education, the labour dispute we're seeing out there — 6, 7,000 people protesting this government on budget day, Mr. Speaker. That's what we saw yesterday. And where does that originate? \$57 million reduction after the 2016 election. 2016, promises were made and then education was cut. And we're seeing the results of that today.

So these most recent announcements, that's why teachers are saying, put it in the contract. That's why teachers are saying, put it in the contract. If you're serious about making investments in the classroom, prove it. Because we don't have confidence that these fancy announcements that you make in election year aren't going to be clawed back the next budget. Because that is the pattern of behaviour that we've seen from this government.

This government, when it comes to this education, this historical labour dispute, they are throwing money at the problem. They aren't actually sitting down with teachers. They aren't actually interested in solving those problems. They want this political problem to go away, so they're making a big, fancy announcement, when we know full well there is nothing stopping them from making that promise at election time and then clawing it back the following year like they always do, Mr. Speaker.

The long waits for surgeries, we have the worst wait times for knee and hip surgeries in the country. Those long wait times, they originate as well from the 2016 budget. Promises were made, and then in 2017, well we saw cuts. We saw a failure to invest.

And we're seeing the results of that now. A failure to keep pace with the investments we need in health care, and people are paying the price. We're now at a point where women have to go to Calgary at 10 times the price, to a Sask Party donor no less, Mr. Speaker.

You know, where do I want to go next, Mr. Speaker? What this party promises at election time, there is daylight, there is a huge chasm between what they promise on election-year budgets and what they ram through the year after, Mr. Speaker. So it's very hard to have confidence in anything they say in this election-year budget.

And you'd think . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, I want to just talk about the debt. I think that's where I want to go next. You would think with the incredible debt that the Sask Party has accumulated during its time, the Premier himself has doubled it during his tenure-ship, and that is only going up with this budget, Mr. Speaker. And you would think that we'd have incredibly reliable public services, you know, that we wouldn't be eighth in the country for per-student funding, that we wouldn't be last in the country for waits around knee and hip surgeries. But no, Mr. Speaker, we've seen debt upon more debt upon more debt.

I mean they want to talk about Lorne Calvert and Roy Romanow. Let's look at the record of NDP premiers. Surplus, Allan Blakeney, surpluses; Tommy Douglas, surpluses; Lorne Calvert, surpluses; Roy Romanow, two deficits after Grant Devine almost bankrupted this province. So if they want to talk about the record, the fiscal record of NDP governments, I will have that debate any day of the week, Mr. Speaker.

More debt today than in any other time in our collective history. More debt accumulated under that Premier than under Grant Devine himself. Conservative premiers, in fact — fun fact, not so fun fact, Mr. Speaker — they have created over 94 per cent of all debt accumulated in Saskatchewan history, 94 per cent. Take that to the bank.

These incredible economic stewards, these conservative governments, Mr. Speaker, they are not . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That number, I will defend that number any day of the week. They are not good fiscal managers. They are not good economic stewards. They are making a mess of things.

And again, you would think our public services were in tip-top shape, but they don't spend on the things that matter. They're not setting us up for the challenges of tomorrow. This year . . . And I heard the member from Regina Rosemont, the Finance critic talk about it. This year, going into next year, we will be spending \$1 billion — that's 1 billion for real, not the tens of thousands we hear from that Education minister — \$1 billion servicing this debt. That is the record of the Sask Party government, \$1 billion servicing their debt and the debt accumulated by previous conservative governments, Mr. Speaker. It's growth that works for debtors and lenders.

And the Saskatchewan people are left holding the bag. They are stuck with the price of that, Mr. Speaker. And this from a government who was elected in 2007 with a promise that they would balance every single budget.

Oh, speaking of election promises, can we believe what they say in election years, Mr. Speaker? That is the question that I'm putting out there to the people of Saskatchewan. From the Sask Party government, that when elected in 2007, said they would balance every single budget, under this Premier they've balanced one — one — Mr. Speaker.

It's not just the debt. That's not the only bad news story here. The economic record of the Sask Party is poor — second-worst economic growth in Canada — under this Premier. When we look at this Premier's tenure, the last six years, second-worst rate of economic growth. It's stagnant, Mr. Speaker. As of January 2024 second worst in terms of jobs growth under this Premier, the worst minimum wage in the country, the worst immigrant retention rates, Mr. Speaker. This is the economic record of this conservative government.

And I heard the Finance critic talk about the GDP. They have a 1 per cent, then a flat line. That's what they predict for this budget. And we've already seen flat growth from this government. That means that this Premier is presiding over the first drop in the quality of life for Saskatchewan people since we saw in the Great Depression, Mr. Speaker. That is their economic record.

And why is this? Why is this debt accumulated? But still we see our public servants . . . We see health care redlining. We see cuts to education, so we have this historical labour dispute. Why? The question is, why? Where is this money going? It's being squandered.

They spend foolishly with their friends, with their donors. Sweetheart deals, Mr. Speaker. 11.6 million to settle a lawsuit

with their biggest corporate donor over that mess in Wascana Park, just so the details of that deal wouldn't see the light of day — 11.6 million. Fourteen million for a new marshals service during an affordability crisis? My God, Mr. Speaker. \$1 million paid out to Stephen Harper over the last six years, Mr. Speaker. Twelve million to Washington to lobby, Mr. Speaker. Forty-two million for their trade offices that they like to fly to. Two hundred and forty million for the AIMS [administrative information management system] computer program that still isn't online. Twelve million in subway billboards out of country, out of province. Like, how does an ad in a Dubai subway help the people of Saskatchewan put food on their table, Mr. Speaker?

God knows how many millions of dollars have been spent on court actions and emergency sessions because they decided to invoke the notwithstanding clause to distract from their record of failure, to scapegoat kids, Mr. Speaker. Hundreds of thousands in billboards attacking teachers. I mean the list goes on and on, the list of waste and mismanagement.

And these economic failures have ripple effects — the worst child poverty rates in the country; the worst domestic violence rates in the country, Mr. Speaker; record overdoses; homelessness on the rise; surging rates of food bank use, Mr. Speaker. And I want to talk just for a minute about these investments in social services. A buck a day for the folks on SIS, although they've allotted about 7 million for that. And when you do the math, they're about 5 million short, so going to have questions about that.

Same with SAID. They're promising \$55 more a month for folks on SAID. Again I did the math. There's an \$8 million shortfall there, so more smoke and mirrors? I don't know, Mr. Speaker. I will have questions for the minister.

Three per cent to CBOs [community-based organization]. That's not going to dig them out of the rut that they're in, Mr. Speaker. So I will have more to say on my critic areas. You know, I've had less than 24 hours with this budget, but I can see that it is not what we need to meet the moment, Mr. Speaker.

And I will just say that, you know, Saskatchewan people are a caring people. We want better for ourselves, not just for ourselves but for our neighbour, Mr. Speaker, for our neighbours. We want for working people to get ahead, for young and old to live in comfort. We want people to have a safe roof over their head, and so far this Sask Party government has failed to deliver on those fronts.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I'm pleased to second the motion moved by the Finance critic and the member from Regina Rosemont. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and hon. colleagues. It is indeed a pleasure to second the motion of this budget. I want to begin by offering my congratulations to the Minister of Finance. Her seventh budget; her 17th budget that she's been a part of in this Saskatchewan Party government, and so much, so much to be proud of certainly. So let's give her a hand, absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk, like we do in most budget reply speeches, and talk about our constituency and talk about our family. And I've been here for quite some time. I want to talk about a little bit of history as well.

We've got a great constituency in Saskatoon Willowgrove. But it's when we look back. And I just think that we in the House and members here and certainly the media and people at home have become too complacent. You know, we look at things like \$100 million schools and say, oh that's nice, and new hospitals and say, that's nice. Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to use my speech to talk about what it was like when I was first elected. And it was very different back then, and I'm going to use some very specific examples.

So to begin with, talking about my constituency, Saskatoon Willowgrove, one of the fastest growing areas of the province, and indeed I'm very, very proud of the residents there. And you know, it's in the city of Saskatoon that is vastly growing as well, recently celebrated over 300,000 people, population of our largest city . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, that deserves the congratulations. Growth of over 14,000 people year over year. As members would know, that's almost a new constituency in the city of Saskatoon just with the growth year over year.

I want to talk about the neighbourhoods that are . . . consist of my constituency — Evergreen, Aspen Ridge, Arbor Creek, Erindale, Willowgrove, Brighton — thriving, thriving in residential, thriving in business. Every time I have an opportunity, if I'm here for a week and I drive home and I go back to my constituency, I see new houses that have sprung up. And I think about those new people. Where are they from? Are they from across Canada? Are they from around the world? Each one has a story to tell about why they chose Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada as somewhere to live.

We have infrastructure, we have needs, but certainly we've had announcements made as well. Population growth, and I have to give credit to many of the new Canadians. They come into the constituency. They buy homes. They build homes. They build businesses, Mr. Speaker, and that is great to see. Yeah.

You know, I want to also, you know, talk about the new businesses and the entrepreneurial spirit of those new Canadians as well. They're not sitting at home on the couch, no, no, no. They're out there raising capital and buying businesses and establishing franchises and things like that. That's just wonderful, wonderful to see.

Before I get too far into my speech, I want to talk about my family. And certainly my daughter, Paige, she's in Hamilton, Ontario. She's pursuing a master's degree at McMaster University, trying to get into med school although that's very tough. But she's working away at it. But she's coming home after exams to visit dad and mom and other friends as well, and she's going to come to the legislature in late April to visit us here. It's been a long time since she was here as a young child, that's for sure.

[11:45]

My son Carter is a financial planner in Saskatoon, working for Mallard Wealth. And yesterday, Brian Mallard was here taking

in the budget and certainly I know in talking to him afterward, he was very, very pleased with what he heard and saw. Carter is a new homeowner. His girlfriend is a nurse at the children's hospital. I'll have more to say about the children's hospital in a little bit.

Carter has also had an opportunity to benefit from sports. Sports has been talked about on the floor of the legislature. He was in track and field, and now he's already giving back by coaching track and field for First Nations and others. He plays hockey, plays football, and like his dad he's a sports fan. He's a Jets fan, a Riders fan, a Blades fan, a Rush fan, and this year, a Berries fan. The Saskatoon Berries baseball team is coming, so we're excited about that.

My wife, Trish, she's a manager of major giving at St. Paul's Hospital Foundation, raising millions of dollars in foundations that do so much for our province, and you know, fostering relationships with people and encouraging them to give back to their hospital and to give back to their province.

We learned earlier this year at one of our receptions that the 32 foundations in Saskatchewan raised \$136 million. The hospital foundation raised that, Mr. Speaker. It's great work and Trish is contributing to that. She's also keeping up with the kids and what they're doing.

I want to highlight my CAs [constituency assistant] and my communications assistants in my constituency. Jacquie Klebeck is a talented writer. She manages and distributes *Provincial Point of View*, my newsletter that goes out to thousands of people every week. And really people across North America get a snapshot on Saskatchewan. They learn a little bit about my community, our community, our city, and our province as well. And she's a pretty good baker and cake maker as well, as we saw yesterday.

Brianne Toupin is my constituency assistant. She's the friendly voice on the phone when people call to say how well we're doing. So she takes those calls with a smile on her face each and every day. She's a mother to three children and they're very involved in school and church and sports. So to Brianne, thank you for all that you do. It is much, much appreciated.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the theme of this budget: classrooms, care, and communities. I want to talk about classrooms to begin with. And this has been a very, very, very good budget for the people of Saskatoon Willowgrove, but it's not the first time that we've had four schools announced for one constituency. I'll go back a number of years where St. Nicholas School, Sylvia Fedoruk, Willowgrove, and Holy Family were all introduced in the same year. Mr. Speaker, those schools are there. They're thriving. They're educating our students. And it's just a great pleasure again to have history repeat itself with this budget. And I want to talk about the four schools that are coming to the Saskatoon Willowgrove constituency as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, as I alluded to earlier, I want to talk about the history. When I was first here, Mr. Speaker, when I first came to be an MLA in 2003, my first interaction with a school was on the prospect of a school being closed — Cardinal Leger School in College Park in Saskatoon. You know, it was just troubling for me that the school boards and the provincial government were looking at actually closing a school.

So I went to the meetings. I looked in the eyes of the parents and the teachers and the students and said, if there's anything that I can do about it, we're not going to close this school. So it wasn't only me. It was parents that came and got involved in the community councils, and you know, my family was right there getting involved in making sure that that school wasn't closed like so many were closed under the NDP at that time. And that was in 2003.

Fast forward to about 2006, Mr. Speaker, and there was a little bit of growth taking place in the province. It was only happening in a few areas, you know, and it only happened in a few areas, Mr. Speaker. But one of those areas was Arbor Creek, an area that was actually, actually growing, Mr. Speaker. But I want to tell you a little bit of a story about Arbor Creek.

What we had to do there was go house to house, if you can believe it, throughout the constituency to try to convince the government at the time that there actually was some growth. So what did we do, Mr. Speaker? We went house to house and we asked people, how many children in your house? And then we put a smile on our face and, maybe you're thinking of having one more? Because we wanted to make sure that those numbers were there, Mr. Speaker. But that indeed was a true story, and that's what was happening in 2003. The government didn't believe that there was growth happening, but there actually was. And they almost closed Cardinal Leger School if it wasn't for the parents and teachers and the community leaders.

Centennial Collegiate. I want to tell you another story. It was very rare at that time for the NDP to build schools. In fact the NDP candidate — first against me — and myself, we were both on a committee to lobby the government to build a high school. They didn't believe us again that there was some growth in the province and that they needed it. So the NDP candidate and I and other community leaders were there, and you know, it just shows what you had to do to convince the NDP government at the time that that's what we needed to do.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008 this government has committed \$2.5 billion towards infrastructure projects, which includes 60 brand new or replacement schools, 30 major renovation projects, \$48 million for 68 new relocatables that go into schools like St. Joseph collegiate, like Centennial Collegiate in northeast Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, this is how you manage growth. This is how you prepare for growth. And this is what . . . now growth is expected in our province.

Mr. Speaker, this budget is absolutely outstanding when it comes to school capital. Two new high schools in the Brighton, Holmwood, Willowgrove areas of Saskatoon, servicing Arbor Creek, Erindale, Evergreen, Aspen Ridge areas of Saskatoon. The high schools are projected to be amongst the largest in the province. That and the Regina schools as well will be the largest in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the residents of Saskatoon Willowgrove, I want to say well done, Education minister. Well done, Finance minister. Well done, SaskBuilds minister. And well done, Premier. Well done.

These schools will combine with the announcement that was made by the Minister of Government Relations and the mayor of Saskatoon on November 16th to combine for a new aquatic centre in northeast Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, a combined one-

quarter-billion-dollar investment for one of the fastest growing areas of the province. Well done.

It's been remarkable the support for our classrooms. But, Mr. Speaker, again, let's review history. What was happening before 2008? The NDP closed — and it's been said many times — 176 schools, an average of one school closing per month during their 16 long year tenure as a government of Saskatchewan. And it doesn't end there, Mr. Speaker.

They lost 400 teachers between 2001 and 2007. From 1997 — and I see the opposition is very quiet on this all of a sudden — from 1997 to 2007, K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] enrolment in Saskatchewan declined by 16 per cent. And at that time, the NDP government provided zero dollars for preventative maintenance renewal in funding.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, we talk about history, but we can talk about today. What does the member today, the one sitting in the House from Saskatoon University, what does she have to say about the growth and what's happening here? And I quote:

... 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 [they should] spend a little less time building ...

Really, Mr. Speaker. That is a quote directly from the member from Saskatoon University.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there you have it. That is the NDP position today on building schools. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't care if you're Bob the Builder or Scott the builder or Jeremy the builder or Ken the builder, I will put up our record on education capital against the NDP any day of the week.

And we're not done, Mr. Speaker. This budget contains more for preliminary assessment and scoping for two new elementary schools for the Holmwood and Brighton area of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. You know, what a better way to show the confidence in the growth of the province and know that we expect more growth to come.

These are projects, Mr. Speaker, again — and it's been said before, and the Finance minister said it yesterday, and many will say it again — we can only do these projects with a strong economy. You need a government that can govern us with a strong economy to be able to do this. And I'll talk about this a little bit more.

This budget delivers the largest ever new investment in three of the most important areas to Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan's future: classrooms, care, and community. I've spoken about classrooms. I want to now speak a little bit about ... turn it to care.

This budget delivers the largest ever increase in health care funding, up \$726 million — or more than 10 per cent — to 7.6 billion. Again I'll put that record any day of the week up against any government, whether it's the NDP over there or the Liberals or whoever came up in question period today.

Saskatchewan Health Authority received \$4.7 billion, or 5.6 per cent increase compared to last year. Mr. Speaker, we have made great strides in recruiting and retaining health care professionals through the health care human resources action plan. Since September of 2021, 262 physicians have been recruited to Saskatchewan from outside the country — 107 family physicians and 155 specialists. Incredible numbers, Mr. Speaker. More work needs to be done for sure, but it's a competitive situation across the country. But, Mr. Speaker, we are leading the way in attracting physicians to our province and our country. And you know, it's a real shout-out to our two Health ministers for again a job well done, job well done.

I could go on and on about this budget's incredible commitment to health care, but I want to spend some time talking about one of this government's greatest achievements, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. Members here and those watching will remember that prior to the Saskatchewan Party government taking office in 2007, only two provinces, Saskatchewan and PEI [Prince Edward Island], didn't have a children's hospital, again something we in here and the media and others sometimes take for granted.

But again, we have a wonderful children's hospital. But when we were in opposition and we were after the government, we lobbied long and hard, petitions every day, lobbied the government to build a children's hospital. And what did they say? Ah, it would be duplication. We don't need it. It would be duplication.

Well, Mr. Speaker, with great pleasure I want to, I believe for the first time in this Legislative Assembly, I would like to present some of the statistics about the care that the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital provides: 80,376 total visits for babies and children since its opening, representing 499 Saskatchewan communities served; 29,342 emergency room visits, Mr. Speaker; 968 neonatal intensive care unit cases with an average stay of 31.1 days, Mr. Speaker; 1,498 mental health ER [emergency room] visits; 652 pediatric intensive care stays with an average of 15 days, 62 per cent of those from outside of Saskatoon; 2,940 pediatric oncology and hematology visits; 3,967 pediatric surgeries, again 52.6 per cent from outside Saskatoon. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the most exciting stats, 5,305 babies born at the children's hospital from opening till today.

[12:00]

That's something that we're very, very proud of as a government, and certainly we don't take all the credit for that. We look to early pioneers like Dr. Laurence Givelichian who spoke to the previous government, spoke to our government and talked about the need. And, of course, Ms. Brynn Boback-Lane from the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation. Now we recently learned this year that Brynn's going to be retiring, but she can do that with great satisfaction, knowing that she was the impetus behind partnering with this government to build what we can all be proud of, every member in this Assembly can be proud of, the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. Once again, none of this would be possible without the growing and thriving economy that is Saskatchewan today.

Mr. Speaker, moving on now to communities. Sometime this year, and we heard this yesterday from the Minister of Finance,

our population will reach 1.25 million people. And we heard today in question period as well it was under a million when we became government. I believe it was fluttering around 997,000 people.

Much of that growth again is happening in my city, in Saskatoon, and in the northeast part of Saskatoon. But it's also happening in colleagues' constituencies as well: Saskatoon Westview, Saskatoon Southeast, Saskatoon Northwest, Stonebridge-Dakota, Silverspring-Sutherland, and other constituencies as well, you know. And, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly happening, and we're very, very proud of that.

Cities, towns, villages, rural municipalities throughout Saskatchewan — and we heard this very clearly at the SARM convention last week — will receive a record \$42.4 million increase in municipal revenue sharing. This is an increase of 14.2 per cent from the year before and a total, Mr. Speaker, of \$340.2 million in unconditional support for municipalities in the province.

Again, Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to look back to the days of when the NDP were in government. I had some good friends back then. I was the Finance critic for a number of years, not as long as this Finance critic because we became government. But you know, when I look back at ministers, Finance ministers — and again they are good friends and they tried their best, like Harry Van Mulligen and Andrew Thomson — but they would go to the SARM convention every year, they would go to the SUMA convention and talk about the need for revenue sharing. But they just quite couldn't get it done. So maybe next year they're going to do it. Maybe next year. Even that election before we became government they said, we're just going to get around to it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what do we have here today? In fact one of those Finance ministers, he didn't deliver revenue sharing. You know what he delivered for the people of Saskatchewan? A 9 per cent PST. So the member just before me was talking about the largest tax increase ever in Saskatchewan. Well I would submit that happened that day when that NDP minister hiked the PST to 9 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this money for communities again is driven entirely by the strength of our economy. And it's based on dependable and a predictable formula introduced by our government that sees municipalities, large and small, across the province receive a share of the PST. So, Mr. Speaker, as our population grows and people spend more money in our province, Saskatchewan communities directly benefit from that growth.

Saskatoon benefits from that growth. Some \$62.5 million will be given to the city of Saskatoon, an increase of 7.8 million or 14.3 per cent to the largest city in our province, Mr. Speaker, with very few strings attached, or really no strings attached whatsoever. But make no mistake, Saskatoon has some big decisions to make. And I'm very proud to be the provincial representative on the downtown event and entertainment district. It was a great, great opportunity to serve on that.

And I was very, very pleased under Premier Wall to chair the build committee of Mosaic Stadium. It's a major decision that had to be made at the time. But this past summer I had the opportunity to talk to some people from PCL, and that stadium

that we have — that we're proud of, that has won Rick Hansen awards for accessibility — would cost us double today. So that's what you get when you kick the can down the road, and certainly we don't want to see that happening. And I want to thank, you know, people like Jim Hopson, our friend Jim Hopson, who is having his struggles these days but is very, very much committed, did so much for that stadium. And of course Premier Brad Wall, he was right behind that all the time.

And you know, the members opposite, they've come to start quoting Premier Brad Wall in the House here. But we hear some of the stories, but we don't hear all of the stories. Like Brad told a great story about luggage, about people who were graduating in Saskatchewan under the NDP, that the number one gift that parents and relatives were giving their children, their students that are graduating from university and post-secondary college, was a piece of luggage and saying, good luck in Calgary. Good luck wherever you are going. That's the attitude that we had under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. And you know, it changed so much. And Brad Wall has said it so well, and I encourage people to hear transcripts of that story.

Well Saskatoon, as I mentioned earlier, is at a decision point, as Regina was a number of years ago. And you know, we're looking at a downtown entertainment district. Also you know, we look at the historic Saskatoon mayors like Senator Sid Buckwold, Cliff Wright, Don Atchison, they all made generational decisions to improve our city. Moving the rail yards; building Midtown Plaza; Centennial Auditorium which is now TCU Place; the building of Sask Place, the SaskTel Centre were all generational activities. Now it's up to the current mayor and the city council to do the same. But by providing revenue sharing, the province is helping the city to make those tough decisions.

Well, Mr. Speaker, my time is getting short, but I do want to touch on a couple of other things. This budget provides \$193.8 million for Saskatchewan Polytech to start the building of a new Saskatoon campus. And again, that's something that every member of this House can be proud of. This was recently enhanced by an additional \$15 million from Nutrien, one of our great corporate partners. And I bet there'll be more corporations stepping up to the table to help in this regard.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to take time right now to acknowledge the minister of Post-Secondary Education for his good work on this project and his good work in this Assembly, as he said that he will not be running again. And you know, I want to take the opportunity at this time to thank all those members on both sides of the House that will not be running again and for their contribution.

And I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your contribution. It'll be a quarter of a century here, much like the Finance minister and the Minister of Government Relations. Our province is 119 years old and you can be proud of being able to serve in this legislature along with the Finance minister and the Minister of Government Relations for 25 of those 119 years. So this isn't a Don Morgan joke or anything like that, it's real numbers. And thank you for your service. And to all members on both sides of the House, thank you for your service over the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some more post-secondary news. The graduate retention program, and we heard this referred

to very briefly in the budget speech yesterday, but some 81,600 students have benefited from the graduate retention program to date and have contributed to our amazing population growth. It just doesn't happen, you know? It just doesn't happen out of the blue, but with programs like this we are encouraging people to stay in Saskatchewan or at least have the option of staying in Saskatchewan and helping to grow our province.

Mr. Speaker, you know, we lost a lot of our best resource, our young people, in those NDP years, and we are committed on this side of the House to never have that happen again in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Another notable statistic is the report from Stats Canada that says — and even the members opposite are going to Stats Canada there because their research isn't too good on their own, but we do that too sometimes, you know, Stats Canada — 18,700 new full-time jobs were created year over year in the province of Saskatchewan. And the Finance minister said this yesterday: that's one new full-time job created in Saskatchewan every 28 minutes.

And you know, she put a little bit of a spin on it, but I'm going to put a little bit of a different spin on it. Every 28 minutes. So when we're sitting here in the legislature and question period begins and we hear about the doom and gloom of the NDP for those 25 minutes, Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House can be very proud to say, you know, in 28 minutes one job has been created in Saskatchewan. So there actually is some good that comes out from question period.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say, I did say earlier I was the opposition Finance critic when I was early in my career here. And you know, it's not an easy job. And it was great to see the member's family here. I know his son was here, and it brought back memories of when my kids were here. And it was great to see the Finance minister's grandchildren and children right here and so proud, so proud of their grandma.

But I was the Finance critic for three years, and I think the member opposite's got me beat by many, many years, and he'll probably be there for many, many years into the future, Mr. Speaker. But what you learn as a Finance critic is you can't be over-the-top critical, you know? And he should know that by the time, you know, he's delivered all of that. And that's what he was yesterday. He was just over-the-top critical.

But if you're going to do that, you have to provide your own solutions. You have to answer the hard questions. If you're going to get rid of the gas tax, how are you going to replace that money? Oh, oh, well we're going to find it somewhere, you know. There's lots of waste and mismanagement. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough.

And what we learned in opposition, both at budget time and all that, is you have to prove to the people of Saskatchewan that you've done your homework, that you have the math done and that, you know, not only be critical of the government of the day but tell people what you would do and what you would do better. And that's, Mr. Speaker, what the opposition failed at miserably both yesterday and today.

Mr. Speaker, it's been truly an honour to be asked to second the

budget, the 2024-25 budget. Yesterday we gathered with family, colleagues, friends, esteemed members of communities throughout this great province to continue to move Saskatchewan forward as we focused on the future of classrooms, health care, and community support.

In the classrooms young minds are nurtured and empowered to become the leaders and innovators of tomorrow. Health care facilities in our province stand as bastions of healing, providing vital care and comfort to all those in need. And within our communities the spirit of solidarity and support thrives, fostering resilience and belonging to all members of society.

Together these priorities of our government are the foundation of a prosperous and compassionate society. And I do want to mention compassionate, because sometimes members opposite accuse us of not being compassionate. And be very, very sure, each member on this side of the House is compassionate. But we're also realists to understand if you want to be compassionate, you have to oversee an economy that is growing and thriving so you have more money for health care, you have more money for education, and you have more money for social services. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, that's what this budget does.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close with a quote from one of Canada's greatest prime ministers, the Rt. Hon. Brian Mulroney. He said, "With hope, optimism, and a belief in the potential of your country you can drive us towards a better future." Mr. Speaker, truer words have never been spoken and we believe that for our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to second the motion on this future-looking budget. I want to thank you. I want to thank the Premier and the Minister of Finance for this opportunity. Mr. Speaker, with this budget Saskatchewan indeed does have a very bright future. Thank you.

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

[12:15]

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's another great day in Riversdale, Mr. Speaker, and with this budget not just Riversdale — although I will highlight some very great things for Riversdale — but Saskatoon and the entire province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I just want to say what a great history lesson and great speech from my colleague from Saskatoon Willowgrove just really highlighting what it was like under the NDP and the changes made and the fights that our colleagues that were elected . . . with the Saskatchewan Party opposition that fought for change and in 2007 ultimately had the incredible honour of forming government in this province. So thank you so much to the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove for a really, really good lesson in the way it used to be.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say a few thank yous. My family is so important to me, Mr. Speaker, and I talk about them in this House whenever I get a chance because my children are the most important thing in my life, Mr. Speaker. And I've had the opportunity to have a few of them come here. I had my son here

just recently that I was able to introduce with a friend of his. And the Premier was very gracious with some time and even on a very busy day with SARM, and came out and got a picture and had a quick chat with them.

But you know, my son is just an amazing young man, Mr. Speaker. He's self-proclaimed that he is taller, smarter, and much better looking than me, and probably all true, Mr. Speaker, but you know, it's . . . Well he's a very smart kid. You know, he's come such a long way. And he was in Edwards School of Business for a couple of years, two and a half years, and decided last summer to start his own business.

And you know, the young man, 21 years old, started door knocking, started a window cleaning business and did really well last year, Mr. Speaker. And I'll never forget his second day in his new job, his new business. And he was very frustrated. In fact we were sitting in this House and my phone kept ringing. And I have a kind of deal with my kids that if they phone me three times in a row, it's important. I've got to talk to them.

So I left the House for a few minutes and talked to my son. And he was very down. He had knocked over a hundred doors and he had not got one sale, and this is over two days. And so, you know, I had a little discussion with him about that and kind of related it to a number of different things, but one was, you know, door knocking in Riversdale.

And you know, when I first started running in 2014, campaigning, I had a very similar experience. And it was real tough on a person. And this job, honestly, anyone that puts their name forward for any type of election, be it municipal, be it with minor communities, school boards, you know, provincial, federal, whatever it is, like I really believe that, you know, good on you and great for taking a step forward. Doesn't matter which side of the House you're from. It is really admirable that you put your name forward and try and do better things in the community.

And so just getting back to my son quickly, I had a really good chat with him. And it was . . . I thought, you know, maybe change your approach a little bit. Because this is something that I did in my door knocking in the early years and even currently, is if I'm having a bit of a rough patch I move to a different area and look at my approach. What am I saying at the doors? Is it resonating? Is it not?

And so I had a little chat with my son. And in only a couple minutes I came back in for session and it wasn't 10 minutes, Mr. Speaker, that I got a text and he made his first sale. And from then it was just . . . he's always got this positive outlook. But you know, he needed just that little bit of encouragement. And I think we all need that from time to time. And my son has been such an amazing encouragement to me and really was part of that story. And just so I'm so very thankful for the relationship I have with my kids, and you know, just talking about my son currently.

My daughter Morgan, she's been in this House before and I was able to introduce her in the House before. And, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about and I'm going to talk about this more in my speech, but we've talked about, or I've talked about in this House my daughter's struggle with mental health and her attempted suicide.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's so many good things in this budget that

I'm going to get to and I just want to touch on one right now. Because I know how . . . when I told my daughter about this, how important this was, and it's our 24-7 rapid access to counselling, Mr. Speaker, in 24 locations. I had the pleasure of making these announcements at three different places in the province, Mr. Speaker, through Family Service Saskatchewan, through Nevaro, through Catholic Family Services in Regina. It's such a great program, Mr. Speaker.

And I know the Minister of Education has tried to phone in to this service. I as well have, Mr. Speaker, and there is very quick appointments. And if there's a problem, if someone's thinking about suicide or anything around that, they're immediately directed somewhere, Mr. Speaker, and it's that access is . . . I've heard time and time again working with youth for over 35 years, how important that access is, to have it right away. And you know, when I explained that to my daughter . . .

And part of this rapid access to counselling service, Mr. Speaker, is the suicide loss support program. And you know, I know that I'm sure the NDP opposition is going to find ways of criticizing this program. But I will tell you, when someone experiences suicide or if someone is a victim of the surrounding community of suicide, Mr. Speaker, it is so very important that those services are available, because everyone around that person that has attempted their life or been part of that suicide is affected. And, Mr. Speaker, preventing another suicide is a big piece of this, and it's really breaking that cycle. But more importantly, giving tools to the people that are surrounding, you know, the people who are struggling with mental health and addictions, giving them those supports I think is just so very important.

And I'm just so very proud of our former minister of Mental Health and Addictions, our now Minister of Health, and our current Minister of Mental Health and Addictions with the amazing strides that we have taken as a government to really help the people that need the help the most. So just thought I'd touch on that one.

Mr. Speaker, I do have three children. My oldest daughter is in Vancouver, talked about her a number of times. I really want to try and get her down to Regina. She lives in Vancouver as I've said, and I'm going to try and get her down hopefully for a question period and to meet some of my colleagues and actually experience this first-hand . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I'm not sure what they got going over there, but I'm going to ignore it right now. And Danielle is . . . It's really neat when you raise your kids. You do what you do. I do what I grew up with.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about this many times, but my mom and dad always helped people. In fact my dad even a number of times would bring a homeless person home. And my dad would wake up at 4 o'clock and go to work, and my mom's sitting there going, well what do I do now? But fortunately I had four older siblings so they could help my mom out. But my dad was just always that caring individual.

And I've tried to do that in my community, Mr. Speaker, which is really why I've wanted to this job. And to see my oldest daughter Danielle work with kids that are mentally or physically disabled in different ways . . . she works with kids with autism, helps them learn how to read, helps them really integrate into our school system and everything else, Mr. Speaker. And it just

makes me so proud to see that continue. And I know my mom and dad are not around anymore, but I know they would be so proud of the examples and more importantly the actions that my kids have taken. And so I'm just so very proud of my kids, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to also echo the words of my colleague from Saskatoon Willowgrove and thank our Finance minister for the incredible budget. I listen to some of the comments from the NDP opposition, Mr. Speaker, and I really sometimes wonder if they read a different budget, or I don't know. We feel like it's an alternate reality because there are so many good things. And I don't know how they can't take a minute and actually find the good things in their community, because there is good things in this budget for every community in our cities and our province, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to thank the Minister of Finance for not only this budget and the previous six budgets she's delivered, but her incredible 25 years of service to our government and to this province, Mr. Speaker. Serving is not the easiest job at the best of times, but I can say when a budget like this is delivered, our community voices have been heard. It's a very incredible budget because we see what we've heard at the doors and what we actually bring forward. And our Premier and our cabinet and our Finance minister have to do all the heavy lifting of putting that all together with the numbers and put it through in a budget. So I absolutely thank her for her service.

We do have a number of members and ministers retiring this year, Mr. Speaker. And I do want to make a couple of mentions to them. We have the Minister of Energy currently, Mr. Speaker, and formerly the minister of Education, has been . . . And really all members on this side have been great friends and support group to me, Mr. Speaker. But you know, the Minister of Energy currently has been just an incredible source of support for me. And I have questions for him and he's just been right there. And if he doesn't have it right away, he'll get back to me. But just such an incredible support. I've been fortunate to sit beside him in caucus, and just really thank him for his service and wish him all the best in his future, Mr. Speaker.

And the Minister of Government Relations, just another incredible support, Mr. Speaker, and another ear that he's always been there for me to help me in whatever it is that I'm looking to do through government. Just gave me some advice and just be a friendly ear from time to time as well. And I really wish him all the best as well.

Former . . . I'm going to call him the former minister of everything, the member from Saskatoon Southeast, who everybody knows is our local practical joker, which . . . I mean I'm trying to fill his shoes a little bit. But you know, we're definitely going to miss him as well, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank him for his faith in me when I was first elected and giving me the opportunity to work on a number of files with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] that were vehicle related. It was just incredible to be able to be a part of that and actually in some ways take the lead on that. So I thank him for that and his 20 . . . boy I don't know how many years. I can't remember how many years he's been serving, just like he can't remember how many years he was married. Anyways for his 25 years of service, Mr. Speaker.

And the member from Yorkton as well, Mr. Speaker. He moved into my office complex and ended up right beside me. And I just so much appreciate his friendship and support, you know, through all the challenges that I've had over the last number of years, and just been an amazing support and friend, Mr. Speaker.

And the member from Arm River, who has cost me thousands of dollars trying to keep up to him in outfits and shoes. But no, what a great colleague we have in the member from Arm River. And we're really going to miss you and obviously wish you all the best in your future as well.

The member from Carrot River, what can I say about him? I don't know. Lots. But I'm excited to hear his speech coming up next. But I think he's responsible for my weight gain when I'm in Regina. There's no doubt with all the great treats that he brings here. And I actually love listening to him speak, Mr. Speaker, in this House because he's just got a lot of experience and he's been a great representation for his community.

The member from Canora-Pelly, who has been an incredible job with our new-coming Ukrainian families, Mr. Speaker, and just a good friend, great to hang out with. Lots of stories and even a car guy, which is, you know, obviously a great thing in my books.

[12:30]

The member from Batoche, who just has a wealth of history knowledge, and if you ever want a history lesson, he is absolutely happy to deliver that. And I've been trying to get him to do a speech, Mr. Speaker, in auctioneer style, because that's what he used to do. But I haven't heard that yet; maybe this time.

And certainly yourself, Mr. Speaker, with your 25 years of service. And a lot of people don't know this, but Mr. Speaker was at my first nomination and actually spoke at my first nomination. So thank you so much for your service.

I do want to mention Lyle Stewart, Mr. Speaker. He's been a good friend and mentor to me since I got elected and, you know, he's one tough man, that Lyle Stewart, and wish him all the best. I chat with him on a regular basis and he's just one of the most positive guys that I know.

And when I'm talking about positive, I don't want to forget — and I never will forget — but my former seatmate, Derek Meyers, Mr. Speaker. You know, I think of him often as he was in the same office as well. And I just want to do a special shout-out to all of the colleagues that are not going to be with us in the 2028 election. So thank you so much for all your service.

I want to talk a little bit about . . . Obviously I want to touch on our theme, Mr. Speaker, and that's this budget and what it's about — classrooms, care, and communities. And when we talk about that, the Premier gave us a really easy way of understanding this. It's the classrooms, 9 per cent record lift; care, health care in our communities, in our cities, and our province, 10 per cent lift; and, Mr. Speaker, 14 per cent record investment in our communities. And that speaks very well in the communities, and certainly at SARM, and lots of my colleagues have been talking to their RMs and their municipalities and it has just went fantastic.

So I do have a few things I want to talk about. The NDP

opposition always asks why there's nothing new in affordability. And, Mr. Speaker, affordability, like we have the second-lowest utility bundle in Canada. And a very important thing to remember, and it's brought up often, but it's over 2 billion in affordability measures in our budget each and every year, taking 112,000 people off the provincial income tax roll, Mr. Speaker — 112,000 people. That provides over \$720 million in actual annual tax savings to the citizens of our province — \$720 million annual tax savings to our citizens.

Our family of four pays no income tax on their first 53,345 of income, and this is only due, Mr. Speaker, to our strong economy. This is what helps create these affordability measures that are not one-time, short interjections, but they are year-on-year affordability measures in each and every budget, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't think this can be spoke of enough, because this . . . When I talk to my community and they understand what we've done, these are the measures that they want to see, not a temporary relief. So I'm so thankful that we do this, Mr. Speaker.

The 2024 budget, something that gets overlooked — 2024-2025 budget — we are helping families. And the Premier alluded to it earlier, the Saskatchewan employment incentive program to make life more affordable for working families with lower incomes.

And, Mr. Speaker, I looked into this one quite a bit deeper, not just the line item in the budget. And I brought it up and I printed it out and I have a number of items on there. This, basically, program supports families with lower income — working families — of up to \$600 per month in additional funding for them, Mr. Speaker. This program is really helping families that need it the most. And again it's made possible with our strong economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about health care. And our health care budget, as we know, is a record \$7.6 billion, Mr. Speaker, with, as I've said, a 10 per cent increase in spending this budget. And these investments include significant investments in Saskatoon Riversdale.

I've had many conversations with the executive at St. Paul's, and Corey Miller was here yesterday. I had a great conversation with him. And they were so excited about the expansion and the safety renewal of the front entrance of St. Paul's Hospital, Mr. Speaker. I heard it a number of times from them and was able to bring this to ministers and explain the urgency and what it really meant to the community. And it's so exciting to see that being built, Mr. Speaker.

The urgent care centre that's almost done in Regina — I'm not sure where it's at; 90 per cent complete, maybe closer — and one right in my community, partnered with the Ahtahkakoop First Nation, Mr. Speaker. And this is such another incredible investment that is happening right in the Riversdale community.

Another big thing I have to touch on is, and I'm hearing this more and more, is our commitment to mental health and addictions in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't be more proud of the investments in this budget, an increase to \$574 million. And I work with community-based organizations and people in Saskatoon and around the province, and talk about our

commitment because our commitment to 500 additional treatment spaces. And I've said this earlier, but it's so important that we have those spaces ready and available when people need them. And, Mr. Speaker, we're getting there. We're almost at 200 spaces already in the 2023-2024 year. And I am so proud of that investment, Mr. Speaker. And that's not only 28 days, but expanding that to help the people for as long as they need to get them the help they need and increase these outcomes, and really, Mr. Speaker, get our children and our family members back into the community where they want to be and where their family wants them. And I'm just so proud of that investment, Mr. Speaker.

I am going to wrap up my comments as I'm getting a little carried away. And I always have fun in these speeches because I like to highlight some of the things that have happened. I'm going to wind it up with something I say in just about every speech that I have. And I hope that everyone that walks up the steps when we come into this building feels as honoured and privileged as I do each and every day. I am so proud and so fortunate and thank the members and the residents of Saskatoon Riversdale and surrounding communities for putting me forward to represent them. And I feel that honour and privilege every time I walk up those steps.

So it is absolute with honour and pleasure that I stand today and say a few words on this budget and I'm so thankful for it and I absolutely will support it. And thank you for my time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's great to be standing here today to talk about the budget. And of course, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about various things that the member from Riversdale just talked about. Like it's been an honour. This is my last kick at the cat for speaking to a budget. Sorry to cat lovers. I actually like cats. But this is my last go at speaking to a budget.

And you know, it's been, it has been a real honour, a real honour to be able to be here for, well I guess it'll be 17 years come the next election, and to be able to represent the people of not just my constituency but the people of the province and what this government has done and how this province has moved ahead. When I first got into this business, Mr. Speaker, you know, I went into it to try and make a difference. I was very fortunate, very fortunate to be with a team, a team that has made a difference in this province, that's moved this province forward, that there was . . . that the NDP never could do.

The reason I went into this was because of my children. You know, I'm so happy that both of my children are living and working in Saskatchewan. You know, Mr. Speaker, and it was brought up by the member from Saskatoon Willowgrove about how people used to get luggage for a graduation present. Our children are working right here in Saskatchewan. They're doing very well and it's just amazing.

And I'll just bring up one little thing. My daughter, who is a schoolteacher, always wanted to be a schoolteacher. Could you imagine what would have happened to her if the NDP would have

been sitting on this side, Mr. Speaker? She probably would have had to go to another province to get a job because the NDP were so busy on closing schools and firing teachers that she wouldn't have had a job. I've had to explain that to her a few times because she didn't realize. She was too young when the NDP were back in power.

But, Mr. Speaker, these are things that I have seen our province move ahead. I've seen our economy move ahead. And you know, it's . . . Really I'm going to hate to leave this place. But on the other hand, you know, there always comes a time that you've got to move forward. And I think it's better that we have somebody who's a lot younger than me and, some of my colleagues have said, way better looking than me to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah. Right. To move on.

You know, and like I said, it's just been a fantastic team to work with. You know, I've been under two different premiers here now. Both of them have just been excellent. Our Finance minister, our Finance minister has done an absolutely fantastic job on putting these budgets together. Her seventh budget. I really want to thank her for all of the years of service that she has put in.

And I want to thank all of my colleagues for being up here, and the opposition. Like I mean, you've put your name forward. What you're trying to do is you're trying to better things for your constituency and things for the province.

Like I said, it's going to be, you know, a little strange. I won't be around here. Actually I got a thank-you letter from the Diabetes Association because they figured that me being around here would help out a lot of people within this caucus.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's been good. And I also want to thank my constituency assistants who have stuck with me right through. Shelley's been there I think for 25, I think 25 years now. And she started under Carl Kwiatkowski. And yeah, she has just been wonderful. And Cindy has been there for, oh, I don't know how many years now, but she's been there for a good number of years. They have worked very hard and they're going to be retiring at the end of when I'm done. They have served our constituency very well. They answer the phone. They look after things probably better than what I do, Mr. Speaker. And it's just been, like I said, it has been a real honour.

And of course, you know, my wife . . . You know, we all know we're away and I'm . . . Let's face it. I'm 400 clicks away from Regina. And so I am gone lots and, you know, which sometimes I think maybe makes her happy. But anyway it's a tough thing on families to be able to come in here and come and do this job, but it's very rewarding. And especially rewarding when you can actually see things happening, see the differences that are being made, seeing our economy move forward.

And you know, I'm very fortunate to come from what I always believe is the best constituency in all of Saskatchewan, but of course I think every MLA wants to say that. You know, Carrot River Valley, we've got things going there. We have Dunkley Lumber that just invested \$260 million in upgrading their lumber plant there. They've got a brand new facility, getting rid of a lot of their waste and making a biochar that is also helping out the environment. So these are good things.

Another little-known fact, we have Ag-Vision Seeds up there in Carrot River, which happens to be the largest grass seed distributor in all of North America. And a lot of people don't know that. But it's a busy place.

[12:45]

This is all providing employment. This is keeping our economy going. We have Premier Horticulture which has done an expansion on their peat moss bog, and so we have numerous people working there. And of course we have great agriculture in there that, you know, our crops have been pretty good all the way through.

And how things have changed in the last number of years since we have formed government. I remember the lumber industry back when the NDP had the pleasure of being in power, and they were shutting mills down. Mr. Speaker, the Weyerhaeuser mill got restarted. Dunkley has expanded. We're doing very well for the economy up there. We're seeing things moving forward way better than it was under the previous administration.

And you know, the whole problem is, Mr. Speaker, when you go back and you look at it and you think of . . . Well it goes back to the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] days. They wanted to try out all these different projects that they had. Like I mean, they had a shoe factory. They had a box factory. They were trying to do the fishery, the fishery . . . [inaudible] . . . None of these worked out.

Then they decided to nationalize the oil industry and sent them all over to Alberta. And yeah, and speaking of the oil industry, you know, I was one of those people who, when I was young, I . . .

An Hon. Member: — There was no electricity back then.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Yeah, they did have some coal-oil lamps and whatnot back in those days. But I actually went out to Alberta. I worked up in the Arctic on the oil rigs in the wintertime to support my farming habit. And you know, you couldn't get those jobs in Saskatchewan because the oil industry in Saskatchewan was basically non-existent. So I was going out there to work to be able to help support the farm, which was . . . actually ended up being a very good deal. And I certainly enjoyed that. But you know, that oil industry would have been here if the CCF government hadn't decided to try and nationalize it.

But you know, they did change their name over to the NDP. Well then they got into all sorts of different things. You know, they had SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. They had, you know, they nationalized the potash industry, which took us a long time to get those potash people back here to be able to do all the things that they are doing and making this province, making our economy move forward. If the NDP ever came back over here, I can guarantee it — they'd crash the economy all over again.

And, Mr. Speaker, so these are some of the things that are happening. And the one thing, the one thing I would like to go back onto is, one thing I'd like to talk about, Mr. Speaker, because, because of . . . because my daughter is a schoolteacher and that's . . . The tremendous investments that we have made,

the tremendous investments that we have made into our education, like 9 per cent this year. Mr. Speaker, that's just absolutely unheard of. Unheard of.

We're not closing schools. We're building schools. And at the end of this year, I think we're up to 69, 69 new schools at the end of this year. Mr. Speaker, we are building . . . And a good example is right in my own constituency. We have a brand new school in Hudson Bay, brand new school in Carrot River. We had a brand new school in the constituency just right next to me in Porcupine Plain. Those schools were in terrible shape. And the NDP, all they would do is, as Berny Wiens, as Berny Wiens famously said when he was on . . . when the NDP were in power, it's easier to close schools than to fix them. That was their altitude.

Mr. Speaker, so the things that we have done for education is absolutely amazing. And I get along very well with our schoolteachers and our school and of course our Wildcat football team, which unfortunately won't be mentioned maybe as much when I'm gone. But I'm certain I'll still get somebody to do a member's statement on what I consider one of the best football teams in Saskatchewan.

But anyway, you know, these are things that are being done. And you know, this \$256 million going to our school divisions to help on classroom complexity and the various other things that are out there, these are big numbers. These are numbers that are absolutely great for us. And I cannot, I cannot understand why the teachers' union is so dead set against this. It boggles my mind.

Actually yesterday I was listening to the president of the teachers' union and she said, well building new schools, you know, that's kind of showy, but we got to help the teachers. Well if you don't have a school, where are the teachers going to go? They got to have schools for a teacher to go to. Like when the homesteaders first came out here, they didn't get a teacher first. They built a schoolhouse first before they got a teacher. Think of that; just think of that. So we have to have the schools.

We have a growing population in this province, something that the other side never, ever thought could happen. As we said, this year we're going to be up a quarter of a million more people in Saskatchewan. This is helping, this is helping our economy, Mr. Speaker. So when you take a look at how things are going, in order and build these schools, in order to go out and build these hospitals, you have to have a strong economy.

But what does the NDP talk about in the budget? We didn't cut the gas tax. Well yeah, but we also gave a real break on the carbon tax on the home heating, which was very important. When I looked at my shop out at the farm and saw where that carbon tax was going, it was big.

And it's the NDP-Liberal coalition that is actually supporting the carbon tax. And I really want the people, I really want the people on the other side to call their federal cousins and say, quit supporting the Liberals on this carbon tax.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do have a listing here, and I'd kind of like to run through this a little bit to be able to talk about the school infrastructure. You know, anyway we've got the school infrastructure. We have 8.8 million planning for nine new

schools and two renovations including a new Regina east joint-use facility for a public and Catholic elementary school; new Saskatoon east joint-use facility for public and Catholic high school. I could hardly say this name, Minahik Waskahigan High School replacement in Pinehouse; a new Regina east joint-use facility for a public and Catholic high school, and that's in the pre-planning; new Saskatoon east joint-use facility for public and Catholic elementary school in Brighton, pre-planning; South Corman Park school renovation; and Swift Current Comprehensive High School renovation.

And then we have another new K to 12 school to replace and consolidate the elementary-high school in Lanigan; new K to 12 school to replace and consolidate the elementary-high school in Carlyle; a new elementary school to replace Ducharme Elementary School in La Loche; 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, the St. Mary, Empire, and Westmount schools in Moose Jaw; new joint-use facility with two elementary schools to replace St. Peter, St. Michael, Imperial, and McDermid elementary school in Regina; new elementary school to replace St. Frances Cree Bilingual Elementary School in Saskatoon; new francophone elementary school in Regina; new francophone pre-K to 12 school in Prince Albert to replace École Valois; a new francophone elementary school in Saskatoon; new joint-use facility with two elementary schools in Regina Harbour Landing neighbourhood; renovations and addition to Greenall High School in Balgonie; renovations and addition to Athol Murray College in Notre Dame; and renovations to Campbell Collegiate in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's a long list and the list just continues on and on. These are things that we are doing for our classrooms. And the whole catch is, Mr. Speaker, we cannot be doing this unless we have a great economy.

Another one that I would like to bring up, Mr. Speaker, is our community colleges. We got \$37.1 million for our community college. Now I was just at an awards ceremony for Suncrest community college this past Friday actually, and I'm a big believer in the community colleges.

One thing what we're starting to do is we're starting to get, you know, some of the two-year programs in there. So people where I'm from are a long ways away from Saskatoon and Regina, so they can take a couple of years of their classes, their nursing. I'd like to see . . . I think education. I don't know if education's in there or not. So these people can go in there and they can start out, and it saves them money. Because as both of our children went through university, it's not a matter of the tuition cost. It's a matter of where they have to stay, their accommodation cost. That's where the big cost is. If they can be doing that right at home, this is a good thing. And I'm a great fan of community colleges.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should get into the health too. And you know, a 10 per cent increase in health budget is absolutely amazing. You take a look under the previous government, what they were doing is they were shutting down hospitals. And every day they get up and they talk about health care. But under this government we are moving forward on the health care end of it.

And you know, and it was brought up about the children's hospital, which the other side never ever believed that could happen. STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service], that was another one that the other side never believed could happen. And yet STARS is one of the greatest things we've ever put into this province. We're moving ahead. We're protecting our people. It's called care, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to run out of time here real quick.

So, Mr. Speaker, our health care, when you take a look at our surgical, how we've expanded the surgical end of it, doing record amounts of surgeries . . . There was a slowdown admittedly through the COVID end. But after that, boy, have we ever moved forward on providing surgeries to the people that need it. And we actually look at other options, and the breast cancer one was a good one. We just didn't have the people here, so we're going to get them done in Calgary so we can at least get these things done so we can provide that service to the people for the care.

And another one, Mr. Speaker. I can't remember, and maybe one of the members here can remind me about how many special care homes were closed, how many beds were shut down. It was literally hundreds. You know, Mr. Speaker, since we formed government, in Carrot River Valley constituency, the last special care home that was built was in Arborfield and that was under the Grant Devine government.

We put another one into Tisdale here. So they had 16 years, never built a single special care home in the Carrot River Valley constituency since Grant Devine days, and we put one in Tisdale. These are things that are helping out our various different communities. Mr. Speaker, I know that health care is always great, but we have a good minister looking after it.

And then to top it all off, Mr. Speaker, we're also working on our mental health end of it. We've increased all the help for people who are having challenges within this province.

The Speaker: — Time has elapsed. This House now stands adjourned till 1:30 Monday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 13:00.]

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Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
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