



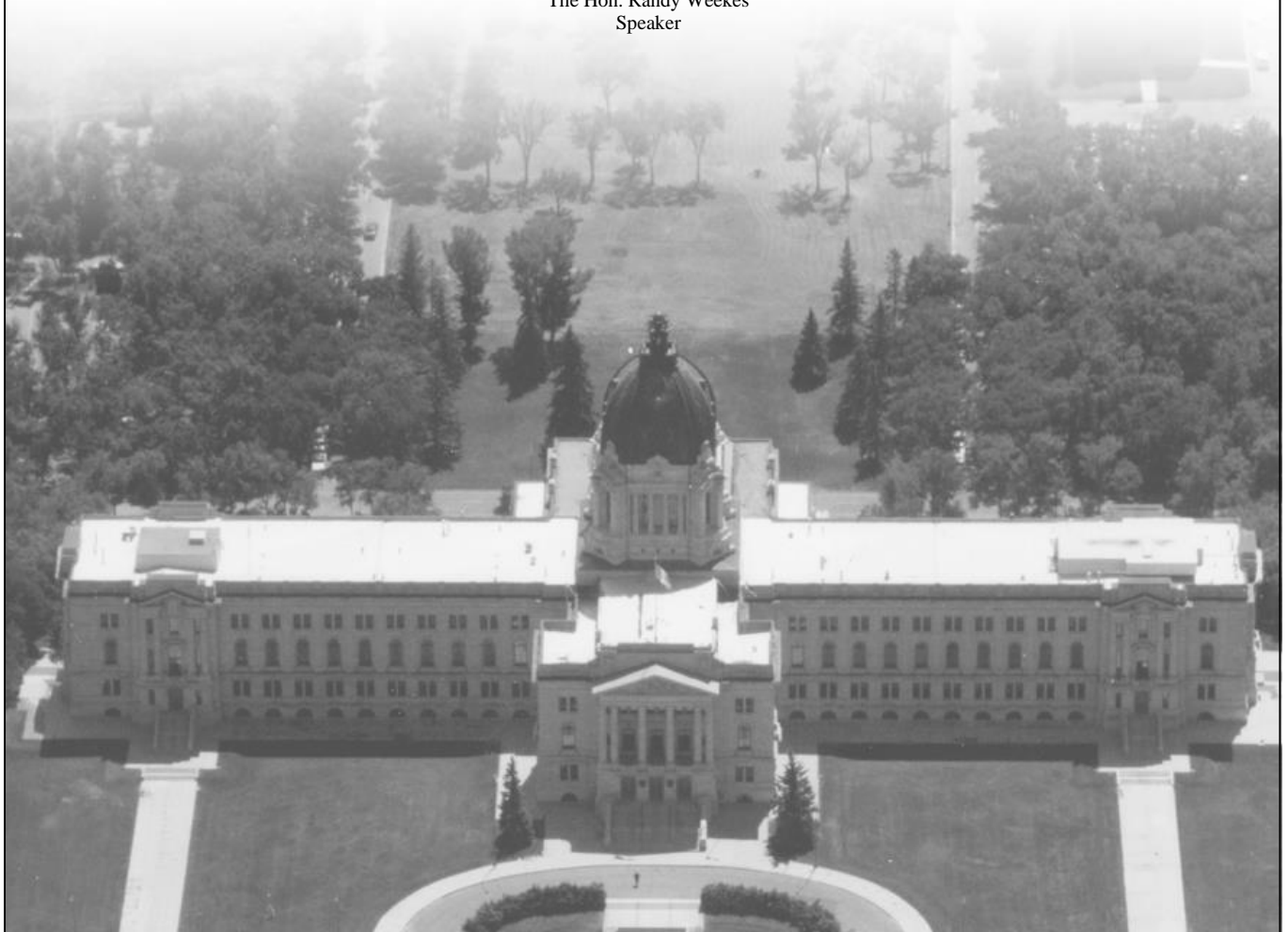
FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

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)
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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)
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Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
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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 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome a remarkable family from Melville to their Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery are grandpa Peter Bauldic, a lifetime employee of Melville Motors; in spirit here today, grandma Pat Bauldic; dad Kurt Kohlenberg, a CN employee; mom Melissa Kohlenberg, a Melville Cornerstone Credit Union employee; their sons Destin and Chaise, grade 12 students at Melville Comprehensive School; and daughter Lena, who I will focus on in a member's statement in a few minutes. There was a decision made by this government that has had a major, positive effect on Lena's life.

I'd like all members to welcome Peter, Kurt, Melissa, Destin, Chaise, and Lena to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce in the west gallery is seated 41 grade 8 students from Emerald Ridge Elementary School in White City.

I look forward to meeting with all of you after question period and having a photograph taken. And I ask all members to please welcome these students to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour today to introduce some friends from Yorkton in the west gallery. I'll ask them to wave as I introduce them.

First is Pastor Peter Laniya; his wife, Tola; his daughter Testimony; and son Favour.

Peter has been an integral part of our community in Yorkton for the past four years. He's the pastor at Dominion Chapel. He's also served as the lead of the Yorkton Ministerial Association.

Peter again has been in Yorkton for four years. He came here through South Africa four years ago. His family, it took another couple, few years for them to get to Yorkton as well, and we're just so happy that they've made it to Yorkton. They've made Yorkton their home. They're such great contributors to our community, and just huge members of our community. And we're just so happy they're there.

So I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to introduce a couple of guests seated in the east gallery. The first person I want to introduce is someone who joined our team about a year ago, Mr. Speaker, and has been just a wonderful addition — Emily Reaume who is a Luther grad, and you know, someone who has brought spark and energy to our caucus and occasionally is tasked in trying to keep me on track, Mr. Speaker, which is no small, small feat. It's my pleasure to see her here watching question period today.

And the other person is someone I've introduced before, but I've never had the opportunity to introduce her — and this will be the last opportunity — on her birthday, her 18th birthday no less, Mr. Speaker. That's our youngest daughter, Maya, up there.

You know, like all parents, real proud of this kid, our baby. An adult today. Someone who's wicked smart, who's kind, and also has a super sharp wit. And, Mr. Speaker, this fall she's going to leave us to pursue a career in nursing, and we're real proud of her.

I invite all members to join me in welcoming these guests and wishing Maya Grace a happy birthday.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the . . . Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present the following petition. 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 in issuing a carve-out for home heating oil; and that the Government of Saskatchewan's decision to not collect or remit the carbon tax on home heating in Saskatchewan has led to a drop in inflation; further, that despite the decision to not charge the carbon tax on home heating, Saskatchewan families continue to pay that tax out of pocket at the pumps, grocery stores, and more.

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

The below undersigned are residents of Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm on my feet presenting our petition calling for improvements of labour laws. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to our attention that even after the October 1st, 2023 increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage

continues to be the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour; that the official opposition was calling for a \$15-hour minimum wage as early as 2018; and that the official opposition has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year and 14 during a public health crisis; paid sick leave has been proven to save employers money while maintaining workplaces healthier and safer for all workers; that 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment; and that more needs to be done to ensure that workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment free.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to improve conditions for Saskatchewan workers by passing legislation to increase minimum wage, guarantee paid sick leave, limit nondisclosure agreements which could silence survivors of workplace harassment, and require employers to track and report incidents of violence and harassment in their workplaces.

The undersigned residents reside in Warman and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Legislative Assembly to fix the crisis in health care. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that there have been 953 health care closures across rural Saskatchewan between August 2019 and July 2023.

These are emergency rooms, labs, and a number of other services, Mr. Speaker. A lot of these have been closed for a long time. And earlier this week I was on a bit of a rural health care tour to Broadview, Wolseley, and we heard from a lot of health care workers who need support, Mr. Speaker. We continue to see health care workers leaving rural Saskatchewan, and that needs to change.

You know, it's also unacceptable that Saskatchewan has the longest wait times for knee and hip replacement surgeries in Canada and that women have to travel to Calgary to get routine breast cancer 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 Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet to present a petition calling on this government to open up vacant Sask Housing units for occupancy. The Provincial Auditor and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association have observed that approximately 3,000 Sask Housing units are currently vacant across Saskatchewan.

Some of these units require renovation but the Sask Party government has cut the maintenance and renovation budget approximately 40 per cent over the last decade. This has not only resulted in vacant units but many of the inhabited units having black mould, pests, and other issues, Mr. Speaker.

Thousands of people in Saskatchewan are unhoused right now, and that number is only increasing year over year. The vast majority of unhoused people in Saskatchewan are Indigenous, a legacy of colonialism. Homelessness has a tremendous cost, a social and a financial cost. According to one estimate, every \$10 invested towards housing and supports for chronically homeless individuals results in savings of over \$21 related to health care, social services, housing, and involvement in the justice system. The province's expenditures on emergency hotels are one example — but one — of the cost of this homelessness crisis which has been fed by this Sask Party government's failed policies.

We, in the prayer, call upon the government to renovate Sask Housing units that require renovation, make them available and affordable, ensure that they are open for vacancy by October 2024.

Signatories are in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Maternal Mental Health Day

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 1st is Maternal Mental Health Day in Saskatchewan. As many as one in five new mothers in Saskatchewan experience some type of maternal mental health issue. This includes depression or anxiety during pregnancy or within the first 12 months following childbirth.

Our government recognizes the importance of supporting mothers across the province by ensuring they have access to high-quality mental health services and supports. We invest in several maternal mental health services. Some of these include postpartum depression and anxiety screening by physicians and public health nurses.

HealthLine 811's maternal wellness program also provides supportive maternal mental health care for those who have suffered the loss of a pregnancy or infant. Registered psychiatric nurses or social workers conduct assessments and provide emotional support, coping strategies, and information on resources that can be accessed in their own community. Free cognitive behaviour therapy is also offered to all Saskatchewan residents, including new mothers who are experiencing depression or anxiety.

Mr. Speaker, we want all mothers who are facing mental health

issues to access the treatment they need and deserve. So on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, thank you to all the mothers of our province who choose to raise their families here. Thank you.

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

Smile Cookie Campaign Supports Local Organizations

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, if you're a fan of Smile Cookies, this is your week to get some here in Regina in support of communities. Tim Hortons in Regina donate 100 per cent of the proceeds from their Smile Cookie sales to local organizations. This week those proceeds go to the Regina Food Bank and First Steps Wellness.

On Monday night I had the pleasure to join with community at First Steps Wellness to launch their Smile Cookie campaign and to compete in the cookie-eating contest along with Saskatchewan Rush lacrosse legend Jeff Shattler, the mayor, the member for Gardiner Park, and other guests.

Mr. Speaker, First Steps Wellness and their dedicated team deliver life-changing, intensive physical therapy rehabilitation for those with a spinal cord injury. The participants and their team are nothing short of inspiring. And with record usage, we know how important the Regina Food Bank is to so many across our community.

I want to thank the owners and teams at Tim Hortons in Regina for their community support. This past year they also supported Ehrlo services and the no-cost community leagues including the Outdoor Hockey League with proceeds from the Smile Cookie campaigns totalling more than \$100,000.

I ask all members to join with me to extend our thanks and to encourage folks to get out and get a Smile Cookie to support these important organizations in our community this week.

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

National Physicians' Day

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the Assembly today to recognize May 1st as National Physicians' Day. On this National Physicians' Day, we honour the selfless dedication, unwavering compassion, and tireless commitment of physicians in our province. Our government is grateful for the care and support provided by Saskatchewan physicians in the overall effort to prevent and treat disease, promote healthy behaviours, and enhance community well-being.

[13:45]

In February our government signed a new four-year contract with the Saskatchewan Medical Association offering competitive remuneration, benefits schedule, and increased funding to support long-term retention, parental leave, and continuing medical education.

Mr. Speaker, our government has seen great progress under the

health care human resources plan in the effort to recruit physicians to the province. Since September of 2021 nearly 280 physicians have been brought to Saskatchewan from outside the province including nearly 120 family physicians. Many of these family physicians have established their practice in rural Saskatchewan, incentivized by our rural physician incentive program. Under the program, up to \$200,000 over five years is offered to attract physicians to rural and northern communities.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members of the Assembly to join me in recognizing National Physicians' Day and extending our appreciation to the physicians who have chosen to practise in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Comedian from Little Pine First Nation Realizes Success in Acting and Stand-Up

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cheyenna Sapp, an actress and comedian from Little Pine First Nation has said that comedy and humour are an important part of Indigenous culture. Mr. Speaker, Cheyenna studied Indigenous studies at the University of Saskatchewan and began watching local open-mike performances around the city.

Mr. Speaker, seeing three Indigenous comedians walk onto a stage and perform was the inspiration that Cheyenna needed. Cheyenna started to write her own jokes down and began taking acting lessons at the university to help with her delivery and has been performing ever since, Mr. Speaker.

"Stand-up comedy is a form of storytelling," Cheyenna has said, "and it's a continuation of Indigenous culture." Cheyenna's success in the comedy world has helped her to land her very first acting job in the new Indigenous sitcom *Acting Good*, which is currently streaming on Crave.

Once filming was wrapped up, Cheyenna headed out on a comedy tour in mid-July with two other Indigenous comedians from Canada in a group called The Deadly Aunties.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating Cheyenna Sapp on her very successful comedian and acting careers. Best of luck as you continue to pursue your dreams and inspire other Indigenous people to do the same. Thank you.

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

Expanding Coverage of Cystic Fibrosis Medication

Ms. A. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cystic fibrosis, or CF, is the most common genetic disease in Canada for which there is no cure. It is estimated 1 in every 3,600 children born in Canada will have CF. These children have difficulty digesting fat and protein, an inability to absorb nutrients, progressive lung damage, and more, and all negatively impacting the quality of life of the child and their family.

This past February Saskatchewan became one of the first

provinces to approve coverage of Trikafta for children living with CF and who meet the medical criteria. While not a cure, if this medication is started early enough, it helps to protect the overall health and lung damage of CF patients. Coverage is also available in Saskatchewan for two other CF medications which target genetic mutations of the disease, Orkambi or Kalydeco. Coverage of Orkambi was expanded in July 2021 for patients two years of age and older and who meet medical criteria. Kalydeco has been listed on the Saskatchewan formulary since 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing all children and their families who are living with cystic fibrosis as we continue to work for a cure for this life-limiting disease. Thank you.

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

Melville Teen Raises Funds for Cystic Fibrosis Canada

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently a Melville teen, Lena Kohlenberg, learned how to crochet and it turned into something very special. But “special” barely scratches the surface of what Lena did for her late grandmother, Pat Bauldic, and is now doing for other patients at St. Peter’s Hospital in Melville.

Among the many things Lena learned to crochet, one was a small frog which she gave to her grandmother while she was battling cancer. Lena noticed her grandmother kept hold of that frog and it seemed to ease her anxiety and calm her.

While her grandmother, Pat, has just lost her battle with cancer, that initial gesture — and a great deal of help by her grandfather, Peter Bauldic — led to the creation of LK Crochet Critters by Lena. Lena’s small business involves selling the crocheted critters to everyone and anyone, but most importantly she is donating frogs to the local palliative care unit in memory of her grandmother.

Mr. Speaker, the story doesn’t end there. Lena has had her own challenges as she personally battles with cystic fibrosis, diagnosed in 2010 at three weeks old. Lena’s mother, Melissa, father, Kurt, and brothers Chaise and Destin began helping raise funds for Cystic Fibrosis Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Team Love for Lena began, and together with the help and generosity of family, friends, and community over the last 13 years, has raised over \$100,000 for Cystic Fibrosis Canada. Mr. Speaker, this remarkable young lady, Lena Kohlenberg, and her family are a testament to the great people who call Saskatchewan home.

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

Positive Economic Outlook in Saskatchewan

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan’s economy is reaching new heights. Statistics Canada numbers show our 2023 GDP [gross domestic product] reached an all-time high of \$77.9 billion, growing by \$1.226 billion or 1.6 per cent, ranking second in the nation in GDP growth.

The province’s GDP is expected to grow by 1.4 per cent in 2024, 3.1 per cent in 2025, and is forecasted to lead the nation with an increase of 3.6 per cent in 2026. And it’s not just our government taking notice, Mr. Speaker. Scotiabank’s recent provincial outcomes report has said the following, and I quote: “Despite setbacks from adverse weather conditions and weaker commodity prices last year, Saskatchewan’s solid growth path is bolstered by a strong investment outlook this year.”

Thirteen major projects are in construction phase across key sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and oil and gas. And BHP’s approval of the \$6.4 billion investment in the Jansen stage 2 project should drive growth prospects over the next few years. Residential construction is also booming, with housing starts sitting at levels above the past few years while most provinces are experiencing a slowdown in building activities. Rapid growth in business investments supports job gains, and hiring has ramped up since late last year.

Mr. Speaker, we know the opposition will continue talking down the economy in every room, even the ones they charge \$2,500 a table for others to be in. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Fuel Tax and Carbon Tax

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, Saskatchewan people are struggling, although you wouldn’t know it if you listened to the spin from that tired and out-of-touch government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, businesses are closing, families are earning less, and everything costs more. Mr. Speaker, it’s time to give Saskatchewan families a break. Why won’t the Premier scrap the gas tax and give Saskatchewan families the break that they need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, “Regina ranked as the most affordable city in Canada to purchase a single-family home.” Not my words, the words on CTV News of February 28th.

Mr. Speaker, “Affordability remains decent by historical standards in Saskatchewan, unlike most other jurisdictions across the country.” Again, Mr. Speaker, not my words, the words of TD Economics of March 16th, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would say this: one of the largest challenges that not only Saskatchewan residents have but Canadians have, Mr. Speaker, is federal policy that is being imposed, that is increasing the inflationary measures of which all of us are facing each and every day when we go to the grocery store or when we go to the fuel pumps, Mr. Speaker. First among them is the ever annually inflation carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, of which the NDP have just committed to this morning supporting Justin Trudeau’s budget, supporting the increase of that carbon tax going from 65 to \$80 a tonne, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite say, we don’t support that. But then they fly to Ottawa, go to Trudeau campaign school, Mr. Speaker. That is their actions, Mr. Speaker. That is the reality.

What they don't like and what Canadians don't like are the consequences of an NDP reality.

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

Contract for Tire Recycling

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows that we don't support the carbon tax, but I can certainly see why he doesn't want to stand on his own record. There are 91, 91 fewer businesses operating in this province today than there were a year ago. And that Premier, Mr. Speaker, has the worst job creation record in the entire country. Those are the facts.

Now this Premier keeps selling out Saskatchewan jobs. That's what the numbers show and that's what local business leaders are saying as well. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the leadership of Shercom said that they had met with the Premier back in 2016 when he was the minister of the Environment. And they say that at that time, the Premier assured them that they'd have access to the tires that they need for their business.

Did the Premier make that promise back in 2016? And if so, why did he break it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the allocation of tires in this province are not by any words of the minister, they're by the industry-led organization that determines where those tires are going. There was a sole-source contract for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, which has changed now to an RFP [request for proposal]. And I would go on to say, Mr. Speaker, the Chair of the Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan, Colin Fraser, went on to say this morning, and I quote:

TSS is an arm's-length from the government. They do not run our operation [referencing the government]. They have an oversight of our product stewardship plan that they approve. We run the day-to-day business. When the RFP went out, that was solely on us. We developed it, we put it out, and we approved it [meaning TSS, Mr. Speaker]. There was no government interference with that whatsoever, and I don't know where that came from or why someone would say something like that. It had nothing to do with anything from the government.

Mr. Speaker, understanding that this is a volunteer Chair of the Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan board, Mr. Speaker, is a businessman in Prince Albert. The entire smear campaign that we have seen come from the NDP on this individual and other volunteers serving on this board trying to improve our provincial environment is shameful, Mr. Speaker. It's absolutely shameful, Mr. Speaker. We should allow this industry-led board to do their work without smearing these businessmen, Saskatchewan businessmen, on the floor of our provincial Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, he's worked himself into quite a lather over there, but he didn't even come close to answering the question. The question was this, Mr. Speaker: did he make that promise back in 2016? And if he did, why did he break it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — It's not the minister's promise to make. When I was the minister, when anyone else was the minister, Mr. Speaker, it is . . . The allocation of tires come from the industry-led board, Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I would ask the Leader of the Opposition does she feel, on behalf of the NDP, that she owes an apology, an apology to Colin Fraser and all of those other industry-led people that are serving on this board?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this is hardly surprising because every time we mention this deal we see that Premier or that minister hide behind the TSS [Tire Stewardship of Saskatchewan]. Now they say that it's an independent, arm's-length board with no connection to the government. I think we heard him say that again today. Mr. Speaker, if only that were the case.

Richard (Porky) Porter sits on that board and is closely connected to both that Premier and to the Sask Party. This is someone who donated \$1,000 to the Premier's leadership campaign and \$6,000 to the Sask Party itself, Mr. Speaker.

Now why is it that every time we see one of these questionable deals, the Premier's friends and insiders are the ones who are pulling the strings?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we're going to line up the list of apologies that the NDP is going to have to make. Another individual that ran a business — actually three or four businesses — throughout his life, retired, Mr. Speaker, spent a couple of decades serving on the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] board; served his community on the RM [rural municipality], Mr. Speaker; served his community fundraising for various projects, including a hospital in the community; moved on to the community of Rosthern and Warman, Mr. Speaker, and continues to serve this province in any capacity that he can. Yes, partially as a volunteer on a board like the TSS, Mr. Speaker.

What we see time and time again is the members of the NDP, now the leader of the NDP, smearing Saskatchewan residents, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan residents that are donating their time to make the environment cleaner here and to make our communities and our province a better place.

The Speaker: — I'd just like to caution the Premier on his language. It's getting pretty close to the line.

I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

[14:00]

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, everywhere we look in this province, we see Sask Party patronage appointments on boards and agencies. We saw that at the Human Rights Commission, and now we see this with Porky Porter and the Tire Stewardship deal.

This is a premier . . . this is a person who the Premier described as follows, and I quote, “He’s been a true friend of the MLA of Rosthern-Shellbrook.”

The Sask Party keeps saying that the TSS is totally arm’s length, totally independent from government. How is anyone supposed to believe that when the Premier’s true friend is leading the organization?

The Speaker: — I’ve let it go before, but I just want to caution members. You’re not to be talking about the other party’s internal business and things like that. So please take that into account.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, perhaps there would be more NDP supporters on different boards or whatever if there were more NDP supporters. Obviously the majority of the people in Saskatchewan support this party, and ultimately they are the leaders in our communities, Mr. Speaker. And as the leaders and as their abilities is why you will see them on different boards within government.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, the government keeps saying the TSS is independent. That’s their basis for withholding every scrap of information on this deal, but that is simply not the case. Porky Porter donated \$1,000 to that Premier’s leadership campaign, 7,000 to the Sask Party.

How can the Minister of Environment claim the TSS is totally independent when one of the architects of this government’s tire policy program has donated thousands to that Sask Party government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — He joins the many thousands of other Saskatchewan residents that are going to donate to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. That’s a function of where we are in this province. The individual donors, Mr. Speaker, of the Saskatchewan Party we appreciate, and they donate to what they believe is a better Saskatchewan. They donate to a party, Mr. Speaker, that they know is going to ensure that our economy is vibrant and growing.

They donate, Mr. Speaker, to a party that they want to form government, that is going to invest 9 per cent in our operations of our school divisions, Mr. Speaker; over 10 per cent in our health care system, expanding care and access to Saskatchewan residents; and investing directly back in our communities through the municipal revenue-sharing program — was not possible, Mr. Speaker, under the members opposite — and investing in our community safety, Mr. Speaker.

It should come as no surprise to the members opposite that there’s people that support the people that are running in the constituencies in this party, including myself. What is surprising to those very people, Mr. Speaker, is the absolute smear job that we see from the members opposite of good, upstanding Saskatchewan residents that are donating their time to make a

better province.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, Porky Porter and the Premier go way back. Just a few months after the Premier was made minister of the Environment in 2016, he appointed Porky Porter to the board of SaskWater. And then in 2017 the Premier appointed Porky to the advisory committee that led to the establishment of the TSS altogether. Then Porky Porter was put on the board of the TSS itself.

How are we supposed to believe that these appointments are merit-based when this is an individual that has given thousands and thousands of dollars to that Sask Party government?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — We’ve seen over the last number of weeks, Mr. Speaker, the NDP calling out upstanding Saskatchewan residents — a number of them — some of them for work they’re doing in a post-political career, Mr. Speaker, some of them for work they’re doing in retirement.

Mr. Speaker, what I would ask the Leader of the Opposition, is she ready to go out into the rotunda and repeat everything that has been said under legislative immunity on the floor of this Assembly that her or her members have said? Go out to the rotunda and make the accusations that your members are making of Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan people that have improved our communities, improved our province, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people that this side are proud to be associated with.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, after the Premier won the leadership in 2018 things kept happening for Porky Porter. Porky was appointed to the solid waste advisory committee in 2018, and thousands and thousands of dollars in donations continued to flow to the Sask Party. How are Saskatchewan people supposed to have confidence in these boards and agencies when we see the Sask Party continue to tap their donors and their true friends to lead them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I invite the Leader of the Opposition to go out into the rotunda and repeat what has just been said on the floor of this Assembly today and over the course of the last number of weeks.

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

Ms. Conway: — I would invite the Premier to answer some of these questions, Mr. Speaker. And for the record, all we have asked from the beginning is an ounce of transparency on how this deal went down.

You don’t want to give us the report? Summarize the report. We

don't want state secrets, Mr. Speaker. We just want a basic summary for the business case behind this deal. Will the Sask Party do that today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, members on this side are available for questions on the floor of this Assembly and available in the rotunda after question period each and every day. I invite the Leader of the Opposition, if she truly supports this critic and the other critics that have made accusations on the floor of this Assembly, go outside. Go into that rotunda and repeat exactly what her members have said on the floor of this Assembly. If she truly has faith in that member and many others, do it.

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

Ms. Conway: — The least transparent government in Saskatchewan history, Mr. Speaker. Of course we will be repeating these questions out there as we have continued to do for days, Mr. Speaker. We have asked for this report. The Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce has asked for this report. Shercom has asked for this report.

If they don't want to give us the full report, give us a summary, just a summary of the business case that supported this deal. Will he do it today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as we learned this week, the members opposite and the Leader of the Opposition also asked firms for a donation to her exclusive cocktail party. The difference is they donated to this party because they believe in what this party stands for. They did not donate to the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

So I invite the Leader of the Opposition again, if she truly has faith in what that member is saying on the floor of this Assembly, go out to the rotunda and repeat it.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, trust in public institutions matters. And when the Sask Party stacks boards with their friends, their true friends and their donors, it undermines public's trust in these agencies. We see this with this tire fire of a deal at TSS. We see this with recent appointments on the Human Rights Commission, multiple friends and donors of that lot over there. We see this in so many places, Mr. Speaker, and people are tired of it.

How are people supposed to have confidence that these so-called independent agencies are independent when the Premier and the Sask Party keep stacking them with their true friends and their donors?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition

has an opportunity to go out and explain why they are sending the very same invitations for fundraising dollars to her exclusive cocktail party, Mr. Speaker. The difference is, people are saying no to that invitation.

She also has the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to go out in the rotunda and actually say that she defends and stands up for and supports that critic and what she's saying on the floor of this Assembly by repeating it out there, Mr. Speaker.

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

Access to Surgical Abortion and Supports for Women's Health

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, it would be great if that tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government cared half as much about the women of this province as they do about their donors and cronies. But as it stands, women in northern Saskatchewan seeking a surgical abortion have to travel all the way to Saskatoon. Still, Mr. Speaker. We raised this last year, but still we see no action from this government. We called for an expansion of surgical abortion access to Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Why hasn't the Sask Party done anything to address this for Saskatchewan women? Does it have anything to do with the fact that we see the anti-choice flag being flown at the legislature today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Abortion is an insured service under the *Canada Health Act*, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan, like other provinces and territories, funds hospital and physician costs related to abortion services, Mr. Speaker.

I would say this: that the Government of Saskatchewan, it's important for us to be listening to people when it comes to health care — to patients, to front-line health care providers, as an example, Mr. Speaker — when it comes to pediatrics and the care for children in this province, Mr. Speaker. And we listen to families. We listen to kids, and we listen to front-line health care providers, Mr. Speaker. The government is announcing today that we will be providing coverage, financial assistance for families that need to be referred out of province, for their kids to be referred out of province for medical procedures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, it's disappointing that this minister can't even say the word "abortion." Nothing has been done to expand access in this province, Mr. Speaker. I think that tells you everything you need to know about the old boys' club in this tired and out-of-touch government.

We've also raised the issue of time frames, Mr. Speaker. The window of access for a surgical abortion is different in Saskatoon than it is in Regina. When we raised this issue back in November of 2022 and March of 2023, the previous minister said the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] was working on fixing this.

When will the SHA finally announce a uniform policy for surgical abortion across the province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would refer the member opposite, when she gets a chance to check *Hansard* tomorrow or later today, that I did refer and said at the beginning of my last answer that abortion is an insured service under the *Canada Health Act*, Mr. Speaker.

As was referenced in the 2023-24 budget, funding was allocated to align both referral processes in Regina and in Saskatoon as well as to upskill obstetricians in Saskatoon, allowing them to extend abortion service to align with Regina, Mr. Speaker. And that work is under way by the SHA. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, the last Health minister told us in committee on March 8th, 2023, well over a year ago, “The SHA is looking into this and I’ll trust they’ll do the right thing.” The right thing, Mr. Speaker, means offering a uniform time frame for guaranteed surgical abortion in Saskatchewan.

We see an anti-choice flag flying outside this building today but no action on abortion access from this tired and out-of-touch government. I don’t think it’s a coincidence, Mr. Speaker. From mammograms to reproductive health, when will the Sask Party start taking women’s health seriously?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said previously, work is ongoing by the SHA to align all health care delivery across all the former health regions across this province, Mr. Speaker, and the SHA will be able to provide a status update as to the nature of that work, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just say that in the area of women’s health, this is a significant area of investment and importance for us as a government. And we referenced that in the budget this year: significant enhancements, funding, a million dollars for ovarian cancer research; Mr. Speaker, three and a half million dollars for development of a breast health centre here in Regina to be supported by staff, breast health navigators, and the necessary staff to offer that service to women right across southern Saskatchewan. And that’s going to continue to be of significant importance for us to make sure that we are listening to women across this province and advancing issues on their behalf, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hospital Parking Fees and Supports for Cancer Patients

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A year and a half isn’t long enough to extend a window, but that minister certainly leaps into action when he’s got to deny cancer patients their parking passes. Talk about misplaced priorities, Mr. Speaker.

When will the minister get with the program and realize that his choices are making life harder for vulnerable cancer patients?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I’ve said before, we have made significant investments, record investments into cancer care in this province, including to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. I’m very grateful for the amazing work that they do, providing cancer services and surgeries and support and diagnostics as well, Mr. Speaker. Screening, we’ll be lowering the screening age when it comes to breast cancer in this province starting in January of 2025, over a phased-in approach, Mr. Speaker. And we’re proud of that investment and the work that we do.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, I would say this: the member opposite, he gets up on a regular basis and he says things on the record, Mr. Speaker, that aren’t always actually accurate. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, April 30th in *Hansard* page 5538, the member for Walsh Acres says, “. . . vulnerable cancer patients are paying to receive treatment at Victoria Hospital,” Mr. Speaker.

It’s not correct. Patients don’t pay for their treatment, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you for the clarity to the minister. I’m sure that really settled things for the vulnerable cancer patients who are paying for parking today.

Victoria Hospital sees patients from all across Saskatchewan, northern and rural and remote patients that sometimes travel long distances for their cancer treatment. Donna Pasiechnik, a cancer patient advocate, had something to say about the decision to cut this program, and I quote:

To nickel and dime cancer patients who are feeling stressed and in pain and financially strapped is mean spirited and petty and surely there is a solution to the parking issues at . . . [the hospital].

What does the minister have to say to cancer patients being forced to pay for parking at the Victoria Hospital?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I’d provided answers previously, the SHA is working to align their policies across the province. And the SHA will speak to that in terms of why they’re doing it. As a matter of fact I think they have, Mr. Speaker. They have spoken publicly.

Here’s what I would say to cancer patients, Mr. Speaker: that, as I said previously, \$26.1 million increase in funding to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency in this year’s budget, an 11 per cent increase over last year’s budget. Funding provided to support cancer services, the ovarian research, ovarian cancer research, Mr. Speaker. More funding for the breast health centre.

Lowering of the screening age. Additional cancer centres across this province to support this work, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, I guess I would say this to the members opposite who again, once again are ridiculing, of course. The member for Meewasin, we know how often he is able to get up on his feet. But the member for Regina Walsh Acres who went on a bit of a rural tour I guess, Mr. Speaker, or he claims that he did, we look forward to what their ideas are because we know we've seen them, Mr. Speaker.

We have a budget, Mr. Speaker, that details what is in the plans of this government. We know what the members opposite have and that's . . .

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Mr. Love: — Mr. Speaker, 67 of Saskatchewan's communities lost community members to overdose crisis this year. Those communities know first-hand that more needs to be done to stop the rise in overdose deaths. Access to treatment is needed, but people can't attend treatment if they're no longer alive. Even SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] understands this, Mr. Speaker. In fact they made a statement about it earlier today: "SUMA recognizes that there is still much to be done for those who are not yet ready to seek treatment and to address the underlying causes of mental health and addictions."

What does the minister say to those community leaders at SUMA who want evidence-based support for people when and where they need it?

The Speaker: — Sorry, I should've recognized the member from Saskatoon Eastview.

I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the message that our government is sending across the province is that no illicit drugs are safe. There is no safe use of an illicit drug, and we will not implement any policies that suggest otherwise, Mr. Speaker.

What our government is doing is warning people about the dangers of illicit drugs. We have the provincial drug alert system. We have overdose outreach teams, Mr. Speaker. We have the free naloxone kit program, Mr. Speaker, that has reversed over 10,000 overdoses in this province since it was introduced, Mr. Speaker. Our government's approach is to focus on treatment and recovery.

We know that the opposition members and their cousins in British Columbia want to implement policies that would actually help individuals stay in a life of addiction. We want to help them overcome their addiction and find a path to treatment and recovery.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on House Services

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its 15th report which includes the 2024-25 estimates. I move:

That the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the 15th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Clerk: — Committee of Finance.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair for Committee of Finance.

[14:45]

COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

The Chair: — The business before the committee are the estimates for Executive Council. The first item of business are the main estimates for Executive Council, vote 10, found on page 47 of the Government of Saskatchewan Estimates book.

Before we begin, I'd like to advise the Committee of Finance of the process. First I will invite the Premier to introduce his officials, followed by calling the estimate. Then the Premier can make his opening remarks. Will the Premier now please introduce his officials.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all attending Committee of Finance here today. The officials that I have with me today are, to my immediate left is

my chief of staff, Shannon Andrews. To Shannon's left is Raynelle Wilson, the deputy minister to the Premier and the cabinet secretary, Mr. Speaker. Behind Raynelle we have Kristen Fry, who is the executive director of corporate services. To Kristen's right, behind me and to my immediate left, is Jared Dunlop. He's the director of policy and research. To my right is Reg Downs, who is the strategic advisor to the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

And back two rows behind Jared is . . . Last year, Mr. Speaker, I'd introduced Ashley as Ashley Knisley. I've since been informed, Mr. Speaker, that her last name is not Knisley, it is Knisley and I'd like to correct the record, Mr. Speaker, from one year ago. And it's important that I do it this year as I am quite confident, Mr. Speaker, that if we have the honour of being back here next year and introducing Ashley, that her name may change again, as I would congratulate her and her fiancé on a wedding later this summer.

**General Revenue Fund
Executive Council
Vote 10**

Subvote (EX01)

The Chair: — Executive Council, vote 10, subvote (EX01), central management and services. The Premier may proceed with his opening remarks.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, for that opportunity for an introduction and for some opening remarks in what will be, I'm sure, about three hours of back and forth, Mr. Speaker, of policies between the two various parties as we come to the conclusion of our budget estimates — 75 I believe this year, maybe 76 hours of budget estimates, Mr. Speaker — where we have ample opportunity, the opposition has ample opportunity to question some of the policies, rightfully so, that are put forward in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

That is the job, and I would say the effective job, that oppositions in any Westminster democracy bring, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is an important part of the democracy that we have in Saskatchewan and across Canada, and across much of the Western world, Mr. Speaker.

I would add to that that it is also important, given that this is an election year, for all of the parties to ensure that they are putting forward their policies before the voters of Saskatchewan so that the voters of Saskatchewan can make an educated choice, Mr. Speaker, an educated choice on who they want to lead their province over the course of roughly the next four years. We're seeing a little bit of an extended term federally with the minority administration that we have there, but roughly for the next four years, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I think this is part of that process in setting really what is the platforms, Mr. Speaker, the stage for an election year here in Saskatchewan.

And we should be thankful, albeit whatever is said in election campaigns, Mr. Speaker, I think we can all be thankful that we do live in the great democracy that we have in this province and in this nation. I know for one I certainly am.

Mr. Speaker, everything that we were able to achieve in this

province over the course of the last decade, decade and a half now, everything that we've been able to achieve as people in community after community — some of those people discussed in question period today, Mr. Speaker — it starts with growth and focusing on growth.

Growth doesn't just happen. Growth is something that everyone has to be focused on in order for it to occur, whether it's population growth; whether it's job growth; whether it's climbing from one job to a better job to improve the opportunities for your family; whether it's investment attraction growth into our communities, Mr. Chair; whether it's export-focused growth, of which we most certainly have been focused on over the last decade and a half; or whether it's even revenue growth within the government, and there's different ways for that revenue to grow.

So I'd say that the ballot question over the course of this summer heading into the provincial election is going to be, who is the party of growth in this province? Who has a plan for growth, and who has ultimately a record of said growth in the years gone by? So I am going to say today we will discuss, ideally, three things.

First is our respective plans for growth. The opposition's plan for growth — and they do have a few, 12 — and our plan for growth, Mr. Speaker, and we do have two.

Mr. Chair, I would say we should also discuss what the various parties have said about growth and how to achieve growth in our province, whether it's population growth, economic growth, and the opportunity that comes with that.

And then last but certainly not least is the records that each of us do have when it comes to focusing on growing our province and bringing our province to a better space than it was yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, so I'll start with the plans for growth that have been released during the NDP's time in government, and as I said, over 16 years there was 12 of them. It started in November of 1992 with a partnership for renewal. It went on in 1994, the research and technology commercialization strategy that the NDP released. They had another partnership for growth, building on the renewal of the Saskatchewan economy they released in 1996. They had the PACE [provincial action committee on the economy] report, the competitive of Saskatchewan's business climate in February of 1997.

On to 2000, another partnership, the partnership for prosperity this time. It's a strategy for success in the new economy in 2000. It might not have worked so well because they had another partnership for prosperity in 2001, which was called the success in the new economy, an economic strategy. That was in June of 2001. And in September of 2001, another growth plan was released which was called growing the rural economy.

All told in 2000, up until 2000 their growth plans, five of them by that point in time, had achieved a grand loss of 7,642 people in the province. And it went on with two more in 2001 and continued to lose another 2,816 people in the province.

Mr. Chair, not to be deterred, in 2002 they released a strategy for rural Saskatchewan and it was a response to the ACRE [action committee on the rural economy] program. That lost another 2,489 people in the province, Mr. Chair. And then the actual

ACRE program, the action committee on the rural economy, was released in March 2005. There's a final report of the business development subcommittee. Those particular three years and that particular program achieved a loss of 3,752 additional people that left Saskatchewan.

Again another action committee of the rural economy they brought in phase 2 in 2005. In 2005 they also brought in the *Saskatchewan Action Plan for the Economy*. For goodness sakes, we needed one by this time. And last, but not least, Mr. Speaker, the twelfth growth plan was *A Blueprint for Innovation*, entering the 21st century. We're a couple of years late on that. But we did enter the 21st century, as the report for the Saskatchewan steering committee on innovation.

Mr. Chair, those are the 12 growth plans that were brought forward by the members opposite.

We've done two, Mr. Chair. We completed one in the year 2020. It was brought out, I believe, if I'm not mistaken, in 2012. And it's called *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*. At the conclusion, I'll table each of these, Mr. Chair. The members opposite might want to table theirs as well. We'll see. We couldn't find them. They've been hidden, Mr. Chair.

But I would say that this first growth plan, I remember working on this growth plan as a new MLA, [Member of the Legislative Assembly] post the 2011 election. Many others will as well. What we were tasked with as MLAs was to go out into our community and talk to people in the community that are, you know, working to build a brighter future for their community, and how do we bring these collective thoughts together to really set targets provincially so that those communities can work together to build a brighter province and a brighter nation, Mr. Speaker. Again talked about some of those individuals today in question period and over the course of the last few days. So that was the first plan for growth. It was really a plan that was developed by MLAs consulting with people in the community and then brought together through that consultation. So it's a plan that was developed by the people of Saskatchewan.

We brought a progress report out in 2013, Mr. Chair, which talked about how we are achieving or on track to achieve some of the targets that were in that original growth plan, *Vision 2020 and Beyond*.

Mr. Chair, in the lead-up to or shortly after 2020, after achieving many of the targets put forward in that original growth plan, what we did was formulate or update with a new growth plan for the province, titled *The Next Decade of Growth: Saskatchewan's Growth Plan*, Mr. Chair. And we are already on track to achieve many of the targets that have been put forward in this plan. In fact a number of those targets have already been achieved.

So it sounds like, Mr. Chair, the province is going to be expecting an update in the not-too-distant future because of the success that Saskatchewan people are having in achieving the targets that were put forward by them in each of these documents, Mr. Chair, allowing people who are volunteering and working hard in industries and in their community building a greater, a better community to come together so that those communities collectively can build a better province.

And so, Mr. Chair, I just take a moment and I would table the Saskatchewan plans for growth that we have, the two of them, as well as the *2013 Progress Report*.

Mr. Chair, I'd say — and we'll get into some of this a little bit more as we find our way through the day — but we should talk just a little bit about what the various parties say about growth. And so I have a couple of quotes, some from a few days gone by and some more recent.

But the first is from Doreen Hamilton, who made a quote in the *Whitewood Herald* a number of years ago, about two decades ago, and said, "The Saskatchewan plan to increase our population by 100,000 people in 10 years," which has been our plan for some time, and we were able to start to deliver on that when we had the honour of forming government in 2007, but Doreen Hamilton had said, and I quote, "This is more wishful thinking than is statistically attainable."

Not to be outdone, not to be outdone a month later Harry Van Mulligen came out in *Hansard* and said:

... they [meaning the Saskatchewan Party] propose to increase the population of Saskatchewan by 100,000 over ... I forget what number of years, Mr. Speaker.

Well it is so over the top, it is so farcical that it flies in the face of reality.

Well, Mr. Chair, we've seen something quite different happen in that time period. We've seen not only 100,000 people, 100,000 people move to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but we've seen our, Mr. Chair, we've seen our population increase by actually 225,000 people in the last 17 years.

Not to be outdone, Mr. Chair, and to jump ahead just a couple of decades, we have the current member from Saskatoon Meewasin who said in *Hansard* on March 27th of 2023, "We will never reach their goal of 100,000 jobs by 2030."

So first we would never reach the 100,000 people, and they've ... Now they are claiming we will never reach the 100,000 increase in jobs, Mr. Chair. Well I for one have faith in Saskatchewan people that not only will we achieve that goal, Mr. Chair, but we're going to achieve many of the other goals that are put forward in our plan for growth.

And when it comes to our records, Mr. Chair, just a brief comparison of our records to set really the stage for some of the conversation that we're going to have here today: 223,806, that is the increase in population since we have had the honour on this side, the Saskatchewan Party has had the honour to form government in the province of Saskatchewan. You compare that to roughly the same time period under the NDP, 16 years previous to 2007, there was a grand population decrease of 627 people. They lost 627 people, left this province, Mr. Chair, over the course of their time in government.

Just last year there was 19,900 jobs that were added to the Saskatchewan economy versus the worst job creation record in the nation of Canada year in, year out.

In 2023 capital investment to this province, 17.2 billion. Mr.

Chair, that's up 25.9 per cent, second in the nation, forecast to be first in the nation this year with another 14 per cent increase. 17.2 billion last year. The last year of the NDP's government when they had the honour, Mr. Chair, 7.6 billion in capital investment.

Value of exports in this province, they're up 71.6 per cent — not since 2007 when we had the honour to form government but since actually 2018.

[15:00]

And I have — I'll get to it in a bit — I have a chart comparing more apples-to-apples numbers from the time when the NDP had the honour to be government. We're hovering today around \$50 billion of international exports, 52, \$49 billion the last two years. I believe in 2006 it was just under \$20 billion, or was \$14 billion or \$16 billion. I'll get the chart, Mr. Chair. We do more in ag exports today than we did in total exports in 2006.

And I think again that is one of the reasons why you will see me time and time rise again in this space and speak about having faith in Saskatchewan people in achieving the goals that we have set out.

Mr. Chair, and it's only through the strength of that economy that we are able to make the investments that we again will discuss today — the 9 per cent operational lift in education, the 10 per cent lift in health care, and the 14 per cent lift to municipal funding.

In addition to that, when it comes to the education file particularly, we have built, up until this budget, 65 new schools were built or in the process of being developed as well as 32 major renovations. This budget that we'll discuss today added nine more school builds to that. One of those, on the east side of Saskatoon, is going to be a joint-use school facility that will house 3,600 students. That will be the largest school that this province has ever seen, Mr. Chair. So nine more schools, two more major renovations. And again you contrast this with the members opposite. They weren't building schools. They were closing one a month for 16 years straight. And that is rather an alarming figure, 176 schools closed over their time.

We have seen investments in health care infrastructure. And yes, you're seeing investments in particular this year but in previous years as well with the most ambitious health human resource plan in the nation of Canada. But you have also seen ambitious investments in health care infrastructure. And you think of the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital, Mr. Chair, not even present in the province under the members opposite. You think of the replacement of the Saskatchewan Hospital. You think of the Weyburn hospital, of which I think we're going to have some positive announcements on the state of construction of that hospital in the not-too-distant days ahead. You think of the upgraded facility, new facility that is coming to the community of Prince Albert, and you think of all of the long-term care facilities that have been built across this province.

I remember distinctly, Mr. Chair, prior to being elected, when those announcements were made I believe in 2008. The Minister of Government Relations was the minister of Health at the time and made those announcements around 13 long-term care

facilities in this province. It was shocking to the province of Saskatchewan and to the people that we could actually build health care facilities in this province because for 16 years all we had done is close health care facilities and fire the nurses and doctors and allow them to move to other areas of our nation.

And, Mr. Chair, I would just say that if you truly have a plan for growth, not 12 plans but a serious plan for growth, you aren't governing in a way that is planning for decline. You aren't governing in a way that is planning for, you know, how you are going to manage the closure of hospitals. You aren't governing in a way so that you are planning for the closure of schools and ultimately fewer teachers working in our education sector.

You aren't planning for a way that you are closing what amounted to 19 long-term care facilities across the province. Over 1,000 long-term care beds were removed from our system, Mr. Chair, under the members opposite when they had the opportunity. You do not close health care facilities, fire over 450 nurses, fire over 173 doctors in your 16 years of time.

When you are planning for growth, Mr. Chair, in this province and you truly understand the recipe that has worked so successfully for Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan communities, Mr. Chair, it is really mapped out in that very first growth plan, that I tabled a minute ago. That very first growth plan that was made and had input from the people of Saskatchewan through their MLA, where we had set targets and Saskatchewan people and Saskatchewan industries and Saskatchewan communities achieved many of the targets that were put out in that plan. And the ones maybe admittedly we didn't achieve, we came much closer to, Mr. Chair, or they morphed and we are still trying to ensure that we are offering the services that Saskatchewan people expect in this province. And the only way that you are able to ensure that we are offering those services is to ensure that we have a strong, robust, vibrant, growing economy.

And that again brings me back to a government and a party that is focused on the growth of our economy so that we can make the 9 per cent lift in operational funding in our schools. A government that is focused on growing our economy so that we can make the 10 per cent lift in health care funding, so that we can ensure that we are fully funding the most ambitious health human resource plan in the nation of Canada and building hospitals in our communities, most recently like Weyburn and Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is focused on the growth of our economy so that we have the revenues to invest right back into our communities with an investment in municipal revenue sharing, an increase this year of 14 per cent, a program unlike anywhere else in the nation of Canada, a program certainly that wasn't available under the members opposite. And in addition to that, investing in community safety, ensuring that our communities are a safe place to live so that families are able to, after a day's work, take a walk around the block with their family and know that they are safe.

We have every opportunity as we look ahead, Mr. Chair, in this province. We have an opportunity to leave this place a better place than we found it, a better place for our children, and a place where they can call home.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want to say thank you to the Premier and to his officials and to all of those gathered here today, colleagues who are gathered for Premier's estimates in Committee of the Whole. And I do look forward to getting into the questions here today. Mr. Chair, I think that we can all agree that Saskatchewan is a wonderful province, full of amazing, hard-working people and full of opportunity.

And I'm hopeful that the Premier and I will have a good exchange today, have some debate about where we've been during his time as the Premier of this beautiful province. I think all that any of us can be asked to do is to stand, be accountable for our record. And today we're going to ask questions and talk about the Premier's record, his time in government, and his time as leader.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to get into the questions. I'm going to start by looking at job numbers. To the Premier: how many people were employed in February 2018 when that Premier came to office, and how many were employed in the latest jobs report dated March 2023?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Chair, I don't have the March 28 number but I have a number of reference points that I think will help us with this. First of all, over the course of the last year, or in 2023 we were up about 19,900 jobs. As we know, month to month there's seasonal adjustments that take place in the estimates that come out from Statistics Canada.

We are at a place today where we have the third-lowest unemployment rate in Canada today, Mr. Chair. I don't have the unemployment rate in front of me, but it is the third-lowest unemployment rate in the nation. When we compare this back to 2018 we have . . . sorry. Today we have 588,300 jobs. That was the job numbers that came out in March.

My understanding that is in April, with the seasonal adjustments and the increases that are coming, is we're about 597,000 jobs is what will be coming out in the latest numbers, Mr. Chair. And I would just say that today our unemployment rate is the third lowest in the nation. It's 5.4 per cent. That 588,300 job number is up, relative to March 2018, by 5 per cent, so that is the relative number that I do have.

We will achieve 600,000 jobs, people working in the province this summer. That's the most that have ever been working in the province's history. And when you compare this . . . And I think this is the comparison that is important to Saskatchewan people, is in March of 2008 the number was 500,000 people working in the province. And so we will achieve greater than 600,000 jobs at some point this summer, up 100,000 jobs since the NDP were in government, Mr. Chair. Today, as I said, the unemployment rate is 5.4 per cent. Under the NDP the unemployment rate was as high as 9 per cent at times, Mr. Chair.

And so when you look at the investment that is arriving in Saskatchewan, up 25 per cent this last year, 14 per cent in-year; you look at the construction jobs that is bringing; you look at the ongoing jobs that are happening — not just in those main

industries that are attracting the billions, tens of billions of dollars of investment like the potash industry, like the uranium industry, the copper mining industry, the oil industry, yes, and the ag value-added industry, as well as the ag tech and manufacturing industry — the future looks quite bright when it comes to the opportunity for careers for all of our children that live here and for people to move here, Mr. Chair.

And I think what is most exciting is if you understand that small business employs over half of the people that work in Saskatchewan, and you think of all of the spinoff opportunities for small businesses to service those export-focused industries, those export-related industries, Mr. Chair, we have every opportunity for so many people to enter the workforce in Saskatchewan, make a choice to stay here in Saskatchewan. That hasn't always been our opportunity. It wasn't in 1991 when I graduated high school, Mr. Chair, but it is today.

[15:15]

And we have opportunities for those very same individuals to go on and maybe start a small business, be successful in that small business, be a community builder in their community, whether they're working in one of those large industries, servicing one of those large industries, or working for a small business that is employing over half of the people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Chair, and adding to and building their community and raising their family in that said community, Mr. Chair.

We have every opportunity, I think, in the years ahead to increase not only the 100,000 jobs that we have but, as it's set out in the plan for growth, to increase another 100,000 jobs by 2030. That is different than what the member from Meewasin had said. He said that we would never achieve 100,000 additional jobs in this province, Mr. Chair, by the year 2030.

We've set the target by talking with Saskatchewan people in industries as to what they'd like to see. And immediately what we see is, a position of the opposition is that Saskatchewan can't do that; Saskatchewan isn't going to achieve that. It's because they don't have faith in Saskatchewan people. They don't have faith in what Saskatchewan people can do when they come together to build their communities, to build their province. And we saw that most evidently today with the attacks and smears in question period.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, we're not going to find any debate in the quality of Saskatchewan people despite what the Premier has to say. Now I will say that the number that the Premier seemed to struggle to find from 2018 was 565,000. And I thank my crackerjack research team for that, Mr. Speaker. And taken as a percentage from 2018 to now, this Premier has a job creation rate of 5.7 per cent. I gave him 0.7 per cent.

And I'm going to disagree with the Premier on this. I think the comparison that is most relevant to Saskatchewan people is not to 20 years ago. It is to other areas in Canada. And, Mr. Chair, the number that I just quoted is the lowest, the lowest in all of Canada.

Now, Mr. Chair, Brad Wall and Lorne Calvert and Roy

Romanow all created jobs at a faster rate than our current Premier. Why does he have the lower job-growth rate with this Premier in office than any other premier going back three premiers?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — So first of all, Mr. Chair, I'd like to read a report that was just released here on April the 30th of 2024, so it's very, very recent. It's from Scotiabank. It's titled *Scotiabank Provincial Outlook*, released yesterday. And the province they're referring to is this one, but they do speak of other provinces as well.

Most provinces are grappling with pullbacks in business investment as a result of restrictive interest rates, yet with upside surprises . . . According to 2024 capital expenditure intentions, private investment is expected to boost growth in some provinces, particularly in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, while remaining a headwind in British Columbia, Alberta, and New Brunswick. Public investment is anticipated to receive a significant boost this year, offsetting some weaknesses in private capital investment, notably in Ontario, BC, and Saskatchewan, where governments have announced substantial infrastructure spending plans.

It goes on to report on . . . It's a subheading, Mr. Chair: "Saskatchewan: Investment boom powers growth acceleration."

Saskatchewan's solid growth path is bolstered by a strong investment outlook this year. Robust commercial and residential construction continued at elevated levels in 2024. Capital outlays are set to increase by \$2.5 billion or 14.4 per cent in 2024, with notable increases in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction. Thirteen major projects are in the construction phase along with key sectors including agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and oil and gas, and BHP's approval of the \$6.4 billion investment in the Jansen stage 2 project should drive growth prospects over the next few years. Residential construction is also booming, with housing starts sitting at levels above the past two years while most provinces are experiencing a slowdown in building activities. Rapid growth in business investment supports job gains, and hiring has ramped up since late last year.

In the resource sector, a strong oil price outlook and stabilized potash prices indicate a promising year ahead. Favourable oil prices are expected to boost income in the province despite largely flat production levels. The normalization of potash prices from record highs in 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine seems to have stabilized and remains above historical levels.

So, Mr. Chair, there's Scotiabank's outlook released on the province of Saskatchewan and, in fairness, other provinces as well. I would say one of the reasons that we are experiencing a favourable outlook from, in this case, Scotiabank — but we've seen it from many other folks as well and it is impacting what will come up, I hope, at some point in this conversation — is the affordability of Saskatchewan families, the affordability matrix of which we're living under each and every year. So we're attracting the investment, creating the jobs. That's been identified by many national organizations. But we're also being

recognized as one of the most affordable places to live in Canada.

And I quoted a few of those quotes into the record earlier today, but I'd like to put one more on the record. And it comes from Paul Martin on April 30th of 2024 — the economist, not the former prime minister. I quote:

Saskatchewan probably has the best income-to-expense ratio in the land. In other words your money goes farther here than just about anywhere else in Canada. And at \$71,000 we were above the national average, even ahead of British Columbia.

I call it NDP BC [British Columbia]. The \$71,000 that he's referencing is the after-tax average income of a family where we rank third in the nation of Canada, and then with some of the more affordable house prices that you can find in Canada. Thereby you see some of the affordability comments that are coming from national organizations in Canada. So herein lies, Mr. Chair, how we have been able to attract over 19,000 jobs this past year. Herein lies how we have been able to attract 30,000 people to move to Saskatchewan this past year.

You contrast this, you contrast this, this economic plan released by the Minister of Trade and Export, Mr. Chair, you contrast the economic plan that we have put forward — the economic plan that is focused on growing our economy, growing our exports, growing our opportunities so that we can continue to invest and increase our investment in classrooms and care and in communities — is quite different than what we see put forward by the members opposite.

The members opposite, actually they did release their jobs plan. The leader released her jobs plan not too long ago. It had this many details — zero. In fact the whole plan consisted of 11 words. So maybe today is an opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to expand on her 11 words that said nothing and explain to Saskatchewan people what her plan, her economic plan is for the province of Saskatchewan. I hope it's a lot better than the plan they had 16 years ago.

The Chair: — I recognize the Opposition Leader.

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, it's interesting to see the Premier try to polish up his numbers on housing starts, but I suppose he doesn't have a lot to work with right now. I'm going to talk about . . . He mentioned projections in the next few years and I want to ask the Premier this. What are the budget projections for job growth in 2024 and each of the next four years?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. First of all on the . . . The comment on housing was not mine. I was quoting the Scotiabank provincial outlook release. And I just take the opportunity to read it in again — again, not my comment, the Scotiabank comment. And the opposition party has issues with what Scotiabank is saying. They can give Scotiabank a call and explain their masterful grasp of the situation, Mr. Chair.

And again I quote from Scotiabank:

Residential construction is also booming, with housing

starts sitting at levels above the past two years while most provinces are experiencing a slowdown in building activities. Rapid growth in business investment supports job gains, and hiring has ramped up since last year.

So I just put that on the record one more time. And I want to clarify, not my words. Those are the words of Scotiabank, Mr. Chair.

First what we need to understand, I think as well, when it comes to jobs growth — and I'll get to the answer to that question — is largely GDP is going to drive the jobs growth in Saskatchewan. We are an export-based economy; 65 to 70 per cent of what we produce is going to be exported to over . . . I think it's 163 countries was the last count this past year, is the number of countries that we export.

That's why you see a very robust and ambitious effort by this government to engage from a province-to-country basis in those countries where our Saskatchewan industries and Saskatchewan people are doing business, and where ultimately we are employing people in this province. That's why you see now nine Trade and Export Development offices that are operating.

And I would just point to a news release today where we saw, Mr. Chair, have seen over the course of the past year, a faltering in Indo-Canadian relations between our respective federal governments, Mr. Chair. You've seen advocacy at the provincial level, understanding that we do have a trade relationship with India, and we've seen an announcement and a recognition of that trade relation by the government of India with the reinstatement, the full diplomatic reinstatement of our Saskatchewan trade representative in that market — the only province to have that occur, Mr. Chair.

And that is due to us being in those markets, advocating alongside and with our Canadian ambassadors, our Canadian High Commissioners, helping Canada's advocacy in those markets but ensuring that we are prioritizing the relationship that is important to Saskatchewan producers, whether it be oil, whether it be mining products, whether it be ag products, whether it be ag tech products, whatever that might be. And we're going to continue to do that because that recipe is allowing us to increase our exports in this province, Mr. Chair. And it has allowed us to increase those exports by some 70 per cent, as I say, relative to 2018, which seems to be an important date here today.

So today the forecast in the budget for 2023 is a 1.4 per cent increase in the GDP. This is by the average of the private sector growth forecast. 2024 in-year, 1 per cent. I think it was announced today we're at 1.6 per cent actually. So we are exceeding the . . .

A Member: — That was 2023.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Oh, 2023. Pardon me. So 1.4 was the estimate for 2023; the actuals came in at 1.6. So we are exceeding the GDP growth forecast. That actually leads Canada, Mr. Chair, by a significant margin. Significant margin. Imagine that — Saskatchewan leading the nation in our GDP, not forecast, but actual GDP. Mr. Chair, the forecast for this year, this coming year is 1 per cent. That would put us roughly second or maybe

third in the nation, Mr. Chair, in-year. I think and we hope and we're planning to exceed those forecasts as well, and then in 2025 a 1.8 per cent GDP lift.

Where does this bring us when it comes to employment rate growth, Mr. Chair? As I said, in 2023 it was just under 11,000 jobs. I said 10,500, I think throughout that year. In the budget our estimate was 10,700. Forecast for 8,400 this year; 8,800 next year; 8,600 in 2026; 8,900 in 2027; 8,500 in 2028. It's on page 32 of the budget documents. And so I just point the Leader of the Opposition and all members over there to those documents, and they can see these numbers for themselves.

[15:30]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now if the projections that the Premier just stated pan out, that means that there will be 43,200 jobs created in the next five years in this province. In 2028 that means that the Premier will be 38,000 jobs short of his target of 100,000 new jobs by 2030.

Now the question is this: how is the Premier going to meet the 2030 target if the numbers in his own budget show that he's going to be 38,000 jobs short of that target?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, herein lies the difference — and this is important for Saskatchewan people — herein lies the difference between a party that believes in what Saskatchewan people can achieve and the NDP. Mr. Chair, the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, has added up 6 years, not 10 years. And when you look at the last four years, let's go 2023, 19,900 jobs; 2022, 10,900 jobs; 2021, 15,300 jobs; and in 2020, 50,800 jobs. Now that is a skewed number, Mr. Chair, because, as we know, that was in and out of a global pandemic. If you add those up and take those jobs at verbatim, it's 96,900 jobs just in those four years, Mr. Chair.

But as I said, we should remove 2020, in all fairness to the question. Remove those 50,000 jobs; you're still at 46,000 jobs in those first four years, Mr. Chair, and many more tens of thousands of jobs in the last 10 years. In fact when you do the actual math, we are on track to achieve the 100,000 jobs by 2030. Herein lies the difference between a party that believes in what Saskatchewan people, industries, communities can achieve, and a party that comes to the legislature to smear them on the floor of this Assembly.

Mr. Chair, I would just say that in addition to the numbers that I have put forward, this is a party that believes that we are going to have the opportunity to far exceed those numbers because of the growth agenda and the plan that we put in place. The recipe for success in this province is not a complicated one. We go out, we attract the investment into the industries that are creating wealth and employing people in our respective communities across Saskatchewan.

And we're seeing that happen with record-setting investment, private sector capital investment coming into the mining industry, coming into the ag value-added industry, preserving our

market access around the world, Mr. Chair. And we're seeing that in our export numbers. We're seeing it in our job numbers, and we're seeing it in the people that are moving to Saskatchewan. That is the focus of this government, Mr. Chair, is to set the standards and provide the environment where Saskatchewan people can achieve all that they can achieve.

What we see from the members opposite, what we see from the members opposite is a growth plan that is 11 words. No details. You can't get details in 11 words, Mr. Chair. And I would ask, you know, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition this question. When it comes to the important relationship that this province has with countries around the world — 163 of them now that we export to — what we have seen in the past, in addition to faulty jobs plans and faulty economic plans, what we have seen in the past starting on September 16th of 2014, we saw the start of what I call the scrap-all-of-our-trade-agreements plan by the NDP.

Cam Broten was the leader at that point in time. He lost that election on his scrap-all-of-our-trade-agreements plan, and we saw that scrap-all-of-our-trade-agreements plan revived and revitalized by one Dr. Meili in October of 2020. They then lost that election as well and had to find yet another leader.

We saw the jobs plan re-announced by this leader just the other day. And are they going to include beyond those 11 words the commitment that they're going to continue to scrap all of the trade plans that we have promoting Saskatchewan around the world?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, how about the Premier stands on his record and I'll stand on mine, Mr. Speaker, while we proceed. Now I notice that he had to pull in stats from a previous premier, Mr. Speaker . . . Mr. Chair. And it is not a lack of faith in the people or industries, businesses in this province that is the problem, Mr. Chair. As someone used to say in this Assembly, the problem is that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. It's that Premier's record that I'm concerned about, Mr. Chair.

Now by the time we're done I will remember to call you Mr. Chair rather than Mr. Speaker.

But I'm going to move on to some health care questions. And the question is this: how many hospital closures were there between August 2019 and July of 2023?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Zero.

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

Ms. Beck: — Perhaps, Mr. Chair, they were converted or something, but the answer that I have here is that there were 951 closures in 53 hospitals in the province. That means 951 times in 53 different hospitals, Saskatchewan people went to get care and they found the service or the hospital closed. And that is one more, Mr. Chair, rural hospital than under Romanow, Calvert by the way, but they know those numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Now there were more than 3,000 days of ER [emergency room] closures in this province. My question is, 3,000 ER closure days in this province, is that acceptable to the Premier when people can't get the health care that they need where they need it in this province?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just first would just explain maybe the difference between a service disruption and a closure. A service disruption, yes, we have had service disruptions in many of our rural and even in some of our urban communities over the course of the past while. I would say that those service disruptions are most certainly are not exclusive to Saskatchewan, as at our Council of Federation table, largely the discussion that we have is about how we are able to recruit and retain people into our respective provincial health care systems so that we can ensure that we have fewer service disruptions across Canada. Ultimately when you look at the strength of the Canadian system, it is provincial systems that build upon one another to ensure that we are a strong system.

Mr. Chair, I would say that that is very different than a closure, very different. Because when you see a service disruption in Saskatchewan, we have every effort, this government is making every effort to ensure that that service disruption is temporary, for a very short period of time, and we are actively working at hiring people to ensure that that service disruption ends and doesn't happen again.

That's very different than what we saw under the members opposite, admittedly, as she had admitted under former premiers, where they closed 52 facilities. They literally, they literally fired doctors and nurses, told them that there was no place for them to be employed in this province.

[15:45]

You contrast that with today where we are, yes, experiencing challenges in a post-pandemic world in delivering health care services, Mr. Chair, but we have the most ambitious health human resource plan in the nation of Canada. It's one that other provinces have actively looked at. It starts with ensuring that we have the jobs available in our system. It started with something as, and I wouldn't say minor, but one of many significant initiatives where the ministers of Health, the Ministry of Health, and the SHA sat down, went through, and had reallocated 250 new and enhanced positions. That's moving part-time positions to full-time positions, ensuring there are the adequate number of positions being hired into our health care facilities.

Of those 250 new and enhanced positions, Mr. Chair, 232 have been filled, been filled and are offering . . . those are people offering services in our respective communities. Other hiring that has occurred due to the health human resource action plan that we have, the most ambitious plan in Canada, Mr. Chair, are these: 97 positions in North Battleford, 70 of those have been filled and they are nursing positions; 69 positions in Prince Albert, 44 of those positions have been filled and they're nurses — all of them have been filled, 44 of them are nurses — 47 hires in Moose Jaw, 25 of those hires are nurses; 30 hires in Yorkton, 11 of those are nurses; 29 hires in Swift Current, 7 of those are nurses; 28 hires in Weyburn, 14 of which are nurses.

This is a result, Mr. Chair, of the most ambitious health human resource action plan in the nation of Canada and one that this government put \$100 million behind to ensure that we are having fewer disruptions as we move through time, Mr. Chair, fewer disruptions than many other areas of Canada and certainly are not planning to close any of the health care facilities like the member opposite did all too quickly.

Mr. Chair, in addition to that and while we're making those investments in the health human services side — in the people, the very people that are delivering care in our province, Mr. Chair — which are resulting in . . . starting to provide real results, Mr. Speaker, we are making capital investments as well.

But just on the nursing side, and the successes and more to come, but the initial successes in that health human resource plan on the nursing side, over a thousand Canadian grads have been hired and are working in a health care facility in Saskatchewan; over 400 job offers to Filipino nurses and other health care professionals, Mr. Chair, 170 of them are in a Saskatchewan health care facility, in a Saskatchewan community, offering health care services to the people reducing the number of any disruptions that we have and increasing the opportunity and the access for care that Saskatchewan people have.

In addition to that, in addition to that, Mr. Speaker, if the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour, let's look at this. Investment in a Victoria Hospital, redevelopment in Prince Albert; investment in a now-being-built Weyburn General Hospital, development project in Weyburn; the Regina General Hospital parkade.

And we know the conversation two years ago in this city around health care revolved around the need for long-term care beds. We're building the largest long-term care facility that this province has ever seen, Mr. Chair. The largest investment in a long-term care facility is happening right here in our capital city.

In addition to that, we're investing, Mr. Chair, in the hospital parkade at the Regina General Hospital that was asked for, by not only the staff, but by people that live in the city that are utilizing that facility, and I would say people that live across the southern portion of this province that need to come in and utilize this city . . . utilize those services.

In addition to that, when you drive north on north Albert Street, you're going to see the province's very first urgent care centre that is going to be offering urgent care services, thereby reducing the load on our emergency rooms. And we need to reduce that load and we need to invest in reducing that load, Mr. Chair. But also an intake, an intake for those that may be living a life with mental health challenges or maybe, unfortunately, entered a life of addictions.

We have a Grenfell long-term care investment. We have the urgent care centre not only in Regina but one coming with a partnership, a unique partnership, with Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation in Saskatoon. We're redeveloping the St. Paul's entrance at that facility in Saskatoon, a new long-term care redevelopment in Estevan, Quill Plains Lodge in Watson, Yorkton Regional Hospital. We're going to build a new hospital in Yorkton, Mr. Chair. We have the Saskatoon patient lodge, which received a million dollars.

And, Mr. Chair, here's an investment that I think isn't unique but, Mr. Chair, very, very important. And that's in the breast health centre of excellence, the renovations and the expanded care that are coming again right here to our capital city.

Mr. Chair, if the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour, that's this government's, that's this government's. It's ensuring that we have a strong, vibrant, growing economy so that we can make investments like that in health care infrastructure, investments like that in health care human resources that are offering the very services in community after community.

In fact, here is the comparison since 2007. Our health capital investment, it's \$2.9 billion up, Mr. Chair. Since 2018 it's up an additional \$417.6 million. \$2.9 billion, the amount invested by this government. That's three times, that's three times what the members opposite invested in their 16 years that they had.

We see today 1,000 more physicians offering services in Saskatchewan health care facilities. We see since 2018, 260 more physicians offering care, offering services in our health care facilities.

Under 16 years in the NDP not only did they lose people in this province, they lost 173 doctors. That was just from 2001 to 2006. I think it was about 6 or 700 people they lost. About a third of them were physicians that left this province, Mr. Chair. And here's the other one, it's 450 nurses left as well over that time, same time period.

Chasing health care professionals as well as teachers out of the province is the record of the members opposite.

Our record, Mr. Chair, if the future behaviour, if a signal of future behaviour is past behaviour, we have today 1,000 more physicians, 6,400 more nurses that are working in our health care facilities. Since 2018, 2,600 more nurses working in health care facilities in this province than there was today than there was in 2018.

That's the record, Mr. Chair, of myself, but more importantly it's the record of each and every member on this side that have been committed to investing in our health care, our health care service delivery in this province. And we're doing that because we're asked to by the people that we represent in community after community.

That ambitious health human resource plan that we have put forward, it's starting to show results. It needs to show more results and we're committed to seeing that. That's that plan that we said we have committed \$100 million to.

Fact is today there are close to 21,000 more surgeries that are being performed in 2023 relative to 2007. That's up over 20 per cent in the surgeries that are being performed today. Since 2018, we're up 6,000, and this year alone we're going to perform 100,000 surgeries, Mr. Chair. We're going to perform more surgeries today than have ever been performed in a 12-month period in the province's history.

Many of them are going to be publicly funded in the public theatres; many of them are going to be publicly funded in the private theatres, Mr. Chair. Another difference that we are going

to see between the members on this side who do not take an ideological approach to how we are delivering services in this province versus the members opposite that would do away with over 160,000 surgeries that Saskatchewan people have received.

And that is maybe why under them, Mr. Speaker, under the NDP we had some of the longest surgical wait times in the nation of Canada.

Mr. Chair, if a future, if future behaviour . . . If past behaviour is the indicator of future behaviour, Mr. Chair, we will stand behind the investments that this government has made year in, year out when it comes to health care investment; year in, year out when it comes to our investment in education; year in, year out when it comes to our investment in the communities in which we all live.

Mr. Chair, we are only able to do that because of the added commitment that members on this side of the House have — and I would say all Saskatchewan people have — in ensuring that we have a growing and prosperous economy so we can actually afford the investments that Saskatchewan people deserve

The Chair: — I recognize the Opposition Leader.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Well after that rather long, self-congratulatory soliloquy, thinly veiled as an answer, Mr. Chair, I'm going to remind us of what the question was.

It was about the more than 3,000 days of ER closures in this province and why people in this province can't get the health care they need where they need it. I think one of the things that the Premier mentioned in his answer was the short-term, I think he described it, nature of these closures and disruptions.

I'm just going to remind him that the hyperbaric chamber in Moose Jaw has been closed for three years. Wilkie has been closed since 2020. And Lanigan is approaching . . . well, over 730 days, Mr. Chair — hardly short term at all. And you know, he references the most ambitious, least effective health plan in the country that has seen 21 fewer nurses in rural and remote Saskatchewan during that Premier's time.

But I do have a question related to this, Mr. Chair, and, you know, the revolving closures that we see under this government. The SHA and the government know which hospitals and facilities are closed and on bypass. They don't share that information. And we've heard from so many people in this province who have to play a guessing game as to whether, when they're on the highway, the local hospital is open or not.

Now this is a province where we now track every snowplow in the province with our phones on a government website. And it's a good thing, Mr. Chair. It's a service I've used before and I know other people who do. But it's funny. It's funny that with the technology we have — maybe it's strange — that you have to show up in person at your local hospital to find a sign taped to the door to tell you whether it's open that day or not, something we hear all the time. Maybe not funny is the word, Mr. Chair. It's dangerous. Why not post this for everyone to see in the province on the SHA website?

[16:00]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Chair, I'll just comment on a number of service disruptions, and the Leader of the Opposition has mentioned a few, the longer term service disruptions that we have, and I'll get to how some of those are being addressed across the province. But first we need to understand what a service disruption is.

It may be a disruption of services for a short . . . a period of time as maybe three hours, Mr. Chair. Maybe an eight-hour service disruption when, let's say a nurse or a physician isn't able to work due to an illness and phones in sick a few minutes before their shift starts, and they need to have . . . You know, the services that they are unable to deliver for that period of time can be as short as three hours, maybe an eight-hour service disruption.

Those are all, you know, very much short-term, unplanned service disruptions that will be in the final count of service disruptions that we have, Mr. Chair. But those are service disruptions that the Health Authority and the local health facility are just simply unable to plan for when they happen at precisely the moment when the services are to be delivered. And so those service disruptions are difficult to communicate in the short period of time, sometimes minutes, before they happen, if there's a snowstorm, if there's an illness and a staff member is unable to show up.

That differs from some of the longer term service disruptions that we have had. And those longer term service disruptions certainly are a focus of this government with the health human resource plan that we have in place. As I said, it's a very ambitious plan, very much one of the most, if not the most ambitious plan in the nation of Canada, Mr. Chair.

What we have seen in those longer service disruption areas due to the ambitious recruitment and retention of largely nurses, but I would say a number of different medical health care professionals into largely rural communities, but not always . . . we have, for instance, the Broadview Union Hospital which has had . . . its emergency department access is now being expanded by four hours on Monday through Fridays from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. This is effective Monday, March the 4th, so this is a recent one. Mr. Chair, that's due to the successful recruitment of combined laboratory and X-ray technologists as well as some registered nurses into that facility. They have arrived due to the ambition of the health human resource plan that we have in play and the funding that members of this government provided to ensure that that plan can be executed on by the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

In the case of the community of Herbert, the Herbert hospital had reopened one of their acute care beds on March the 4th as well, and this is due to stabilization of the licensed staff that they have.

In the Wolsley Memorial Integrated Care Centre there's a partial resumption of the emergency department services from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. Again that began on February the 26th.

We have Biggar. We have Watrous, Tisdale, Moose Jaw, Melfort, La Ronge, Kamsack. All had temporary service

disruptions, but they are being returned to . . . Those disruptions are being returned to service delivery, Mr. Chair, and it's due to the Saskatchewan Health Authority recruiting more people.

Across Canada we know that we need to recruit more health care professionals into our system. That's why you're seeing in this province we're able to say that we've recruited over 6,000 nurses into the health care system, over 2,400 I believe the number was since 2018. We recruited over 1,000 physicians into our health care system. We're recruiting lab techs into the system. We're recruiting RNs [registered nurse], LPNs [licensed practical nurse], increasing the number of nurse practitioners that are offering services.

And so these service disruptions, yes, some of them can be a little bit longer. It is the goal of the government, and the Saskatchewan Health Authority has been instructed, that they have the resources to ensure that they are hiring the adequate number of health care professionals so that we do not have service disruptions into the future. That is the goal and that is what we are working towards. Some of those service disruptions, yes, they're as short as three hours and arrive on a short period of time.

The longer service disruptions are available on the Saskatchewan Health Authority website. I believe there's six of them, longer term service disruptions, that are on that website as we speak.

Mr. Chair, I would say that this is a government that listens to the people in health care, offering those services in our communities through the Saskatchewan Health Authority, listens to the people that live in the communities that are utilizing those services, to ensure that we are committed and providing the funding so that those health care services that people expect are available, they are accessible over the long term in their community.

Mr. Chair, I would invite the members opposite to put forward what their health care plan looks like. I hope it's more than their jobs plan, which was 11 words. And because, Mr. Chair, it's important if past behaviour is an indicator of future behaviour, when it comes to the number of days or the number of disruptions that the members opposite caused through decisions that they made in closing 52 hospitals in this province, Mr. Chair, you take 52 hospitals times 14 years times 365 days a year. That means 265,000 days of closed hospitals under the NDP.

And that's just till 2007, thankfully, when the people of Saskatchewan made a different choice. They made a choice, a choice to elect a government that is going to ensure they are focused on strengthening and growing our Saskatchewan economy so that we can actually invest in maintaining, increasing, and building our health care services and our health care facilities in community after community in this province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. Now I'm not sure if the Premier said it was too hard, and I did listen closely to the answer, but he would know that service disruptions, the closure of ERs is a matter of life and death. If people know that they are not open, Mr. Chair, they will go on to the next facility or make a decision about whether to call an ambulance or not. I hope he reconsiders and looks at putting those closures up on the SHA website, because this is something that is very practical and something

that we hear often from people in this province.

I'm going to move on and I'm going to go back to a day about . . . More than a year ago, and this was after the Regina General Hospital was put on bypass again, communities of all sizes were dealing with the lack of an effective recruitment and retention plan. It was put on bypass because of short-staffing. And at that time, SUN [Saskatchewan Union of Nurses] president Tracy Zambory called on the Premier to form . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm not sure if the member has something to say . . . called on the Premier to form a nursing task force, very practical suggestion, to find solutions. Again that was more than a year ago. Since then, Mr. Chair, we've had fire code violations, we've had stop-the-line emergencies in hospitals, in emergency rooms of all sizes.

Now the Premier has stubbornly, steadfastly refused to say yes to a nursing or a health care task force. The question is, why?

[16:15]

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, a few points I'll make on this. First, with respect to engagement with all of our health care unions — not just SUN and with Ms. Zambory, but all of our health care unions — the Health ministers are committed to frequent discussions with not only the leadership but the members as well as they travel to communities across the province.

I, myself, engage with Tracy Zambory with SUN on . . . have engaged on numerous occasions and engage each and every year at our Council of Federation of which we will be in Halifax I believe in July, Mr. Chair. The first day I believe there's a breakfast that the CNA puts on, the Canadian Nurses Association, of which I think I've attended each and every year that I've attended the Council of Federation. I don't think I've missed, Mr. Chair, but I could stand to be corrected on that. But I've attended numerous times, not only with, you know, our representative at the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, Tracy Zambory, but with representatives from across the nation as well.

In addition to that, as I said, both Health ministers are engaging with leadership of our . . . union leadership across the board in the health care field. And they've been asked to, and don't need to be asked because they engage and engage frequently.

They also engage with communities, Mr. Chair. You know, there's mayors and reeves. We had SARM here not too long ago, SUMA as well, Saskatchewan urban municipal convention here in our capital city. And our Health ministers, if you haven't noticed, are busy, very busy in the days leading up to those conventions, the days of, and the days after.

And they're engaging with municipal leadership and listening to those mayors, those reeves, the councillors in both our rural and urban communities on, you know, what the priorities are from their perspective and what they're hearing with respect to what health care services may be struggling, what health care services need to be added, and often about what might be working in those communities as well.

We have a number of local foundations as well that are volunteers. We were talking again about one of these volunteers today in question period. But volunteers that are working on behalf of their community to improve the opportunities that they have and that our Saskatchewan Health Authority has in offering health care services in and around their community and to the people in their region.

There's regional groups, Mr. Chair. In my area we have what's called the Twin Rivers regional working group. They work together on a number of different regional initiatives there's in and around the community of Rosthern, taking in Duck Lake and a number of other communities — Waldheim, Laird, Hepburn, the list goes on. A number of RMs working on regional landfill solutions, for example, working together to fundraise their 20 per cent of their hospital that was announced in that community, Mr. Speaker. That is a group that I personally have seen both Health ministers engage with in their time and previous Health ministers engage as they have engaged with other regional working groups across the province.

So yes, our engagement with union leadership, very important, Mr. Chair. And we've heard the calls from Tracy Zambory on a nurse task force, and I'd say that that conversation continues. But we are listening to other union leaders as well, Mr. Chair. And also listening I think to community leaders, to those that are donating and volunteering their time to improve the opportunities for service in their community.

And I would say as important as any of those, and in the over 60 communities that these Health ministers have visited, Mr. Chair, it's important to recognize and commend them for the conversations that they're having with front-line providers, with our nurses, RNs, LPNs, with our lab techs, with the physicians that are offering the services to Saskatchewan people, the nurse practitioners, all of the people that are offering those services that other people in Saskatchewan, in their community often need.

Mr. Chair, and it's through some of that consultation that the over-capacity response in Saskatoon and Regina was arrived at. This was a solution that came from the very front-line health care providers — some of them represented by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses; some of them represented by other unions as well — and what it called for was to increase the number of a variation of health care professionals in our emergency departments to ensure that we have the capacity to address what's coming through the front door, for example, at the Regina General Hospital.

What has come about from that, Mr. Chair, is when it comes to the positions, there has been just under 62 positions that have been approved to be hired, and we're happy to report that the Saskatchewan Health Authority has hired 50 of those positions. What the result of that is, we have a decrease in the number of alternative level of care patients that are in our emergency departments, and we have a decrease in the admissions of patients that might not have a bed.

Mr. Chair, you add to this the investment, of that capacity investment of 62 positions, you add to that the investment and the people coming to offer services in the community of Regina again through the urgent care centre, going to be removing people from our emergency rooms, people that may have an

illness of some type or something that has happened that is maybe not emergent and doesn't warrant being in the emergency room, but it can't wait 10 or 12 days to see their primary care provider, whether that be a physician or a nurse practitioner.

They now have the option to go to what is, will be the urgent care facility and receive the care that they need without taking up a place or taking up a bed for a period of time in our emergency room, or as they triage in that very emergency room, having to wait for a number of hours as higher priority cases ultimately are being seen before them. And so, Mr. Chair, we see this as really filling a gap and working with the SHA to ensure that it's fully staffed and being able to offer the services that are going to provide for better care not only for the people in Regina but better care for the people in the whole entire region, Mr. Chair.

That's how we work together, yes, with our union leadership. We work together, yes, with our community leadership and those volunteers that are serving on our hospital foundations, for example, but also working directly with the front-line providers that are offering services in facility after facility, in community after community across the province.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, it's an awful lot of words to say no, say no to a very specific request by nurses in this province to be part of a nursing or a health care task force. They want to just, Mr. Chair, not tell ministers or the Premier what their concerns are. They want to be part of the solutions.

You know, he would know that the concerns with the urgent care centre are around how they're going to staff it with the terrible rates of retention we have in the province. Mr. Chair, nurses in this province — like so many others — don't feel heard by this government, but they keep trying to get their attention.

We saw emergency room nurses who wrote to the Health minister about their concerns with the rapidly rising number of contract nurses that are employed or contracted by this government. In their letter they said, and I quote, "The significant disparity in perceived value leaves the permanent staff feeling frustrated." They went on to say, and I quote, "When we can find ways to attract agency nurses and keep them coming back, why can we not find ways to retain our own nurses?"

Mr. Chair, it's a good question. I'd like to know what the Premier's answer is.

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Chair, in much the same fashion as in Regina — in a previous answer — and partially due to the conversations that have happened with all of the aforementioned entities, including input again from front-line providers, of where the Minister of Health has instructed the Saskatchewan Health Authority to ensure that they have officials on the ground in the hospital in Saskatoon.

So they are talking with those front-line health care providers to ensure that the communication about, you know, what positions they might need to ensure that the services can be delivered is very rapid back and forth between the Saskatchewan Health

Authority and whoever within that entity, within the Ministry of Health, and wherever that communication may have to happen.

In light of that, across the board, Mr. Chair, in the Saskatoon facilities there has been 385.61 full-time equivalents, additional full-time equivalents that have been approved by the Saskatchewan Health Authority, and they are actively hiring individuals to fill those positions. 182 of those positions have been filled. When it comes more specifically to nurses and LPNs . . . well nurses, there's 144.76, so roughly 145 positions that have been approved to be hired. Over 65 of those positions have been hired as well, Mr. Speaker.

To the other question around, you know, where are we going to hire people to offer services in the urgent care centre, I think . . . Is it 120 or 200 people that were going to staff the urgent care centre here? It's a number of folks that the Saskatchewan Health Authority are going to have to hire to staff the urgent care centre here in Regina as it opens this summer, offering those services. And I want to come back to those services because I think they're important and signify the difference between how the current government versus the opposition view the delivery of health services and the role of the government in funding those health care services, Mr. Chair.

But they will be part of the health human resource action plan that we have, as I said the most ambitious plan in Canada, a plan that has added 550 training seats into our various post-secondary institutes in the province. Those 550 training seats cover a total of 18 various designations, health care designations, so that people in Saskatchewan now have more seats to access. Twice as many when it comes to nurse training seats in the province, relative to members opposite. They'd actually, when it comes to psychiatric nurses, they had cut the entire program in the province. We've reinstated that program, Mr. Chair.

[16:30]

But I'm reminded as well, in addition to the nurse training seats and the 18 different designations that we have added 550 training seats to . . . Well let me finish on that first. When it comes to the grads that are coming out of those programs, and let's look at nursing grads in particular in Saskatchewan — again coming out of a number of seats that are over double what it was under the NDP — when it comes to the University of Saskatchewan, 90 per cent of those graduates are staying in the province, employed by the Saskatchewan Health Authority, offering services to Saskatchewan people.

When it comes to Saskatchewan Polytechnic — also has a number of nurse training seats — 95 per cent of those graduates are staying in the province of Saskatchewan, consequently and partially because they then have the opportunity to raise their children in this province. But they also have the opportunity to collect on the graduate retention savings program that we have, \$20,000 in their tuition that will be returned to them over the course of a number of years.

When it comes to Indigenous people that are taking their nurse training at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, 99 per cent stay and are employed in the province of Saskatchewan. And so when the member opposite had asked, you know, where are we going to get the people to offer the services in the urgent care centre?

Right here. We're going to hire the grads that are coming out of our post-secondary institutes.

We've hired other grads as well. Over 1,000 nursing grads alone have been hired across this nation, are working in a Saskatchewan Health Authority building offering services in a Saskatchewan community. One hundred and seventy Filipinos are here, Mr. Chair. A number more have been offered jobs as well.

But I'm reminded of the state of physician training seats actually in this province under the members opposite versus what we see today. And I think this is indicative, and you can overlay this very same scenario when it comes to nurses and the number of nurse training seats that were available under the members opposite when they had the honour to serve the people of Saskatchewan as their government. Or psychiatric nurses, which was zero, Mr. Chair. They had cut that entire program. We've reinstated it.

But when it comes to physicians, and we'll use this and it can be an analogy for the other disciplines, 60 nurse training positions were available in the province in 2007. Sixty nurse training . . . sorry, physician training seats were available at the College of Medicine, in a college that was, Mr. Chair, being watched closely by the accreditation body.

What this government did very early — in addition to the 13 facilities that they committed to in 2008, the infrastructure spend — is they committed to a significant infrastructure investment in the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. That was the largest challenge that that college had in ensuring that they were going to be able to continue to be an accredited college for years into the future and train physicians for Saskatchewan communities.

In addition to that infrastructure investment, we saw an investment — and our Minister of Government Relations knows this well, as he was the Health minister at the time — we saw an additional investment in the College of Medicine, taking those physician training seats from a number of 60 to a number of 100. Mr. Chair, we've since went to 104, and this year 108 training seats, close to doubling the number of physician training seats in this province versus under the members opposite.

In addition to that, the residency seats, Mr. Chair, where graduating physicians have the opportunity to practise in a community and hopefully maybe stay in that community, went from 60 to 120.

All of that and revamping our international recruitment processing . . . our qualification program. I remember the old CAPE [clinicians' assessment and professional enhancement] exam morphing to what we now call the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program.

Mr. Chair, that was all hard work, investment, Mr. Speaker, on not just the government's behalf but all of those in the sector and the University of Saskatchewan as well as other post-secondary institutes that expanded their medical training programs, like the nursing program, like the psychiatric nursing program, like the nurse practitioner training program. All of that has happened, Mr. Speaker, through this government's commitment to ensuring that we are able to train Saskatchewan people to work in our health

care system. And all the while we are working to attract people to move here and work in our health care system.

This is a very, very different plan than what was enacted under the NDP. And if future behaviour, the indicator of future behaviour is what happened in the past, Mr. Speaker, lord help us if the NDP ever get elected in this province again because we will not have a health care system that is worthy of the people in Saskatchewan that are investing in it.

Mr. Chair, I would just go back to the global numbers of who is working in our health care system and how we are going to recruit people into places like the urgent care centre by believing in Saskatchewan people, believing in our post-secondary education system, and believing that Saskatchewan people most certainly will choose to stay here and to work in our Saskatchewan Health Authority system

They're doing that today. Over 6,400 more nurses are working in the system today than did in 2007 under the NDP. More than 1,000 physicians are working in that system today than did under the NDP. Since 2018, 2,600 more nurses are working in our Health Authority system today in a community in Saskatchewan that did under the NDP, and we're still hiring more and more each and every day. Two hundred and sixty more physicians offering services in Saskatchewan than did since 2018 — never mind under the NDP — since 2018, Mr. Chair.

You contrast that with the record of the members opposite. Closing the hospitals, yes, but firing the doctors and nurses, Mr. Speaker, I think is really something that is inexcusable to the Saskatchewan people. Thankfully in 2007 we saw the Saskatchewan people make a different choice, a choice of a government that is going to ensure that we have a strong and robust economy, an economy that guarantees and ensures that the investments in health care are going to be on par with what Saskatchewan people expect. And we didn't have that for years, and that's why they made the change.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thanks, Mr. Chair. A little free advice for the Premier. You know, some day the bogeyman of the bad old days or, you know, what happened 20 years ago aren't going to work for people because they know what it's like working in health care under that Premier. And he might also, Mr. Chair, want to check his facts around retention rates. You know, he had a lot of numbers there, a lot of bluster.

In 2022 we retained a sum total of 14 per cent of pediatric specialists in this province. Radiology professionals, we lose about 80 per cent out of province, Mr. Chair. And so many of the problems that we see in health care stem from a lack of staff. Staff recruiting is part of it for sure. Training seats are part of it, but retention . . . We're losing people because they're burning out from working short, working through their vacations, and working under conditions under this government. And, Mr. Chair, we have to do so much more to retain the staff that we have and do a better job of getting people living in Saskatchewan working and staying in the health care system.

And I agree with the Premier here, especially when it comes to First Nations and Métis people in this province. Now this is

something that I asked the Premier about last year, and since then there's been zero progress on that front.

My question is this: when will we see a detailed plan to recruit and retain First Nations and Métis people in health care like our Grow Your Own plan?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Chair, "if past behaviour is the indicator of future behaviour"; first of all, those are the Leader of the Opposition's words. She brought that up. I've used that as some examples to make some comparisons and contrasts: the opposition's record; the opposition's plan or sometimes no plan, lack of a plan, I think; or 11-word plan, Mr. Chair. But most certainly the Leader of the Opposition brought up the fact that past behaviour is an indicator of future behaviour.

To the question around retention of Indigenous workers into our health care sector, I just said one of those numbers in the last answer, Mr. Chair. When it comes to the University of Saskatchewan, the general grad retention rate into the province is 90 per cent. When it comes to Saskatchewan Polytechnic, the retention rate across the board of nurses that are staying in our province, Mr. Chair, choosing to stay in our province, is 95 per cent. And when it comes to Indigenous nursing grads at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, that retention rate in the province of Saskatchewan is 99 per cent.

Mr. Chair, we're talking about net numbers. And this is important because I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, we do need to talk about net numbers. The net number of the increase in nurses in Saskatchewan since 2018 is up 2,600. The net number of physicians working in our system, our provincial system since 2018 is up 260. The net number of physicians since they had the opportunity to form government is up over 1,000. The net number of nurses that are working in a Saskatchewan Health Authority building offering health care services to Saskatchewan people, relative to 2007, is up 6,400.

Mr. Chair, these are the net increases, and I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when she says we need to increase the number of people that are working in our communities to limit the amount of temporary service disruptions that we have, but just as importantly to ensure that Saskatchewan people are receiving the care that they have invested in and receiving the care that they expect in this province.

And thankfully in 2007 they elected a government that is going to ensure that we are focusing on the growth and strength of our economy so that we can make the investments in health care that you have seen over the last decade and a half, investments that this year included an over 10 per cent increase in health care funding, Mr. Chair, unprecedented in this province's history.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, we will leave it to the people of this province to see if they think that the health care that they have in this province right now is the health care that the people in this province, those working in our health care system, deserve.

But I'm going to move on. Now I'm going to talk a little bit, Mr.

Chair, about the Education minister, this Premier's Education minister, someone who has presided over the longest teachers' action in the history of our province. This is someone who has made statements on the very first day that are demonstrably inconsistent with the facts. He's rammed forward a bill that uses not one, but two notwithstanding clauses to trample the rights of vulnerable kids. And he's sown chaos and he's sown division in our education system. And frankly, Mr. Chair, this is someone who's shown himself time and again not to be up to the job.

The question is, why hasn't the Premier fired this Minister of Education?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Let's talk about the Education minister here a little bit. And then we might talk about a few other folks in this Assembly as well as we find our way through this, if that's the choice that is being made, Mr. Speaker. But let's talk about what this Education minister delivered on behalf of students, on behalf of teachers, on behalf of parents across the province.

First and foremost, just in this most recent budget, nine new schools. Nine new schools being built. As I mentioned earlier, one of those schools will be the largest school in the province. That's due to a growth-focused government, Mr. Chair. What that will mean is more classrooms that will be available for children, students to attend, Mr. Chair, and it's through the largest operational budget in the history of the province. Not only largest budget, but largest increase in the history of the province, Mr. Chair, that our school divisions are going to be able to employ more teachers, more educational support staff, Mr. Chair, to ensure that our students are receiving the quality education in this province.

[16:45]

Mr. Chair, I would say there's a number of other things that this minister has, and other ministers have achieved in the province as well, Mr. Chair. And that is ensuring that, you know, that our parents in this province, they have a choice on where they can send their children. They send their children possibly to a public school. They can send it to a separate school, often a Catholic school in the province, Mr. Chair.

But they also have the opportunity if they should choose, to send it to, Mr. Speaker, an independent school. We have parents that are sending their children to the Huda School here in Regina. We have parents that are sending their children to affiliate schools in the province, Mr. Speaker. I think of RJC [Rosthern Junior College] in the community of Rosthern. We have Luther College, Mr. Chair. A number of parents make that choice to send their children to Luther College, Mr. Chair.

And it's this Education minister that has been part of ensuring that this government's record when it comes to investing in schools — not just building schools but operational funding in our schools — continues to be strong. And what we've seen over our time in government since 2007, we've seen an increase in enrolment of 18 per cent, an increase of enrolment of 18 per cent. That's due to people moving here, people choosing to stay here, Mr. Chair. That's part of the 225,000 people that are living in

Saskatchewan that just simply didn't under the NDP.

Over that same time period what we've seen, and this current Education minister is part of these numbers, Mr. Chair, is an increase in our K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] funding of 57 per cent. Eighteen per cent student population increase, a 15 per cent increase in the funding.

Mr. Chair, just in addition to this, I would say it is this Education minister that has ensured and carried further involvement of parents in their children's education by passing, in this legislature, the parental bill of rights. Mr. Chair, parents need to be involved in their children's lives. They need to be involved in their children's education. The parental bill of rights ensures that that will be the case, and it is a bill that the members opposite would retract again, Mr. Chair, if they ever had the opportunity.

But here is an opportunity for us to take a position, Mr. Chair. We know that over the course of the . . . in about a week, we are going to have teachers from across this province that are going to have the opportunity to vote "yes" or "no" on an offer that has been offered by this government. Mr. Chair, we feel that that is a fair offer. It's a fair offer for our educators, for our teachers in schools right across this province. It gives them the security of continuing to ensure that they are among the highest paid — above the Western Canadian average — in our nation, Mr. Chair. We believe that it is a fair offer that has been offered to our teachers.

We believe it's a fair offer as well for our parents and for our students. It's an offer that — if our educators would, Mr. Chair, vote "yes" to — would ensure that we would have the continuity of our classes till the end of the school year. We would ensure that we would have continuity in the way of graduation exercises and ceremonies for our children. It's an offer that is investing, investing in supports directly into our classroom across this province, Mr. Speaker. It's also an offer that, if our educators would vote "yes" to, many if not all of them would receive in the neighbourhood of a couple thousand dollars of back pay, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chair, we believe there is a fair offer that has been put in front of our teachers across this province. We would ask for and believe that they should vote "yes" to that offer. What's the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, there's a bit to unpack there. First of all, I'm going to correct the Premier. Associate schools, such as the Huda School, are not independent schools. Luther is a historical high school.

But back onto . . . You know, his misinformation that the only way to have parents involved was to call an emergency session and invoke the notwithstanding clause twice to take away the rights of children is simply beyond belief, Mr. Chair. Parents have and will continue to be involved in their children's schooling more and more because, you know, it's needed. We don't have the supports that are needed in those classrooms.

Now school divisions, and this maybe goes back to the offer that the Premier's talking about. We believe that deals should be

negotiated at the table and teachers will make their decision with the information they have. But speaking of information that's in hand right now, we see school divisions working through their budgets. And already we see school divisions make clear the fact that more cuts are going to be needed in order to balance their budget because of this government's underfunding, despite the continued self-congratulations.

Last week we saw Saskatoon Public send home information showing that they've been forced to make cuts to classrooms and warn that they still face, and I quote, "chronic underfunding." What, Mr. Chair, or where does this Premier think that that school division should cut next?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Chair, specific to Saskatoon Public, since 2007 the funding level was up about 77 per cent, \$125 million. This past year the increase to Saskatoon Public to a total of \$286 million being provided, but the increase was \$26.7 million, which is a 10.3 per cent increase year over year, really an unprecedented increase in the education sector, Mr. Chair. Since 2018, up \$55 million or a 24 per cent increase. What we've seen in student enrolment increase in Saskatoon Public is a 16 per cent increase. So funding has went up 24 per cent, student enrolment up 16 per cent.

Mr. Chair, I'm reminded of the very first funding announcement that I was involved with in February of 2018. The very first allocation of funding and decision that we had made as a cabinet, in my first cabinet meeting, was to add \$30 million to the education budget, specifically to hire EAs [educational assistant] into our classrooms. That has been disbursed. That was in-year funding, Mr. Chair, much like the 40 or \$50 million being added last year was in-year funding as well. That was in-year funding that was provided and then was solidified in each and every budget after that.

In addition to that, since 2021 there has been additional educational assistant funding that has been provided to the level of \$3 million to Saskatoon Public. That's allowed them to hire 166 additional EAs into their schools, and this is on top of the relocatables that have been invested in and on top of the capital infrastructure in the new schools, up to and including this most recent budget, that have been included, Mr. Chair. So \$26.7 million is the increase to Saskatoon Public. That is a 10.3 per cent increase to their operating budget, Mr. Speaker.

And I appreciate the words of the Leader of the Opposition, telling me, you know, the difference between a public high school, a Catholic or separate system high school, a historical high school, or an independent high school, Mr. Chair. I think the question that parents in this province have and policies that have been put forward by her members on her side is, which of those schools specifically would you close?

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Chair, you know, the number one question that I get about education is about the lack of funding from that government. Now it's great to have growth; there's no doubt about it. But you have to fund the services that go along with that growth, like in our schools. And it's great to have new

buildings, Mr. Chair. It really is. But you have to staff those buildings and that is not something that we have seen from this government.

Now documents from Saskatoon Public make it very clear. Since 2016, just before that Premier took office, per-student funding has been cut by \$2,485 per student. Which supports — and I'm going to ask this question again because I really want an answer to this, Mr. Chair — which supports does the Premier think Saskatoon Public Schools should cut to make up for the difference, for the decline of \$2,485 per student in their system?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the funding of our schools across this province, as I have said a number of times, the Minister of Education has said a number of times on the floor of this Assembly and in the rotunda and in other venues when asked, Mr. Chair, Saskatchewan people, individuals, families, fund at a higher rate per capita our education system than anywhere else in Canada — anywhere else in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, what we have seen . . . So what that means is each individual Saskatchewan resident is investing more in our provincial education system than any other resident across the nation of Canada. And so for that investment to increase, for that investment to increase per person in this province, Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the Opposition needs to explain where those dollars would come from.

We've seen what happened in Manitoba. We've seen what happened in Manitoba where the provincial government didn't have a 9 per cent increase in operational funding like we have here in the province of Saskatchewan. They had a 3.4 per cent increase. And what happened is the Manitoba NDP government returned the ability for school divisions to collect their own education property tax, and we saw in one school division the increase of education property tax by some 17 per cent.

Is that the plan for education that the Leader of the Opposition is putting forward, like her counterparts in Manitoba? Like they had before when we had sit-ins in this very building, Mr. Speaker, protests of people across this province — and yes, we listen to all people across this province, Mr. Speaker — because of the unfair education property tax system that the NDP had put in place.

Mr. Speaker, more largely to the point around the choice and the information that was provided, or schooled to me rather, on our historical high schools, Mr. Speaker, our qualified independent schools, our certified independent schools, of which they have taken the stance that they would not provide parents with that choice.

[17:00]

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon we have a school, the Misbah School, which is currently moving from being a public associated school to an independent school. Is that a school that the NDP would not fund?

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Chair, obviously the Premier has no

ideas about where Saskatoon Public should cut with the underfunding that they've been handed by that government. That's not a surprise. He didn't even touch it, Mr. Chair.

Now recently about 3,000 teachers and their supporters came to the Legislative Building. Actually it was about a year ago. But at that time, the Premier said that those teachers had been heard. Well since then we've seen a bad-faith billboard campaign, sometimes bus ads, using taxpayers' dollars to vilify, to vilify teachers in this province. Mr. Chair, some of those billboards are even still up today.

This is my question: how much money, how much money . . . Well the former minister wants to chime in here. Maybe he should get on the record. He can partly own some of this. But the question is, how much money has the Premier spent on this campaign to vilify teachers?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — As we said in the last question, Mr. Chair, in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan people are investing more per capita in our education system than in any other province across the nation of Canada. We have seen the decisions that have been made in NDP Alberta where they have increased their funding by, not 9 per cent like here in Saskatchewan, but 3.4 per cent. We're seeing the resulting fallout with respect to the decisions that local divisions are making in increasing education property tax in at least one school division by some 17 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I would say with respect to the choice that parents have in where they can send their children, Mr. Speaker, to whether it be a public system, whether it be the Catholic system, whether it be an independent school, a qualified independent, certified independent school, Mr. Speaker, a historical high school, whatever that might be, Mr. Chair, I'll just read into the record a couple of quotes with . . . yeah, a couple of quotes with respect to the members opposite.

The member for Regina University said back in August of '22 when asked if the NDP would stop funding all private schools like the Huda School, Luther College was mentioned, she said "obviously" on Twitter, Mr. Chair. That was August the 2nd of 2022, Mr. Chair.

It goes on. The Leader of the Opposition has not only stated in the NDP policy is that they would not, just not fund independent schools in this province, when asked years ago when we had a court case going on, Mr. Speaker — it involved the public and separate school system in Theodore, Mr. Chair — and I would quote the question that came from a reporter: "And so if I hear you correct, besides the constitutional obligation to have a Catholic school system you're not as keen on giving 80 cents on the dollar to other independent associate schools?" And the response from the now Leader of the Opposition was, "If that comes at the expense of the publicly funded school system, no."

Mr. Chair, the NDP record is that they would not provide the choice for parents on where to send their schools. And so I would direct the question back at the Leader of the Opposition one more time. Given the opportunity, would she or would she not fund the Misbah School in Saskatoon?

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Chair, again we have the Premier auditioning for the role of the Leader of the Opposition. He's doing an okay job at it; give him a B. But I'm going to move on because, you know, there's nonsense in what's coming out of the Premier right now.

I'm going to move on to something that is very important to the people of this province, to people back at home, and that's cattle producers in this province. And cattle producers in this province are well-known, long-standing stewards of the land. In addition to producing the best beef in the world they sequester carbon in the soil, and livestock producers are essential for preserving native grasslands. The work that the ag sector does to reduce and sequester emissions is certainly important, but there's been zero recognition or incentive for that under the government.

The question is, why not? Those producers are struggling. Why is there still no plan that recognizes the role that producers play in protecting wetlands, grasslands, and addressing climate change? Why is there no support to encourage these producers to continue to remain in cattle and continue to do the important work that they do, producing the best beef in the world, and also being stewards of the land?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Happy to have an agricultural question on the floor of the Assembly, Mr. Chair. And let me say that this is a party, a government that will always have the backs of our producers. And I would say that the very first thing that this government did very, very early in the mandate — it was Bill No. 1 or 2 — was to remove the very unfair education property tax on this province's farmers.

Mr. Speaker, that was the start and certainly not the end of the conversation. In just the last couple of years we've seen as it relates to cattle farming, Mr. Speaker . . . But I'm going to go on to the broader agricultural picture as well and the role that we are playing not only in providing food security to Saskatchewan residents, Canadian residents, North American residents, but over 163 countries around the world because this is a space where this government has most certainly been firmly supportive of supporting our ranchers, supporting our farmers here at home, but also supporting them by ensuring that they have market access and have access to investment abroad.

Just this last year, Mr. Chair . . . And this is another difference. And I can remember the former member from Melville-Saltcoats standing somewhere over there, and he was crystal clear when he opened his mouth, Mr. Speaker, on the floor of this Assembly, and talking about the lack of NDP commitment to the agricultural sector by closing the rural farm service offices that we had, not fully funding the ag business risk management programs that we have a partnership with the federal government.

Thankfully again in 2007, that has all changed. It was that minister, and we've had three, not very many over 16 years, Mr. Chair. We've had three Ag ministers that have all supported ensuring that we, rather than having ad hoc programs like the NDP did, Mr. Chair, that we have very strong crop insurance programs, business risk management programs, and have

extended those from not only crop insurance to the cattle industry with some of the livestock programs that we have in place.

Just this past year there's an additional \$70 million that was provided to support drought-affected livestock producers so that they can maintain their herd in those times like the last couple years in certain areas of the province where we just simply haven't had enough rain. There was a water program that was invested in so that those ag producers could either dig another dugout or pump some water to ensure that they could maintain the herd, the breeding stock that they may have been working on for generations, Mr. Chair. And I would dare say it's some of the most valuable breeding stock in the world.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to invest in wildlife compensation and in looking at how we can expand the support programs that our agricultural producers have.

Mr. Chair, here's another significant difference when it comes to working with the ag industry and how the ag industry is actually having a broader impact when it comes to addressing climate change, not just here at home, but abroad. We had commissioned the Global Institute for Food Security — another entity that didn't exist under the NDP, Mr. Chair, does exist thankfully under this government — a research-based entity. We had commissioned them to look at the crops that we're growing in Saskatchewan and look at some of the other methods that some of our competitors are using and how they are producing those crops in other areas of the world.

And here's what they found. Canola and wheat, Mr. Chair, that is produced in this province using zero-till technology, using GPS [global positioning system] technology, using the latest in ag tech, Mr. Chair, and using the zero-till technology that is innovated in Saskatchewan and largely is being built in the province of Saskatchewan, what they have found is that our canola and wheat is produced with a 65 per cent lower carbon content on a per-tonne basis than the next seven largest producers globally.

When it comes to field peas, that number's 92 per cent lower and lentils is 95 per cent lower. Thank goodness for guys like Al Slinkard that innovated that particular crop and have created the access point for us into a number of countries throughout the Middle East, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to producing the most sustainable, ethical, cost-competitive, and highest quality food that you can find on earth, we have \$20 million of agricultural natural grasslands that is sequestering large amounts of carbon day in, day out, Mr. Speaker. And we're working with the ag community on how we can ensure that they are recognized, recognized for the work that they are doing.

We are working with the ag manufacturing community to ensure that they are recognized that when they sell 1,000 drills to the country of India — and yes, that has happened, Mr. Chair — that they are also recognized allowing Indian farmers to have the same carbon sequestration opportunities as what we are experiencing here in Saskatchewan, carbon sequestration opportunities that are, in this case, sequestering over 15 million tonnes of carbon. That's 95 per cent of what the entire industry emits, Mr. Chair.

We have the most sustainable agricultural producers in the world. We took them to Dubai to put them on the front stage for the world, Mr. Chair. We bring them with us when we're in India. We bring them with us when we're abroad. We're ensuring that we have market access. We're ensuring that they have access to investment, and we're ensuring that their story is heard.

That's unlike the members opposite entire agricultural climate change policy, is to count cow farts, Mr. Speaker. That's what we see from the members in Ottawa, their leaders, Mr. Speaker, the minority administration, that their leader had just said he is going to support one more time and one more budget, Mr. Chair, one more budget in ensuring that industries that are creating wealth, industries that have created wealth and created lifestyles like agriculture, like cattle ranching in this province, Mr. Speaker, are challenged due to Liberal-NDP policies coming from Ottawa, Liberal-NDP policies that . . . like the fertilizer cap, Mr. Chair. Explain that in rural Saskatchewan. Bring that up at a SARM convention, Mr. Speaker. But Liberal-NDP policies like this year, that the NDP are supporting in Ottawa that are increasing our carbon tax from \$65 to \$80 a tonne, Mr. Speaker.

We have a better plan in Saskatchewan, and our ag producers support it.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, I'm not really sure what some of that was or why he's shouting so much. The report he referenced is a great report. We agree with it. This is what we're talking about, Mr. Chair. But it's not all good news out there.

[17:15]

We're talking about cattle producers and ranchers. And I want, you know, with his vast knowledge of the cattle industry, I'm sure he knows this already, Mr. Chair, but there are 70,000, 70,000 fewer cattle, beef cattle in this province than there were last year. The number for cow-calf pairs is down 85,000, Mr. Chair. Producers are struggling in this province, but you know, that's what you got from that Premier.

But they're not the only ones. They're not the only ones who are struggling. The changes that this government has made to the PST [provincial sales tax] are driving costs up for all families in the province. In 2017 the budget brought in the largest, the largest tax hikes in Saskatchewan's history. And two years ago the Premier imposed 32 fee and tax hikes to make life more expensive for Saskatchewan people at a time when they were already struggling.

Does the Premier know how much more an average family in Saskatchewan is now paying in PST since all these changes were brought forward by his government?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — To just draw a couple of comparisons here, Mr. Chair, first is in the . . . And again I would direct the Leader of the Opposition and anyone that has their budget documents with them — and if you don't I would urge you to go get them — there's a lot of information in these particular documents. But the bottom of page 75, the bottom of page 75, the intercity

comparison of taxes, utilities, and housing. For a family at \$75,000 of total income, number one ranking in affordability measure is the city of Regina. They have a 6 per cent PST, Manitoba seven, Toronto eight . . . or Ontario eight, and British Columbia has a 7 per cent PST as well.

But Regina is the most affordable city to live at a \$75,000 income level, at \$100,000 income level for a family, and again at \$125,000 income level, Mr. Chair, all paying less tax than they did in 2007, Mr. Speaker, and when included taxes, utilities, Mr. Chair, paying less than their other counterparts across the nation.

One of the things we talk about with respect to the affordability measures that Saskatchewan people have that may not be present in other areas of the nation, is the fact that one of the very first things that this government did was look at how they could remove low-income individuals off the tax roll, the provincial tax roll altogether. And they were able to remove 112,000 people off that tax roll. That's a measure that is preserved in this year's budget with over \$2 billion of affordability measures. This alone is saving Saskatchewan low-income individuals, often parents, over \$830 million each and every year — \$830 million each and every year.

In fact in 2024 in Saskatchewan, a family of four is going to pay no provincial income tax on their first \$59,475. Under the NDP that same family of four, so in 2007 that same family of four started paying taxes at \$26,150. That's a difference of \$33,000. That is how you take 112,000 people off the income rolls altogether.

One more piece with this, Mr. Chair, is . . . Well let me go on. I'll do the interprovincial comparison as well. We have in Saskatchewan one of the highest tax-free thresholds, the threshold on where you start paying provincial income tax. As I said, that's \$59,475 in Saskatchewan. We have a 7 per cent PST here. In Alberta that number is 55,700. In Alberta you would pay \$3,775 more in tax than you do in Saskatchewan.

In BC, NDP BC, you start paying tax at 39,930. They have a 7 per cent PST there — 9 per cent it was under the NDP in this province — but in NDP BC you start paying tax at \$39,930. You would pay 19,000 . . . or in Saskatchewan you earn \$19,545 more tax-free before you start paying tax. NDP Manitoba, that number is \$21,425 more you can earn in Saskatchewan before you start paying tax. New Brunswick is \$16,425 more you can earn in this province before you start paying tax. Relative to Nova Scotia, we're \$35,000 higher. Relative to Newfoundland, we're \$23,000 higher and relative to Prince Edward Island, a resident of Saskatchewan starts paying income tax \$26,000 higher than you would in that province.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question on the increase in PST in the budget . . . And this is an important perspective, Mr. Speaker. There's more people in this province that are earning more money and they are spending more money. And so the PST numbers are going to increase.

What that means is municipal revenue sharing is also going to increase to our communities as they share in that revenue stream, Mr. Speaker, that is collected through the 6 per cent PST that we have here. Was 9 per cent under the members opposite and is higher than that in virtually every other province that is charging

a provincial sales tax, Mr. Speaker.

So in this province, Mr. Speaker, what we are experiencing with 225,000 additional people relative to when the NDP were in government is increased PST revenues, Mr. Chair. Increased PST revenues because there are more people that are spending more money, and we in turn are ensuring that those dollars are landing in our municipalities through the strongest and only municipal revenue-sharing program in the nation of Canada and one that experienced a 14 per cent lift this year.

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

Ms. Beck: — Well he said a lot of things again, Mr. Chair, but kind of missed the question. So I want to thank my crackerjack research team because they had the answer. The question was about the cost to families in this province with the Sask Party government's PST changes since 2017. The number — and they can write this down — is \$1,029 for the average family who's earning \$100,000 a year, Mr. Chair.

But you know, under . . . Listening to this Premier, you'd think people have never had it so good and they should be, you know, just celebrating. But Angus Reid recently released a report, a respected polling firm, that showed that 57 per cent of Saskatchewan people are struggling to pay for their groceries.

In fact the question that found this asked . . . found 57 per cent of Saskatchewan people finding it difficult or very difficult to put food on the table, Mr. Chair, and that the number one issue in this province — should be no surprise to that Premier — is the cost of living. We lead the nation in mortgages in arrears, and we lead the nation in child poverty. We see families who are bringing home less while everything costs more.

It's a simple question to the Premier because I'm not sure day after day he actually understands the struggle that most people are going through in this province — 57 per cent. Does he accept that Saskatchewan people are facing a cost-of-living crisis?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Chair, I'm going to take the opportunity to read in a number of . . . I often talk of the \$2 billion in affordability measures that have been introduced during the time that we've had the honour to form government and are secured with the budget that was released and we're going to vote on very shortly. Because you don't always have time in question period to read these in, but I think in estimates it's necessary for us to read these in because largely these are different than what Saskatchewan people were experiencing when there was an NDP government here.

So of the \$2 billion of affordability measures . . . I'm not going to read them all, but I'm going to read the ones, a number of them. We have the lowest personal income tax and it is indexed. Just the index for 2024 is going to save Saskatchewan residents more than \$70 million in annual income tax savings. That's significant — \$70 million. That's on top of the 800-plus million dollars that I mentioned earlier in the initiative that had removed 112,000 people from the tax rolls altogether.

We have in this province the second-lowest utility bundle in the

nation of Canada. Now I'll get to some supportive quotes of that in just a moment. Mr. Chair, we have a reduced education property tax, far reduced than when the NDP was in power, and we see that actually in reverse now in the province of Manitoba with the funding decisions that the provincial government is making, the NDP is making, as well as the decisions that the individual school divisions are having to make in increasing the education property tax there.

Active families benefit, introduced by this government, preserved in this budget. Children's drug plan, introduced by this government, preserved by this budget. We have the SSI [secondary suite incentive] grant program; the PST rebate on new home construction, over \$46,000. We have \$10 child care. For those that say we never work with the federal government, we worked with them. We were the third province to sign the child care program to ensure that those dollars could flow through to Saskatchewan families, often young families. We have a number of expanded supports in the insulin pump program for type 1, those living with type 1 diabetes.

When it comes to students in this province, we have the lowest personal income tax. Again it's indexed. That impacts students who are often low-income in this province. We have the second-lowest utility bundle in Canada, again I say because of the impact that has for our youth, our students that are attending post-secondary schools. We have the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship. We have the grad retention program, again introduced by this government, as admittedly a number of times has been said that the opposition would remove that program. They would steal that \$20,000 tax credit from our province's youth, that tax credit that close to 100,000 students have utilized so that they can stay and start their career and raise their family in a Saskatchewan community. Like we saw today, Mr. Chair, that is the NDP Party in this province. It just simply isn't on the people of Saskatchewan's side.

We have grants for low-income students, Mr. Chair. When it comes to seniors, we have again reduced the education property tax — large impact on seniors. The seniors' income plan has been quadrupled from what it was, and did not see an increase under the members opposite. We have the personal care home benefit. We have the seniors' drug plan. There's ambulance subsidies. There's home care services that have been expanded, Mr. Chair. And when it comes to the most vulnerable that are living in our communities, Mr. Chair, we have disability tax credits, we have caregiver tax credits, we have aids for independent living, increases to SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability], increases to SIS [Saskatchewan income support], Mr. Chair.

We continue to invest in the people across the province of Saskatchewan in affordability measures. And we know they are facing affordability challenges, Mr. Chair. I wouldn't say it's an affordability crisis, but I would say there are significant challenges that Saskatchewan families and Canadian families are facing, largely due to the decisions that are being made in Ottawa by a minority Justin Trudeau-Jagmeet Singh minority administration — supported, Mr. Speaker, all of those decisions, including the budget that's going to be voted on nationally, is supported by the NDP.

[17:30]

Now, Mr. Chair, when it comes to supportive quotes of the cost of living . . . And I said in an earlier answer that Regina has been, at many income categories, is regarded as the most affordable place in the nation of Canada to live. Part of that is due to the utility bundle, the affordable utility bundle that we have. Part of that is due to the level at which you start, the income threshold at which you start paying taxes. Here's the Leader of the Opposition in September 13th of 2022:

I think we have one hell of a story to tell in this province about the quality of life, about the opportunity that's here. We need to be telling that story. And in an affordability crisis we have some of the best rates as a province, the most affordable housing in the country.

Appreciate the compliment of good governance in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Member for Meewasin in November of 2023: "SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, each of them ensuring folks in Saskatchewan have access to some of the most affordable rates in the country."

I agree, Mr. Chair. The new member, Mr. Chair, from Regina Coronation Park:

In Ontario the real estate is skyrocketing, in BC the same. In Alberta, the same . . . We are in good shape to attract people from all provinces. People can afford to buy a house . . . for [over] \$400,000, where they can't even afford [it] in other provinces, where we have such a good . . . [opportunity] to attract people to our beautiful province . . .

We agree, partially because of the cost of living, partially because of the opportunity. And the member for Regina University, Mr. Chair, on her Twitter: "Taxes aren't leading to income security, so instead of giving me an \$850 tax cut I'd rather contribute another \$850." That's not the view of most Saskatchewan residents, Mr. Chair. That is certainly not the view of most Saskatchewan residents.

So the question comes, Mr. Chair, as to, we know what the record of the NDP is. It's skyrocketing education property rates. It's lack of investment in the services that Saskatchewan people want. We know what the NDP would do when it comes to affordability because we see what they're doing in supporting the federal administration with the largest inflationary pressure that Canadians are facing, Mr. Speaker. And in addition to a number of policy decisions, we have the infamous, every year annually increasing carbon tax, a tax that their party supports, Mr. Speaker, a government that is bringing that tax in.

Their party supports a government that promised that that tax would never go above \$50 a tonne, Mr. Speaker. Their party is supporting a government that promised, Mr. Speaker, that that tax would not be expanded beyond \$50 a tonne. Just this year that same party is going to vote for the federal budget. In a few days, Mr. Chair, they're going to vote for a federal budget that takes that tax from \$65 to \$80 a tonne. Mr. Chair, this is the record of the NDP Party. They continue to prop up a Justin Trudeau government, Mr. Speaker, enacting policy after policy that is reducing affordability for Canadians, reducing opportunities for Canadians.

And in spite of those pressures of the NDP and the federal Liberals, what we are seeing in this province, Mr. Speaker, with a government that is focused on growing our economy so that we can make investments in our health care system, in our classrooms, Mr. Speaker, and in our communities, we are seeing opportunities for Saskatchewan residents unlike anything we have seen before, Mr. Speaker. And we are seeing affordability opportunities for people to move here from other areas of Canada, not only because they can afford to buy a home and raise their family but because they have the opportunity to have a great career.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, so many words up one side, down another. He knows that we don't support the carbon tax, but I welcome the opportunity to say that again. But I will remind him that the question was whether or not he believes the people of Saskatchewan who tell us that they are facing an affordability crisis. It appears that he does not believe the people of Saskatchewan.

You know what? I do. I've heard from them time and time again how much people are struggling to put food on the table, to get their kids in activities, and to just pay their bills. Now I also believe that they need some relief, and some immediate relief. There are things that the federal government absolutely is doing to make life more expensive, and there is a lot that that Premier has done to make their lives more expensive. They need some relief.

So tomorrow we're going to vote in this Assembly on a motion, and I'll quote the motion in case they haven't read it:

That the Assembly calls upon the government to suspend the collection of the provincial fuel tax from gasoline and diesel for a period of six months in order to help families struggling with the high cost of living.

Now this is a common-sense measure that we've seen implemented in provinces of both sides. I don't put political affiliation on all of the provinces, Mr. Chair. But the question is, how is the Premier going to vote? Something that would save people in this province 15 cents a litre immediately. Will he finally get behind this common-sense fuel tax relief for the people of Saskatchewan?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I'll be a little bit shorter on this answer. I won't be quite 11 words, but I'll be a little bit shorter, Mr. Chair.

A number of quotes here. I'm just going to summarize these quotes. In '06 the Hon. Graham Addley wanted to introduce legislation to dedicate every dollar of fuel tax from motorists towards maintaining and building Saskatchewan's roads. Andrew Thomson in 2006, something very similar. Peter Prebble in 2006, something very similar. Buckley Belanger in 2006: "We want to legislate passing every dollar collected for fuel tax towards the maintenance and building of Saskatchewan roads." And so my question to the Leader of the Opposition, or maybe more so the Saskatchewan people's question, is going to be, how will you build those roads, Mr. Chair?

Their record isn't good in this space, where they collected more fuel tax than they invested in highways. Thankfully today not only do all of the dollars collected go into upgrading our highways to make them safe for the goods that are transporting down those roads, but also to make them safe because the other very valuable . . . People that are going down those roads are our families, Mr. Chair. And you've seen unprecedented investment in twinning highways, in passing lanes, in turning lanes, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that our families that are driving up and down those roads are safe, alongside the many commodities that we are exporting from this province.

With respect to the budget that is going to be voted on very shortly, what we are going to vote on is a budget that affords over \$2 billion in affordability measures for Saskatchewan people; a budget that invests over 9 per cent in the operational transfer to our school divisions and our classrooms; a budget that has over 10 per cent unprecedented, largest investment in health care that this province has seen; a budget that is increasing our municipal revenue sharing, again a program not seen in Canada or under the NDP in this province, an increase of 14 per cent to our municipalities, Mr. Speaker; a budget that is providing carbon tax protection to the people of Saskatchewan, shielding Saskatchewan people from that Liberal-NDP coalition in Ottawa. And we're still building highways in this province in this budget, Mr. Chair.

What I would ask the member opposite . . . And this gets back to, you know, really what a government's primary function is, and it's to represent the people of Saskatchewan. And you know, I look back at various premiers in this province. And you know, let's single out some of the New Democrat premiers over the years. We have Premier Calvert, Premier Romanow, Premier Blakeney. Mr. Chair, I may not have agreed with all of the policy or the policy perspective that those leaders put forward on behalf of Saskatchewan people, but I can always believe that they had the best interests of Saskatchewan people at their heart, at the hearts of that policy development. I truly believe that premiers Romanow, premiers Calvert, and Premier Blakeney, they felt they were doing what is in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

Given today with the commitments made around the carbon tax never going above \$50, now today we see it going 65 to \$80. Given today what we see happening with the measures that are creating inflationary pressures on Saskatchewan and Canadian residents — the measures that are singling out the industries that are creating wealth and employing people in Saskatchewan — the last thing I think a leader or any party that is vying to form government in this province should do, should be going out and attending a Trudeau campaign school on how you are going to re-elect that very government that is causing harm to Saskatchewan people and other Canadians.

And so I ask the Leader of the Opposition, I ask the Leader of the Opposition, as we know she attended along with some caucus members that very Trudeau campaign school, how could you do that to Saskatchewan people?

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

Ms. Beck: — Well again there's a bit from that Premier, Mr. Chair. But on this, on this specific smear that we're hearing right

now, the Premier knows so very well that this was not a campaign school. In fact, Mr. Chair, he had to photoshop together three different photos just to make it look like we might have been in the same room at the same time. Now I believe that his predecessor, I believe that his predecessor was called out for splicing together things that didn't actually happen. Mr. Chair, it is clear he is no Brad Wall.

And now you know what? I'll talk about this too. In terms of talking about federal leaders, I'm happy to talk about this and clear the air. As I have said from day one, if I'm given the privilege to be premier of this province, I've no problem telling Justin Trudeau or Jagmeet Singh or any federal leader when they're offside, like they are with the carbon tax. And I also have not an ounce of problem telling Pierre Poilievre when he's dead wrong about scrapping child care or support for diabetes and contraception. And I'll tell you what, Mr. Chair. I'll tell you what. I never ever would have rolled over for Stephen Harper like these guys did, like these guys did over there, when it came to getting a fair deal on equalization. So there you have it. I'll clip it for you and send it to you.

Now the question was about how this Premier was going to vote on our motion to provide people in this province with 15-cents-a-litre break on their fuel and their diesel, something they desperately need right now. But this is a government that doesn't like that idea. I think I heard him say no. But they've failed to deliver any cost-of-living measures in this budget. Nothing at all for families, but they had so many ways that they could have helped.

Why did the Premier, if he doesn't like this idea, why did he fail to provide any new measures to provide relief to people in this province who — again I'll remind him — 57 per cent of them are struggling just to put food on the table?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — So, Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned numerous times in question period on the floor of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, this budget that we are about to vote on continues to have over \$2 billion in affordability measures, many of which I listed out in a previous answer, many of which are not available in virtually any other province across the nation, Mr. Speaker.

Also again, a part of that affordability measure is having the second-lowest utility bundle in the nation of Canada, having a lower PST, markedly lower than a number of other NDP-governed provinces, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to the greatest affordability measure that the people of Saskatchewan and, I would say, across Canada could ever experience, it would be the un-election of the current administration. Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax, which is larger than any gas tax charged across the nation, specifically in this province, Mr. Speaker, is not lowering emissions in any markable way, Mr. Speaker. It is only costing Saskatchewan and Canadian families money.

That has been shown, Mr. Chair, when you see the CPI [consumer price index] rate in the province of Saskatchewan at 1.5 per cent. You see the CPI rate across the nation of Canada at 2.9 per cent.

[17:45]

The reason that was given as to why the CPI was lower in Saskatchewan was because this government shielded Saskatchewan residents from that harmful carbon tax on how we heat our homes, Mr. Speaker. We shielded them with an Act on the floor of this Assembly. Credit, all members had voted for that Act, Mr. Chair. That has dropped the CPI in the province to half of the national rate or roughly half of the national rate.

Can you imagine, can you imagine if we were to remove the consumer carbon tax on all of the gasoline, the groceries, all of the associated costs across our economy, what the CPI would be not only in Saskatchewan but across Canada? This is a flawed policy. It's a flawed policy that's supported by the NDP nationally, Mr. Speaker.

And I would say to the Leader of the Opposition, is if you are so sure of what you are saying and addressing Justin Trudeau, Saskatchewan people might not be questioning that. They're questioning where you're saying it from. Are you saying it from a Trudeau campaign school where you're sitting in the same chair that he sat in?

Mr. Speaker, that is the challenge that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, is we have an NDP Party nationally and provincially that continues to prop up a very harmful federal government in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I would say again, how could you do this to Saskatchewan people? How could you not be on the side of Saskatchewan people by ensuring that we are advocating for a better opportunity for tomorrow?

Mr. Speaker, and if you don't believe me, if the Leader of the Opposition does not believe me, maybe she'll believe some of her MLAs. Because I want to read into the record a number of quotes that have been made by colleagues on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last while.

First we have the MLA for Regina University, who called the Saskatchewan economy a "dumpster fire." They called our oil industry a bleeping nightmare. That was the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre, the one that likes to drive by and smear a number of hard-working Saskatchewan residents that are volunteering to make their community, their province, and their nation better.

There's nothing to be proud of here, the member from Saskatoon Nutana had to say. It's pretty dang demoralizing to live and work in Saskatchewan, says one of their candidates from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton. Thankfully we have an MLA from P.A. Carlton that thinks quite differently.

Again the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre says, "Cut it out with all that 'strong Saskatchewan' nonsense." Mr. Speaker, again this is a party that just simply does not believe in Saskatchewan people. This is a party and a leader that are not on the side of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, again the Regina University MLA even questioned if it is ethical and right for us to raise children in this province. Let me repeat that: questioned whether it's ethical or right to raise children in this province. I think many Saskatchewan parents would beg to differ with the opportunities that they have, the

choices that they have on where to send their children to school, Mr. Speaker, and how they raise . . . Mr. Speaker, the MLA for Saskatoon Centre said that companies in Saskatchewan are raping mother earth.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on and I'll find an opportunity to do that. What we have today thankfully with a change at 2007, a change in government, is a government that does believe in Saskatchewan people, a government that believes in strengthening and growing the economy of Saskatchewan so that we can make those investments in our classrooms, in our health care, and in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

I stand by the budget that was introduced by our Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier. I'm going to support that budget, Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes, and I'm going to very much look forward to the outcome.

The Chair: — One more short question.

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Chair, I will always be on the side of Saskatchewan — so much so that we're going to fight and continue to fight and bring the concerns of Saskatchewan people to the floor of this legislature. And we are going to give the people of this province a real opportunity for change in the next election, because I know that the people of this province deserve so very much more than what they are getting right now.

And let's take one last question, Mr. Chair, and it's this. This is this Premier's record. Last year in this province we set a record for overdose deaths — 467 families in our province lost a loved one. Mr. Chair, that's nine people lost a week, more than one person lost every single day. These are children. They're parents. They're aunties and they're uncles. And every single loss changes a family in our province forever.

This is a premier who's not investing in evidence-based choices to address this growing crisis.

This is not a place for partisan spin and wedge. This is about lives in our province. In fact, he's cut supports that keep people alive. Treatment is absolutely critical, but you cannot check into a treatment centre if you've died from an overdose — again something that almost 500 families in this province are struggling with.

When will this Premier bring forward an evidence-based plan that will keep people in our province alive?

The Chair: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition — it's not a partisan issue. Mr. Speaker, the poison and drugs that we are seeing in our communities and on our streets, not just in Saskatchewan but across Canada, has I think caused everyone pause to have a very different conversation about how we are going to support people in our community, and all too often our family members, when it comes to not only addictions, Mr. Chair, but also, you know, mental health challenges that we're seeing in maybe a post-pandemic world, mental health challenges that we're seeing in our youth in a world where everyone is connected to social media and drugs that are available that are much more highly addictive than anything that

we have seen in the past.

Mr. Chair, this is a different environment for us as a society, a different environment for us across the nation of Canada, one that we talk about at the Council of Federation table when the 13 premiers gather. When the Health ministers gather I know they have those discussions. And it's one of the reasons why a number of years ago we had specifically appointed a Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, is to work on supporting our community members and our families in this space.

And I would say that there's really two ways that we're looking at this in Saskatchewan, and one of those ways . . . None of those ways are ways that maybe we see a province like British Columbia looking at it in the decriminalization of drugs. We have a different belief. We have a focus first of all on supporting those that may need mental health supports or may have entered a life unfortunately of addictions and are looking to make a change.

We are drastically increasing the number of addictions, intensive addictions recovery beds that we have. Mr. Speaker, we're introducing a ROSC system, which is a recovery-oriented system of care system in the province. It's focused on recovery. And the first step of that is ensuring that we have an ample supply of intensive addictions recovery beds. Our target of 150, we achieved that very shortly. We today have a target of 500 intensive recovery beds. Mr. Chair, those include a number of detox beds in the province. And working with communities across the province — and we can provide or table a list of those if the opposition so chooses — this is the first step.

The second step, I would say, is we need to have access into the system. We know all too well in this city in particular, Mr. Chair, that our emergency rooms are not the place for individuals in our community and in our family to present if they are having a mental health crisis or unfortunately, as I say, have entered a life of addictions. That's what you see being built on north Albert Street in Regina is an access point. And a part of that urgent care centre is going to be focused on providing that mental health and addictions access for people that want to make a change or are experiencing a mental health crisis.

Mr. Chair, one side will be urgent care, focused on volume of people through. The other side is quite the opposite and is going to be focused on taking that individual by the hand and providing them with the medical professional that they may need at that point in time. You'll hear the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions talk about meeting people where they are, but we can't leave them there.

That's what that urgent care centre is about on north Albert. That's what the partnership with Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation in Saskatoon is about when we get that system up and running, Mr. Chair. And I dare say we'll be looking at expanding that system of care across the province, Mr. Speaker. So recovery-oriented system of care. We're supporting those in our community and those in our family all too often if they are having a mental health crisis or have unfortunately entered a life of addictions.

The second stream of effort that this government is focusing on, Mr. Chair, is one of enforcement. We need to remove the drugs from our community, and we need to also remove the drug dealers from our community, Mr. Chair. That is why you are

seeing an unprecedented investment in our municipal police services, in our RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] services, and yes, in our Saskatchewan marshals service to support the aforementioned two police services, Mr. Chair. They're going to support them by presence, and they're going to support them with the work that they do to ensure that those people that are dealing this poison in our community are going to suffer the full consequences of the law.

Mr. Chair, you are seeing that investment, that investment built with all three levels of those enforcement agencies, Mr. Speaker, as well as a number of specialized teams that are . . . The warrant enforcement suppression team for example, the crime reduction team, the PACT [police and crisis team] teams that are operating in our communities and increasingly busy and need to be increasingly added to in the years ahead.

And last but not least we are going to need, out of this federal administration or the next, changes to the Criminal Code of Canada to ensure that we can continue to keep our communities safe in this province, Mr. Chair. And we're in constant contact. The Minister of Justice, our Attorney General is in constant contact with her colleagues across the nation as well as our federal minister to ensure that we are advocating on behalf of the necessary changes that need to be made and when they need to be made.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what you see here is a government that is focused on a recovery-oriented system of care. What you see here is a government that is focused on ensuring that our communities are kept safe and doing what we can to remove this poison from the streets of our communities. And you are seeing a government here that is willing to work with the federal government to make the necessary changes to the Criminal Code of Canada so that our communities can remain safe into the future.

None of this is possible, none of this is possible if you don't have a government that is first focused on the growth and the strength of our provincial economy. It's those funds from the growth and strength of our provincial economy — that is really the people of Saskatchewan and what they do each and every day — that we are able to make the investments in this space, make those investments in recovery-oriented system of care.

The people that are going to work in that urgent care centre on north Albert Street, the investment that is made in the actual building of that facility on north Albert Street, the people that are working in uniform to keep our communities safe — none of that is possible without a growing and strong economy, one that we have had for a number of years here in Saskatchewan. And come this fall, we'll be asking the people of Saskatchewan to continue with the government that they have so that we can continue making the investments on their behalf.

The Chair: — Having reached our allotted time, I would ask the officials to now leave as we will be voting on the estimates.

Is subvote (EX01), central management and services in the amount of \$6,098,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX03), communications

office in the amount of \$1,094,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX04), cabinet planning in the amount of \$765,000, agreed to?

[18:00]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX05), cabinet secretariat in the amount of \$512,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Subvote (EX06), members of the Executive Council in the amount of \$152,000. This is a statutory amount. No vote is required.

Is subvote (EX07), Premier's office in the amount of \$492,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX08), House business and research in the amount of \$248,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX10), Intergovernmental Affairs in the amount of \$2,810,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Is subvote (EX12), Lieutenant Governor's office in the amount of 725,000, agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

Resolved that there be granted to His Majesty for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2025, the following sums for Executive Council: \$12,744,000.

Is that agreed to?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried. Okay, there being no further business before the committee, I'd invite a member to move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Committees.

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the committee to report progress and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Next sitting.

The Speaker: — Next sitting. It now being past the ordinary time of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 18:05.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
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Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
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Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
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