



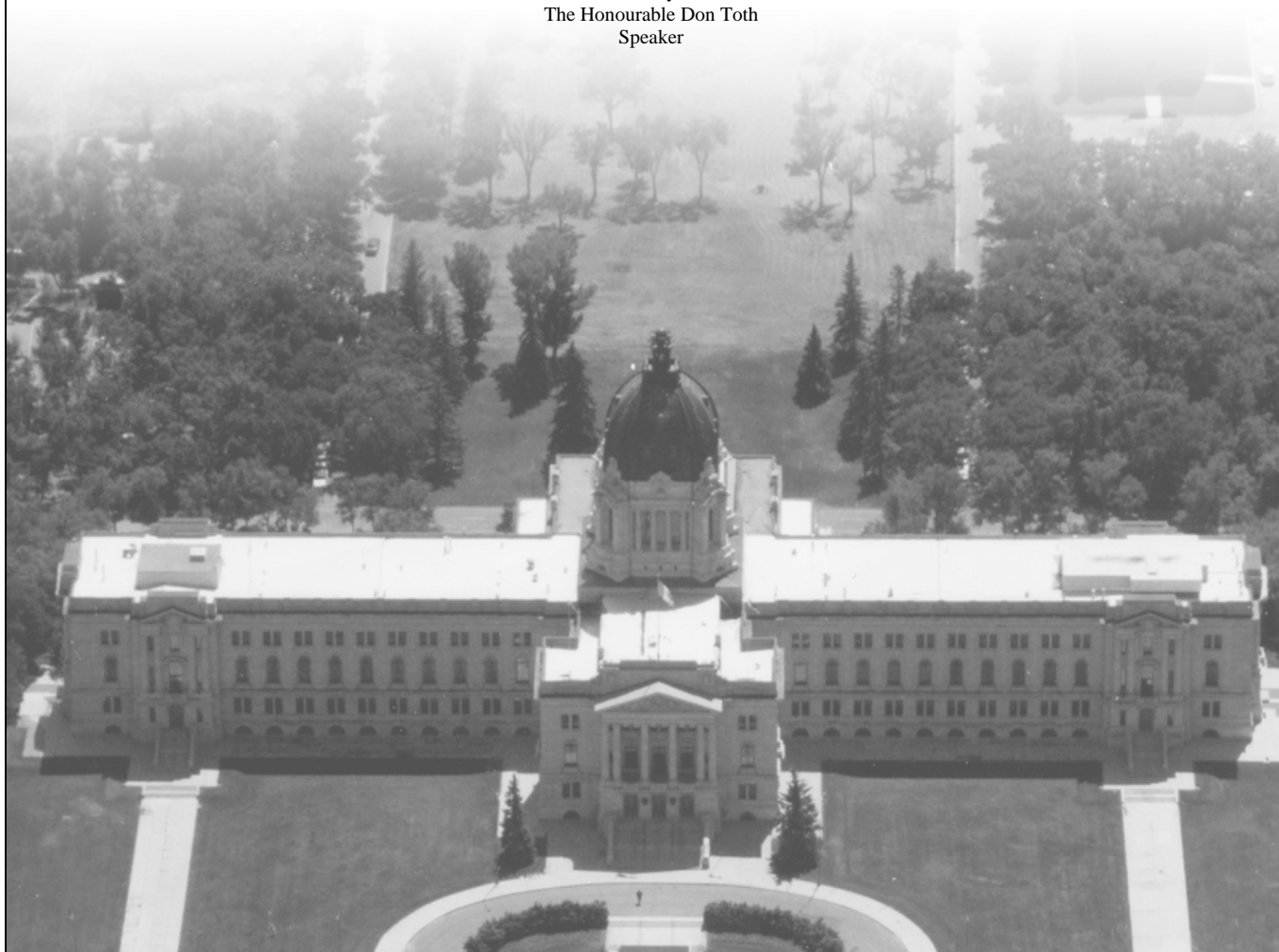
FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

| Name of Member | Political Affiliation | Constituency |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Allchurch, Denis | SP | Rosthern-Shellbrook |
| Atkinson, Pat | NDP | Saskatoon Nutana |
| Beatty, Joan | NDP | Cumberland |
| Belanger, Buckley | NDP | Athabasca |
| Bjornerud, Hon. Bob | SP | Melville-Saltcoats |
| Boyd, Hon. Bill | SP | Kindersley |
| Bradshaw, Fred | SP | Carrot River Valley |
| Brkich, Greg | SP | Arm River-Watrous |
| Brotten, Cam | NDP | Saskatoon Massey Place |
| Calvert, Lorne | NDP | Saskatoon Riversdale |
| Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken | SP | Saskatoon Silver Springs |
| Chisholm, Michael | SP | Cut Knife-Turtleford |
| D'Autremont, Hon. Dan | SP | Cannington |
| Draude, Hon. June | SP | Kelvington-Wadena |
| Duncan, Dustin | SP | Weyburn-Big Muddy |
| Eagles, Doreen | SP | Estevan |
| Elhard, Hon. Wayne | SP | Cypress Hills |
| Forbes, David | NDP | Saskatoon Centre |
| Furber, Darcy | NDP | Prince Albert Northcote |
| Gantfoer, Hon. Rod | SP | Melfort |
| Harpauer, Hon. Donna | SP | Humboldt |
| Harper, Ron | NDP | Regina Northeast |
| Harrison, Jeremy | SP | Meadow Lake |
| Hart, Glen | SP | Last Mountain-Touchwood |
| Heppner, Hon. Nancy | SP | Martensville |
| Hickie, Hon. Darryl | SP | Prince Albert Carlton |
| Higgins, Deb | NDP | Moose Jaw Wakamow |
| Hutchinson, Hon. Bill | SP | Regina South |
| Huyghebaert, Yogi | SP | Wood River |
| Iwanchuk, Andy | NDP | Saskatoon Fairview |
| Junor, Judy | NDP | Saskatoon Eastview |
| Kirsch, Delbert | SP | Batoche |
| Krawetz, Hon. Ken | SP | Canora-Pelly |
| LeClerc, Serge | SP | Saskatoon Northwest |
| McCall, Warren | NDP | Regina Elphinstone-Centre |
| McMillan, Tim | SP | Lloydminster |
| McMorris, Hon. Don | SP | Indian Head-Milestone |
| Michelson, Warren | SP | Moose Jaw North |
| Morgan, Hon. Don | SP | Saskatoon Southeast |
| Morin, Sandra | NDP | Regina Walsh Acres |
| Nilson, John | NDP | Regina Lakeview |
| Norris, Hon. Rob | SP | Saskatoon Greystone |
| Ottenbreit, Greg | SP | Yorkton |
| Quennell, Frank | NDP | Saskatoon Meewasin |
| Reiter, Jim | SP | Rosetown-Elrose |
| Ross, Laura | SP | Regina Qu'Appelle Valley |
| Schriemer, Joceline | SP | Saskatoon Sutherland |
| Stewart, Hon. Lyle | SP | Thunder Creek |
| Taylor, Len | NDP | The Battlefords |
| Tell, Hon. Christine | SP | Regina Wascana Plains |
| Toth, Hon. Don | SP | Moosomin |
| Trew, Kim | NDP | Regina Coronation Park |
| Van Mulligen, Harry | NDP | Regina Douglas Park |
| Wall, Hon. Brad | SP | Swift Current |
| Weekes, Randy | SP | Biggar |
| Wilson, Nadine | SP | Saskatchewan Rivers |
| Wotherspoon, Trent | NDP | Regina Rosemont |
| Yates, Kevin | NDP | Regina Dewdney |

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I present the first report of the Standing Committee on House Services which I now lay on the Table.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Government House Leader:

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader:

That the first 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: — Agreed. Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

**Revision to the Rules and Procedures of the
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the revisions to the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* as presented be adopted and brought into force effective December 13, 2007; and further, upon adoption of this motion, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly shall ensure the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* as revised are printed and republished in English and in French.

I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader and seconded by the Opposition House Leader:

That the revisions to the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* as presented be adopted and brought into effect December 13, 2007; and further, upon the adoption of this motion, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly shall ensure the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* as revised are printed and republished in English and in French.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss at this opportunity not to say a few words by way of background to the revision of these rules and the bringing of them into force, effective tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, over the course of the summer I, as well as my colleagues — the former Speaker, Myron Kowalsky; the former government house leader, Glenn Hagel; Clerk, Greg Putz; and deputy Clerks Iris Lang and Ken Ring — spent a fair bit of time going over the details of the rules as they were now being applied. Given the fact there had been fairly substantial changes to the way the committees work and with the fixed calendar, this required an update of the rules, some of which were actually quite antiquated.

Mr. Speaker, it was an opportunity for us to spend some time going over the details. And I believe a very good job was done and that the rules are going to serve this Assembly and this province very well going forward into the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government members — and I believe it's safe to say all members — I would like to express our gratitude to the individuals I mentioned for their participation in this very important and timely issue. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — 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: — Agreed. Carried.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I present the second report of the Standing Committee on House Services which I now lay on the Table.

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Government House Leader:

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader and seconded by the Government House Leader:

That the second 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: — Agreed and carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, it is a privilege to introduce three friends of mine and three respected members of the First Nations community. We have with us today Chief Guy Lariviere, the chief of Canoe Lake First Nations. We have Howard McMaster the chief of staff of the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] in Saskatchewan and Barry Opekokew from Canoe Lake First Nations. I'm really honoured that you're in our Assembly today.

Last week First Nations community lost a respected senator, Jonas Lariviere, from the FSIN and our condolences to the chief and his son on behalf of the Premier and the members in the Assembly. So please join with me in welcoming these three out of the First Nations to our Assembly. Please come anytime and it's a pleasure to see you here.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also want to take the opportunity to join my colleague in welcoming these very special guests. Of course the chief, Guy, who has been around politics in the northwest part of the province for many, many years, and of course Mr. McMaster and of course Mr. Opekokew.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

So I just want to say it's an incredible honour to welcome them here as well and to point out that when we lost the respected elder, I did have the opportunity to attend the wake service, and

it is indeed a great loss. So my sympathy to the entire family of Jonas who was a well-respected elder. He was 100 years old at the time of his death, and we did attend his birthday.

And many say he was much older than that because in the old days the records weren't kept very well, and that was when he was baptized. And many times baptisms took several years to achieve. So many people do believe that Jonas, who was a respected elder, was much older than his hundred years that was on his card. So I want to join the Assembly and the colleagues through all the parties in welcoming these special guests today. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the legislature 32 grade 10 students from the Melville Comprehensive High School, their teachers Perry Ostapowich, Alyson Juve, and Elvin Mandziak. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to specifically introduce you to one student up there, Afrodita Papageorgiu, who assisted in my campaign and actually was probably part of the reason that I am sitting in this seat today.

I had the good fortune of meeting with the class before and mentioned Mr. Ostapowich today. I think a number of members in the House will start to realize he's a familiar name in this legislature. He's been very faithful in bringing his classes in here and letting them understand and see how the operations of the legislature work, and he's to be commended for that. So I ask everyone to welcome them here today and hope that he brings many more classes to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly, I'd like to introduce two guests in your east gallery. Sitting in your east gallery, two visitors, Tom Graham — Tom is the president of the Saskatchewan division of Canadian Union of Public Employees. And accompanying him this afternoon is Erin Morrison, the executive assistant of the Saskatchewan division of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. So I'd like to ask all members to welcome them to our Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Introduction of guests.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly two people that are seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are Robyn Betker who is a student at the University of Regina, is taking human justice, and is the past president of Students Against Drinking and Driving. And also in the gallery is Tim Spelliscy who is the provincial director for SADD [Students Against

Drinking and Driving].

These people both reside in Regina, and they are in the legislature today to hear a member's statement that I will be reading shortly regarding changes they were making to try and reduce the number of people drinking and driving in this province. I would like to ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Battlefords Blend Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge here in the legislature the women of the Sweet Adelines and in particular the members of the Battlefords Blend who this year are celebrating their 25th anniversary as a chorus. Twenty-five years is a long time in the history of our fine province, Mr. Speaker, but this barbershop style singing group of 22 to 24 women has been providing community and regional harmony to the benefit of our citizens since November 1982. And more significantly, six of the current group were at the very beginning when the Battlefords Blend was founded. They are Millie Fulton, Grace Waldner, Mary Nykiforuk, Hermione Martel, Elsie Boulton, and Alice Henderson.

May I offer the congratulations of this Assembly for the 25 years of accomplishment achieved by Battlefords Blend Sweet Adelines in this their anniversary year, and may they continue to bring harmony and joy to the people of northwest Saskatchewan for many years to come. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Meadow Lake.

Tribute to First Nations Leader

Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Senator Jonas Lariviere of the Canoe Lake First Nation. Senator Lariviere passed away on December 3 at at least the age of 100. As hon. members know, Senator Lariviere was one of the most respected First Nations leaders in the history of our province. He served for many years as a councillor of the Canoe Lake First Nation and was one of the five founders of the FSIN. He was later made a senator of the FSIN.

I had the pleasure of meeting Senator Lariviere in the summer of 2006 when I accompanied then federal Indian and Northern Affairs Minister Jim Prentice, a long-time friend of Senator Lariviere, to the Canoe Lake First Nation for the official opening of the new health centre. Not surprisingly for a man held in such high esteem by all, the health centre was named in his honour.

I was struck by the amazing sharpness of mind and energy for a

man of 100 years. Senator Lariviere talked with great knowledge and insight about all the latest political happenings, both locally and in Ottawa, with Mr. Prentice and I. He really did love politics. His son, Chief Guy Lariviere, tells me that right up until he passed away, he closely followed political events, from the FSIN to the latest events in parliament.

The esteem in which Senator Lariviere was held was evident at the memorial service held December 6 in Canoe Lake. Nearly 1,000 people attended to pay their respects to this revered elder. Senator Lariviere will be missed by all — his children, his 32 grandchildren, 106 great-grandchildren, and 51 great-great-grandchildren. His legacy and spirit will continue to live on through them and the amazing contribution he made to his community, our province, and our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

North Park Wilson School

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, North Park Wilson School, the small school with a big heart, has been recently renovated. North Park Wilson is the only public elementary school serving the residents of City Park, North Park, and Richmond Heights within the constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin. The school is unique in its focus on education through the arts. In 2004 it was declared by *Today's Parent* magazine to be one of the 40 best schools in Canada because of its innovative programming, only one of three schools to be honoured so in Saskatchewan.

Despite the importance of the school to the surrounding core neighbourhoods and the success of its unique, innovative programming, in 2004 the future viability of North Park Wilson was in doubt. The school was built in 1953, and aging infrastructure was affecting enrolment. Of particular concern was the school's gymnasium which was too small to accommodate many sports and many other activities. The community, particularly the North Park Wilson School Parent Council, rallied around the school promoting to parents in the neighbourhood the benefits of the school's program and pointing out to the Saskatoon public school board and provincial government the key role the school plays in the local community.

Student enrolment increased, and in November 2006 provincial government funding was announced to make possible the construction of a new gymnasium and associated renovations. The new gym has now been built. I trust gym members will join me in congratulating North Park Wilson School on its new and bright future.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

New Processing Facility in Arborfield

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, an exciting new venture has

recently taken place in the town of Arborfield. Can Pro Ingredients has purchased the assets and operations of the former Arborfield Dehy Limited. Construction at the existing alfalfa processing plant has already begun. The result will be a processing facility utilizing exciting new technology.

In addition to alfalfa, Can Pro will be processing canola. Can Pro will make canola meal using innovative processing technology allowing canola to replace fish meal in fish food. This technology was developed at the University of Saskatchewan. It is a source of great pride that this facility will be able to grow and prosper in my home constituency. The Saskatchewan Party government shares Can Pro's vision of further development and growth for this sector in Saskatchewan and what better way to do this than to promote home grown technologies and business.

Mr. Speaker, given the vast canola-growing region that lies within the Carrot River Valley area, I feel the area chosen for the development of such a facility was a wise one. This new facility will be completed by May of next year and has 120 employees throughout the construction phase. Once the plant is operational, Can Pro is expecting to hire an additional 20 full-time employees.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join in congratulating Can Pro Ingredients of Arborfield and wishing them great success in their new venture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Order of Merit Recipients

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you. On Thursday December 13, our province will see the investiture of seven Saskatchewan residents who will receive the Saskatchewan Order of Merit for 2007. I'm especially pleased that a resident of Saskatoon Nutana, Donald C. Kerr, has been selected as an Order of Merit recipient.

Mr. Speaker, Professor Kerr is widely recognized in Saskatoon and indeed throughout our province for his many talents and contributions as an English professor at the University of Saskatchewan. He's also noted as a published writer of stories, poetry, and plays; and a board member who has worked with numerous arts organizations, such as *Grain Magazine*, Coteau Books, NeWest Press, and SaskFilm.

Mr. Speaker, Don Kerr is known for his passionate interest in preserving the city of Saskatoon and prairie heritage. Through his collaborative efforts, our city now has a heritage coordinator and people owning heritage property are given tax incentives for improvements that are made.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Kerr grew up in Saskatoon Nutana. He attended Nutana Collegiate, and he still lives in our old neighbourhood of Nutana. Most mornings you can see him down at the Broadway Roastery writing and regaling people who happen to go to the coffee shop.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Professor Don C. Kerr on receiving the 2007 Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Investment in Canola Crushing Plant Benefits Saskatchewan Economy

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague from Carrot River Valley today in bringing another exciting story about canola, this time from my constituency of Yorkton.

Mr. Speaker, recently Mitsui & Co., a Japanese trading house, has invested a 40 per cent share in the Louis Dreyfus canola crushing plant that will be constructed in Yorkton in 2008. This is a prominent investment of approximately \$30 million.

The plant is scheduled to be fully operational by mid-2009. This is a great opportunity for farmers in the Yorkton area, Canada's main canola-growing region. The plant would be capable of crushing 850 000 tonne per year of oilseed which will produce 350 000 tonne of canola oil per year.

Providing farmers with additional markets for their crop is not the only benefit of this new facility, Mr. Speaker. It will also produce more jobs for the people of Yorkton and its surrounding area. The Mitsui investment will create a trickle effect that will benefit the entire Saskatchewan economy.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I on this side of the House would like to congratulate Louis Dreyfus and Mitsui & Co. on their investment in the future of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Party government shares this vision of economic and industrial growth through the promotion of business in Saskatchewan. I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating these companies on their new venture.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

First Persephone Performance in New Theatre Building

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night something very magical happened in Saskatoon — first night for Persephone Theatre in its brand new building, the Frank and Ellen Remai Arts Centre. Mr. Speaker, it was both an honour and a pleasure to be in the crowd of the first show as we watched a truly wonderful production of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Now it was a bittersweet night though as we all missed the original builder of Persephone River of Dreams, Tibor Feheregyhazy, who passed away last summer. We all felt his presence, and not only will he always be remembered for his role in the development of this magnificent cultural centre, but also for the tremendous growth of professional theatre and actors in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize Sheldon Bourne, general manager for Persephone, who received special thanks and a well-deserved standing ovation last night for his commitment

and leadership in supporting Tibor and the board in the completion of this magnificent project. The goal of Building on a River of Dreams is simple — create a space that will not only enhance Persephone but also the cultural and physical landscape of Saskatoon. Musicians, dancers, amateur theatre players, multicultural performers, and more will move across Persephone's new stages, enhancing the arts for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Persephone theatre, its staff, and patrons as the curtain rises on this beautiful theatre. Or should I say in dramatic fashion, break a leg, Persephone. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Essential Services Legislation

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, when asked by reporters what work the Sask Party had done in advance of essential services legislation, the Labour minister said that since last winter they had been researching the practices of other jurisdictions in Canada. He also said and I quote:

We've given it quite thorough study. It's based on some best practices. So, I appreciate the insight, but we've studied this pretty thoroughly.

Mr. Speaker, the minister certainly seems confident enough about his research to tell reporters that it has been thorough. Researching other jurisdictions in Canada is fine but, Mr. Speaker, any research leading up to legislation should have a consultation process.

As we clearly heard yesterday, this government does not place much value on any processes of consultation. To the Minister Responsible for Labour: could he tell us which Saskatchewan stakeholders he has consulted with in the past year of his study?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the deputy leader.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to take that question on behalf of the government. Mr. Speaker, as indicated, we have had a consultation process with many people in this province. That consultation occurred on November 7, 2007, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this was a consultation that meant that there are 20 members opposite sitting in the official opposition benches, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a time that the government of this province

wants to build this province and grow. There will be a growth agenda. There will be a growth in population. And you know, Mr. Speaker, there will be a growth in the number of people who are in the unions, Mr. Speaker, because the labour force in this province under this government will grow, unlike . . .

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Unlike that official opposition who for years managed decline in this province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, on October 1 of this year, one short month before the provincial election, the Minister of Health was asked about the Sask Party's intentions as they relate to essential services legislation. When asked if he would consider the legislation, here's what he had to say, quote:

No. It needs to be negotiated. It needs to be put in the contract. I'm quite confident . . . [he said] that it can be negotiated. I don't think we need get to legislation. I don't think we need to go there at all.

Mr. Speaker, did this government do any consultations with the general public? Or did they simply sit around the room consulting each other? It looks like they decided to legislate essential services without even telling the current Minister of Health.

My question for the Premier is, my question for the Premier is: why wasn't the Minister of Health included in the backroom consultations about this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank that member for the question related to growth in this province. We need an agenda that is going to move this province forward. We are going to work with the people in this province and the different groups in this province to establish comparable legislation with other provinces.

We want to be competitive, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that there is the position of this province such that when investors, when labour groups are looking at the province of Saskatchewan, they see it in the same competitive market that they see Manitoba and they see Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

We want to be assured that this province takes its rightful place, Mr. Speaker, as a leader in the new West, a leader, Mr. Speaker, to determine that this province is going to grow. So, Mr. Speaker, we want to move forward and we will move forward on this issue.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health, the former Sask Party leader, Elwin Hermanson, and even the new Premier of Saskatchewan all said prior to the election that legislation for essential services was not necessary. The Sask Party's own election platform made no mention of legislating essential services. The president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, who represents 93,000 members, says the minister responsible has not consulted him on the labour issue.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party had been preparing essential legislation for over a year without consultation — even as its own members were publicly saying legislation was not necessary.

To the Minister of Employment and Labour: why did no one from his party consult with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour during the year-long study of this legislation?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour, Mr. Speaker, to stand and talk about growth and to talk about the need for Saskatchewan to rebalance, Mr. Speaker. We need to be assured that this province is in a competitive position. We cannot be in a situation where our neighbours, Manitoba and Alberta, have legislation or have different points in place that will make us less competitive.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 16 years under that NDP government, thousands, in fact tens of thousands of young people left this province, Mr. Speaker. Why did they leave? They left this province because we were in an uncompetitive position and the jobs were elsewhere, Mr. Speaker. We want to change that. We want to assure people in this province that they have a choice — that they have a choice to work and build their careers in this province. And that is the growth and security agenda of the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation represents more than 12,000 who work in Saskatchewan. Our professional teachers provide quality education to Saskatchewan's most valuable resource, our children. As a former children . . . as a former teacher — possibly a child — the Minister of Education must have an understanding of the need for consultation on the important matter of essential services.

To the Minister of Education, has his party respected the fundamental role of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation by consulting on essential services legislation, and how would they impact the lives of Saskatchewan teachers and the quality of education they are able to provide, or did they continue their practice of failing to consult with anybody about nothing?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Well, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour again to take that question from that member as regarding education.

As the member has indicated opposite, I have spent a number of years involved in education. I was a teacher for 11 years and I was chairman of a school board for nine years, Mr. Speaker. And there are times when the boards of education make difficult decisions. They make difficult decisions about school closures. They make difficult decisions about the placement of students.

But, Mr. Speaker, clearly as we move forward in talking with our stakeholders, of which the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is a very important stakeholder, unlike the government opposite who over the last number of years have not considered the unfunded pension liability and the obligation of this government, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there will be a time in this province when the taxpayers of this province, through the statutory responsibility of government, will have to ensure that at least \$300 million is put forward to ensure that teachers' pensions are met, unlike that government over there.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party claims to have been working for over a year on essential service legislation. And they say they have been sending a clear message that they would be pursuing this since last winter. Despite all these claims, the Saskatchewan Party's recent announcement that they would immediately be pursuing essential services legislation seems to have come as a surprise to hard-working men and women within the province. Perhaps that's because they denied it just before the election.

The Saskatchewan Party's lack of clarity during the campaign, and quite frankly since the campaign, has teachers asking if and how they will be impacted by the government's hasty pursuit of education essential service legislation.

Mr. Speaker, teachers deserve answers. Teachers deserve more. To the Minister of Education: will teachers be included in the government's plan to legislate essential service? Yes or no. Simple.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, before I tell that member what the agenda of timelines are for my office as early as next week, I do want to remind the member opposite that under that government when it was in office over the last 10 years, the enrolment in this province was 193,000 students and now that enrolment sits at 163,000.

Mr. Speaker, that government has cost job opportunities for teachers when they were in government. Dozens of teachers

were let go because that government did not look at an agenda that would involve growth.

So, Mr. Speaker, next week I can tell the member that I will be meeting with the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Dianne Woloschuk, and I will be meeting with Mr. Lyle Vinnish. And we will be consulting with them on numerous matters.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Saskatchewan right now, there are no limits on the right to strike for police officers and firefighters. Interestingly, the right has almost never been used.

Mr. Speaker, our police and firefighters provide a vital public service to the people of Saskatchewan. In previous years, they have sat down at the bargaining table with their employer and negotiated a fair collective agreement. Both sides know that their service could be withdrawn during the collective bargaining process, but rarely has job action occurred. That is further evidence that the labour laws in Saskatchewan are working.

I would ask if the minister consulted with police and firefighter associations. But we all know the answer. So, Mr. Speaker, would the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing tell this Assembly whether police officers and firefighters will be considered essential services in this legislation?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Our government is consistent in saying that we're going to ensure essential services. The way to do that in Canada is to come forward with legislation. The way to do that is to make sure that what we've seen in recent weeks — 400 people a day turned away from the Royal University Hospital because of labour action — that those rights of strikers are balanced with public safety and security in Canada. And that's what we're going to continue to work on, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 25, 2004 the member from Swift Current gave a speech to a Calgary audience where he stated his visions to, and I quote: "... explore synergies in [the] public service."

Well, Mr. Speaker, just a few short days into government, and the more than 50,000 public sector workers are seeing where those synergies begin. They begin with legislation that may have a dramatic impact on their rights. Yet the new Health minister said just before the election that this would not happen. That legislation was not necessary. Mr. Speaker, would the

Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission tell this House why the Sask Party wouldn't tell public sector workers of this plan for essential services before the election?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, as we table legislation, we invite feedback from across the political community, the policy community. That way we ensure that all voices are given voice. What we can speak to, Mr. Speaker, is that this is not about taking away the right to strike. This is about balancing the right of public safety with those who were going to strike to ensure that we don't run into the same situation that we did a few short weeks ago where 400 people a day were being turned away from the Royal University Hospital. We can do better than that, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, and it's time we do.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This bears repeating. On October 1, 2007, just days before the call of the 2007 provincial election, the current Health minister was asked to clarify his party's intention with respect to health care and essential services. When asked directly if legislation would be considered, he said, and I quote:

No. It needs to be negotiated. It needs to be put in the contract . . . I'm quite confident that can be negotiated. I don't think we need get to legislation. I don't think we need to go there at all.

Now we hear from other members of the Saskatchewan Party that the plan for essential services legislation had been in the works for over a year. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the Minister of Health: why did he tell the people of Saskatchewan that a Saskatchewan Party government would not legislate their rights away when his party clearly had a plan to do otherwise?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, as consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions, the way to protect public safety during labour disputes is to move towards legislation. That's why we're moving forward legislation. It's consistent with other Canadian jurisdictions. It's a way of ensuring that public safety is balanced with the right to strike. Thank you, sir.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It appears that both the Minister of Health and the hard-working health care professionals who provide care have been in the dark for some

time about how the Saskatchewan Party plans for essential services.

There are dozens of different professions within the health care sector. Workers have a right to hear today from this minister who will be affected by the legislation and the degree which they will have their rights limited. Will registered nurses be affected? Licensed practical nurses, psychiatric nurses? What about doctors? Maybe it will be radiologists or lab techs. How about paramedics, X-ray technicians, or psychologists?

My question through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Health is simple: will he put on the record today exactly which health professionals will be included in his government's plan to legislate essential services?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, what we will put on the table today is the right to ensure the right to strike is balanced with public safety. What we can also say is that the right to strike for unions is not going to be interfered with. What it is going to do is guarantee that public safety is balanced. And we'll move to a national norm just as other provinces already have. We're way behind after the legacy of the last government, and it's time that we move forward.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested that during the recent CUPE strike the Minister of Employment and Labour made a call to Peter MacKinnon, the president of the University of Saskatchewan. When reporters asked about conversations between Mr. MacKinnon and the minister, he replied, quote, "All I'll say, there was a range of what I would term as quiet diplomacy. And I won't give any specific details of that."

To the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour: what quiet diplomacy did he conduct during the CUPE strike, and exactly what does he feel is an appropriate level of involvement with one side of the table during a labour dispute?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, on the public record, Mr. Speaker, what we've said is we were delighted with the work of the ministry's conciliator. He worked with both parties. And we were able to help end the strike through his work, and that was something the former government was unable to do during and after the strike.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps that was the member's best shot at answering the question, but it certainly doesn't do it justice.

Mr. Speaker, as most of us know, there are several different unions representing a wide variety of workers at the province's two universities. At the University of Saskatchewan, for example, the faculty association represents more than 1,000 professors, librarians, archivists, and extension specialists. I'm sure they are very interested in whether or not they qualify as essential services. There's also ASPA [Administrative and Supervisory Personnel Association], representing the interests of personnel and administration and supervisory capacities, in addition of course to CUPE.

[14:15]

To the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour: which of these unions have you had discussions with about essential services? Which of these unions represent employees who would be deemed essential services, and how many employees does this affect at each of the universities?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I certainly appreciate the question. As we table the legislation, we will receive feedback from across the policy community, and we're looking forward to receiving that, especially from institutions as distinguished as the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. So I appreciate the question, sir.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, the Sask Party made the following promise. It's contained in their platform document, and I want to quote it. And it says:

Protecting public safety by working together with the province's public sector unions to ensure essential services are in place in the event of a strike or labour action.

Note the words, Mr. Speaker, "working together." Well it's now clear from the members opposite that they haven't talked to police officers. They haven't talked to correction officers. They haven't talked to firefighters. They haven't talked to health care workers. They haven't talked to nurses. They haven't talked to anybody other than themselves, Mr. Speaker.

What I can say is this: they say that actions speak louder than words, Mr. Speaker, and you need to keep your word, Mr. Speaker. To the Minister of Labour: how does his lack of consultation square with your Throne Speech that says keeping your word?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, it's a good day when the member opposite quotes from our party platform.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, we said we're going to ensure essential service legislation, and that is consistent with what the standard practice is across Canada. That's how we ensure essential services, is through legislation. We appreciate and anticipate and welcome feedback as we come forward with the legislation next week. And I appreciate the quote from our platform. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — You know, Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't be so bad had they had enough gumption to put essential services legislation in their platform. But they didn't have that kind of integrity, Mr. Speaker. No, they said they were going to work with public sector workers to include essential services, Mr. Speaker, and in fact their Minister of Health, before the campaign, said they didn't need to legislate it. So, Mr. Speaker, it's about integrity, according to their Throne Speech. It's about keeping your word. Their word was, Mr. Speaker, that they were going to work with public sector unions. They were not going to legislate.

So to the member opposite I ask this question again: why can't the members opposite, on the third day of this Legislative Assembly, keep his word, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, we will hear from across the policy community as we table the legislation and that way we can receive informed consultation, which is in stark contrast to what used to happen when the party opposite used to try to run the province. Consultation is going to be meaningful, and as we move forward it's also going to be informed because stakeholders will be able to actually focus on what it is we're proposing.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say this is about public safety, Mr. Speaker. But they won't say, they won't say today, are police officers included in their legislation. And they have three police officers in their caucus. They won't say it's about firefighters. They won't say it's about registered nurses. They won't say if it's about physicians in the province.

What they do say, Mr. Speaker, is they're introducing legislation. Tell us today which professions are covered under their legislation. They've been at this for over a year. Surely to goodness they can tell us today. They need to be transparent, Mr. Speaker, and at least accountable.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, we will get into the details of legislation as we table it because there's no sense inciting unnecessary fear. Because what we can guarantee is we can guarantee the right to strike from unions and that is going to be balanced with public safety. Because we want to ensure that there is no repeat of 400 people a day being turned away from the Royal University Hospital in times of need. We want to move forward to ensure that snowplow operators are operating during winter storms, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that public safety is balanced with the right of strike.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Tougher Treatment of Repeat Drunk Drivers

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is cognizant of the danger on our streets and highways posed by drunk drivers. Given this threat to the security of Saskatchewan residents, I am issuing a directive today that will see tougher treatment of repeat drunk drivers.

Mr. Speaker, effective immediately, all prosecutors are instructed to strongly consider proceeding by way of indictment and, upon conviction, applying for forfeiture of the vehicle where the Criminal Code permits, in the following circumstances.

If an offender has two or more convictions for impaired driving within two years of the date of a current offence, the Crown will strongly consider proceeding by way of indictment and, on conviction, applying for forfeiture of the vehicle. Secondly, if an offender does not have a previous impaired driving conviction within two years of the date of the current offence but has three or more impaired driving convictions within four years, the Crown will strongly consider proceeding by way of indictment and, on conviction, applying for forfeiture on the vehicle. Or, Mr. Speaker, thirdly, if an offender has a prior conviction for impaired driving within two years of the date of the current offence plus two or more impaired driving convictions within four years, the Crown will strongly consider proceeding by way of indictment and, on conviction, applying for forfeiture of the vehicle where the Criminal Code permits.

Prosecutors are also encouraged to exercise their discretion and to consider applying for forfeiture of the vehicle where a repeat offender is convicted of impaired driving causing bodily harm or death.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend our police officers and our Crown prosecutors for their past good work on various checkstop programs. These programs have had significant effect in reducing drunk driving. This directive I am announcing today is one more tool that we can give our police and Crown prosecutors to combat the problem of impaired driving.

Mr. Speaker, with this directive I am giving notice to the people of Saskatchewan: if you are charged today and you are facing

your third conviction for impaired driving, you run a serious risk of losing your vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have voted for safer communities, and we are delivering on our promise to decrease the number of repeat drunk driving offences in our province. I am proud to issue this directive before the holiday season, given the unfortunate prevalence of impaired driving and tragic accidents that all too often result from impaired driving during this time of year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that we emphasize the way that society feels about people who drive when they're drunk. And so this initiative is an important way to identify and make sure that people understand the seriousness.

But it's very clear — and I think the minister has outlined the fact — that this is building on many good things that have been done by the police and by the prosecutors and by the courts and by organizations like the people who are in the gallery today around the public education as it relates to drunk driving. And so we applaud that work.

But I think one of the things that's missing in this announcement today is the directive going to all the people of Saskatchewan. If you know someone who is at risk of driving drunk, then you have the opportunity and the obligation to get them help through our very good addictions services and mental health services throughout, across the province because that's also part of keeping our streets safe.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I applaud the minister for doing this, but I think we also have to emphasize the fact that there are places where many of these people who get involved in the third or fourth or fifth event like this can get some help and get them completely out of this whole trap that they're in. So thank you very much, and I applaud the minister for his work.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Ms. Eagles, seconded by Mr. Ottenbreit, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Calvert.]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Schriemer: — Mr. Speaker, merci. Comme vous le savez, vous êtes le membre de l'Assemblée qui représente mon village

de Montmartre et les gens de Montmartre dans le district de Moosomin. Les gens veulent vous féliciter sur votre élection comme directeur de l'Assemblée.

[Translation: As you know, you are the member of the Assembly who represents my village of Montmartre and the people of Montmartre in the constituency of Moosomin. The people wish to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the Assembly.]

I just congratulated Mr. Speaker on his appointment as he represents the hometown where I come from: Montmartre, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Schriemer: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a range of emotions. First and foremost is that I am thankful and I am humbled. And I wish to thank the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland for putting their faith in me to represent them in this honourable House. I promise to do the best that I can do, and I promise to humbly serve the province and the constituents of Saskatoon Sutherland.

I would also like to thank my family, my election team, for all of their hard work during the election. We went to a lot of doors, knocked a lot, and heard a lot of responses from the community with regards to many issues.

My work history has involved health care and policing. In policing I spent four years in the drug unit which is a combined unit of RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and city police officers that work to do the drug work from about Davidson north. And we were very successful in our endeavours.

My family comes from a medical background. I grew up in Montmartre. My father was a small-town physician, so health care was a common topic in my home. I have two children, a daughter 25 and a son 23, who are both paramedics working in this province, and I worked as an EMT [emergency medical technician] prior to becoming a police officer. There's many, many changes that have occurred in health care, rurally and in the urban setting, and some of them, of course as we know, have not been positive.

The constituency of Saskatoon Sutherland is a very diverse constituency. I have people living in poverty, to middle class, upper middle class, up until millionaires. One issue that transcends all socio-economic classes is the issue of addictions. It is a real issue, Mr. Speaker. It is something that is a life-and-death situation. The disease of addictions can kill people, and does. It also transcends all of the areas — social services, education, health, and justice. I'd like to just talk a little bit about addictions and how it crosses over boundaries between health, justice, and social services and education.

The most commonly used drug in Saskatchewan is marijuana. Marijuana has a chemical in it called THC [tetrahydrocannabinol], and what we've done in Canada is we have discovered grow operations in climate-controlled environments. This method of growing marijuana has increased the THC levels substantially, and what we do know is that they're about five times stronger than they were in the '60s or

'70s. Consequently what's happening with the marijuana usage in the province is . . . research is showing that there is a higher incidence of schizophrenia. That's a mental health disorder. It's a very serious one, and we connect it back to marijuana use.

[14:30]

Marijuana also costs money. For example an eighth of an ounce of marijuana costs \$100, and that will last you maybe a day if you're a heavy user. The grow operations in these houses are a risk for our environment, for the safety of our children. Chemicals used in grow operations, when children are living in the home, can cause serious health effects, and also the black mould that grows on the houses, on the walls, can be of detrimental effect when reselling the house. Grow operations are largely supported by organized crime. Organized crime is a real issue in Saskatchewan and in Canada.

Cocaine is the second drug of choice, and cocaine can be used many different ways. You can inject it into your vein. Cocaine hydrochloride is water soluble, and that method is actually preferred. A lot of people or addicts are injecting marijuana or, pardon me, cocaine, as well as smoking it. Smoking marijuana, Mr. Speaker, or smoking cocaine, pardon me, Mr. Speaker, is done by turning the cocaine hydrochloride into a base called crack. This happens when you mix it with baking soda, and that makes it a smokable form.

When children are in a home in a using environment, second-hand marijuana smoke is present. Second-hand cocaine smoke is present. And methamphetamine is also a drug that can be smoked, so second-hand methamphetamine is present. In my experience, what I do know is that nothing has been done to protect children in using environments by the previous government, and it was not looked at, touched, or recommendations made in any way in Project Hope . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . project hopeless, yes.

Methamphetamine — we've had some serious issues with methamphetamine because it's such a detrimental drug.

The way methamphetamine works is when you use methamphetamine it causes a hormone called dopamine to rise in the brain, and that's your pleasure hormone. So becoming a premier, becoming elected, any enjoyable experience you might have — seeing your child for the first time — that pleasure is activated by dopamine in the brain. With methamphetamine the highest form of pleasure you have is multiplied by five times so that when you smoke methamphetamine you never feel as good. Anything after that does not give you pleasure any more. Consequently recovery from methamphetamine addiction is severe. It's rarely successful, and there's an extremely high suicide rate with our teenagers and our young people with regard to methamphetamine addiction.

Methamphetamine can be made at home in Saskatchewan. We don't have to import it like cocaine. We can make it in our kitchens. Our children have access to recipes and how to make methamphetamine on the Internet. It's been done, and it will continue to be done, and it will be continued to be sold on our streets, and it will continue to kill our children.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of substance abuse is a serious issue, and

it's one that we, the government, are addressing. I thank the Premier and Minister McMorris, Minister of Health, for selecting me as the Legislative Secretary to deal with the issue of addictions and opening of beds as per our promise in the Throne Speech and in our platform.

I ask today that we take into consideration the children that are growing up in these environments, that are breathing in drugs. Research is yet to be done or concluded as to just how badly these children are affected. We know through fetal alcohol spectrum disorder that alcohol is a very serious issue. It's high in our Aboriginal population, and under addictions it also needs to be looked at and addressed.

Project Hope to date has given us zero extra treatment beds in this province. I know through my experience — and member opposite mentioned the good addictions program we have in this province — I think all the addictions workers are dedicated; however we cannot access them after 5 o'clock. They have to wait; addictions people have to wait for three months to get a meeting with an addictions counsellor. They wait even longer to get a bed. This is unacceptable, and it's something that's been going on for some time.

The help line is something that is a good idea. However when you have an adolescent that needs detox, that needs a counsellor at midnight, you can't put him on the telephone. It doesn't work. That's not the help they need. We need more accessible help. And we, this government, plan on dealing with the addictions issue. We plan on opening 100 more beds. And it is the responsibility of government to make these things available to the people of Saskatchewan. This is something that the previous government has failed miserably at doing.

I'd like to share a story with you, one that one of the constituents gave me. And I'll just read it:

Charles Plumb was a US Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent 6 years in a communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from his experience!

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"

"How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

[The man replied] "I packed your parachute" . . . Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform: a white hat; a bib in the back; and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said 'Good morning, how are you?' or anything because, you see, I was a fighter pilot

and he was just a sailor.” Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn’t know.

Now, Plumb asks his audience, “Who’s packing your parachute?”

... Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give [them] a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason. As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack YOUR parachutes.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this government knows who packed their parachute, and it identifies the issues and promises that will make Saskatchewan a better place than we’ve found it. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, it’s an honour to stand before you in the first session of the twenty-sixth legislature. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your esteemed position to which you have been elected by your peers and colleagues. I would like to wish you a very successful term in the House.

At this time I respectfully acknowledge my husband Douglas and my loving family of four teenagers, now adults, for the sacrifices they made for me to be here. I thank all the people whose support and encouragement have brought me here today. To my campaign team and hardworking volunteers, thank you for giving me your trust over the years — two and a half years, but who’s counting? It’s an honour and a privilege to represent them all in the Legislative Assembly.

I’d like to congratulate all members of this Assembly and especially the members on my side of the House sitting for the first time as government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — I believe the message has been delivered by the people of Saskatchewan.

The riding I represent is called Sask Rivers. I would especially like to thank the people of Saskatchewan Rivers for their overwhelming support. We won the election by more than 1,000 votes. We had a very interesting, fun, though difficult task over the two and a half years, and I’m very happy that the people of Sask Rivers acknowledged my team’s hard work and also believed that people of our community have realized that we are capable of so much more.

We campaigned on a platform to improve this community through hope, not fear, and I’d like to take this time to show my respect for the hard-working people of this constituency.

Mr. Speaker, Sask Rivers constituency stands from Big River to White Fox, a span of 200 miles across. It borders the Saskatchewan River to the south and the boreal forest to the north. Situated in the northern area of the riding is beautiful Waskesiu who many have attended. It’s located in the Prince Albert National Park, home to 11,000 people, four First Nations communities, and several regional parks. It’s a riding dependent on agriculture, forestry, and tourism.

This is the riding I call home, where my husband and I live on a fourth-generation cattle operation. My roots in this riding are almost as old as the province of Saskatchewan. My maternal grandfather homesteaded in the Christopher Lake-Northside area in 1916. Raising a family of ten, his descendants still reside in that area.

In 1953 the community of Paddockwood presented a brief to the Royal Commission of Agriculture and Rural Life. Holding a forum to discuss problems of the community in regard to agriculture and rural life, all problems were discussed for the purpose of summarizing problems and solutions. It’s interesting to note that the problems the community had in the ’50s are very much the same as today — roads, health services, education, insufficient credit to young farmers. Things have not changed much since the ’50s and why is that so? Under the present government these issues will be rectified.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, much of these rural problems still sound familiar and linger in today’s world of 2007. These supposedly minor problems of the past have become major problems of today and the future, and I am confident our current government will focus on these problems and improve life in rural Saskatchewan.

The good people in Big River and area are struggling with forestry issues today, as well as many others in the Saskatchewan Rivers constituency. I, for one, would like to see innovations and entrepreneurship as sustainable economic development options for growth in the forestry sector. Our forest area is huge and needs to be utilized. When the saw mills began in the early 1900s, loggers prospered and families raised generations of foresters. These families would still like to work in the forest industry and need our ideas.

Other areas exceeded higher than normal precipitation levels resulting in producers struggling to seed and harvest crops. Choiceland and Smeaton especially suffered, and the Smeaton community also experienced the closing of their elementary school.

Mr. Speaker, one of the central priorities of the new government is job creation and people retention. We have an abundance of opportunities in the Sask Rivers area that we are very excited about. We look forward to having an economically prosperous and fruitful constituency, and we’re confident that our population will actually grow.

Under Premier Brad Wall, the constituency of Sask Rivers will prosper under the plan to train and retain young people. Young people represent the core of our foundation and are badly needed all across our province. For too many years, we

witnessed migration to other provinces without an appropriate retention plan. We badly need young entrepreneurs and labourers to give development in this constituency, and we're very excited to bring our people back to Sask Rivers.

We have an abundance of opportunity right here. We have a positive vision for the future. We picture new business openings and rural development with home builders and families flocking here. We'd like to see more children playing in our towns, more shops and businesses opening their doors, more services available for our residents. So let's put a stop to those shrinking towns, and let's start growing our population. We need to restore public confidence.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, the constituency of Sask Rivers offers some remarkable history. Not many people realize that our constituency is home to the very first Red Cross hospital in the British Empire — what an achievement! Carved out of the forest fringe, this hospital was built in Paddockwood and served smaller communities that were further away from the hub city centres.

Built in 1920 and used until '49, this hospital was developed for the large number of World War I veterans returning to the area and raising families. Vacant land was being taken up by returning men who had gone overseas from the Paddockwood area. Our community built and maintained this hospital, and its success led to the development of 23 more of these hospitals throughout Saskatchewan. Both of my parents were actually born in this hospital, mom in '31 and dad in '29.

Our province was built by pioneers — hard-working farmers, labourers, and determined settlers. Saskatchewan Rivers still has the same attitude. We're willing to work very hard to build a better way of life for our children.

My grandfather arrived in Canada in '27, filing a homestead and working for \$55 a month to purchase a team of horses and wagon. My son is now fourth generation on this land. All of his four great-grandfathers farmed in the Sask Rivers constituency. Their move to Canada took a huge leap of faith. They left all that was familiar because they believed a better life would be found in Canada for their family in generations to come, and I will always be grateful for the courage they showed in what it was meant to be a Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, living and working in this riding, which was developed almost solely on immigration, I know how important it is that we keep our schools and long-term care facilities right in these communities. Our seniors deserve the best quality of life that we can give them, as these resourceful people were inventive, innovative, and courageous Canadians. I believe these qualities live on in our next generation, and I am here to represent their interests.

One interest I would like to see is young individuals staying in Saskatchewan and having endless opportunities for success, room to grow and give to the social contributions of their society, just like their ancestors had hoped for. I spoke to many people with stories of their hopes and visions. Why have so many of our young people left this promising province?

I'd also like to talk about some of the more recent accomplishments of our constituency. A major education company has recently named the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division as one of its North American showcase districts. Thanks to the hard work of the educators in my constituency, Smart Technologies has donated \$76,000 worth of hardware to reward their creative use of technology in the classroom. Angie Lysitza, a teacher at W. J. Berezowsky School, was congratulated for showcasing her classroom ideas. Her teaching style is now a model for educators nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also confident that business will continue to grow in my riding. And some wonderful people are making Sask Rivers the place to be. Arne Petersen, for example, has done some great things with Elk Ridge Resort — a four-season complex and prestigious 18-hole golf course. Maybe some of you have golfed on it.

Arne had a vision for our beautiful boreal forest and he's developed one of the most successful tourist attractions in Saskatchewan. Arne achieved success using a relatively simple business model. We can entice people from all over the world with Saskatchewan's natural beauty. Our province can be a destination hot spot for tourists, and Arne is realizing that vision.

Tourism is one of the many industries on which Saskatchewan will grow under this new government. Our riding, for example, offers great potential for farming, forestry, and the diamond mine. I'm sure we're all very excited about the prospect of diamond mining in the Fort-à-la-Corne district. With Great Western Diamonds, Shore Gold, Shane Resources, and Star Uranium Corporation, one of the biggest kimberlite finds in the world has been discovered right here in the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers.

The new government has only been in power for a few short weeks and I'd like to note the improvements that have already been made. Our next election date has been set for November 7, 2011, thus marking the end of election game playing and pre-election gimmicks and spending.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — Mr. Speaker, also of importance for me personally, since I'm one of the few women in the legislature, is the zero tolerance for harassment.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — Our new government has taken a hard-line stance against workplace harassment and this sets an excellent precedent for workplace conduct in our province. A new generation of government lawmakers should represent the ever-changing face of the Saskatchewan public and these ideas exemplify this new face. Employees in this province should not have to hesitate to voice their opinions for fear of losing their job.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that everyone in this room is excited about the fresh, new Saskatchewan face that we are forming, and if any of you have loved ones living in other Canadian provinces, now is the time to convince them to come back to

Saskatchewan. There's hope for this province after all. In my riding and all across Saskatchewan, I can feel optimism in the air. We have a fresh, new government that makes sense. We have world-class oil sands. We have fixed election dates. We have no more redundant taxes on used cars. We have aggressive diamond exploration and we have plans to improve health care and attract doctors and nurses.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — We are growing our population at last. And last, but definitely not least, our beloved Riders have won the Grey Cup.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Ms. Wilson: — I'd like to end on a note of optimism and hope, and to assure the people of Saskatchewan that the new government will work hard to address their needs. We are part of an exciting, new Saskatchewan. And again I'd like to thank the people of Sask Rivers for giving me their trust and support. In my part of the country we have numerous lakes, beautiful lakes, that dot the constituency and can be enjoyed by ice fishing, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling over the winter months. This year there's been an abundance of snow to aid to these sports and I'd like to welcome all of you, all the Saskatchewan residents, to enjoy all the resources that my riding has to offer.

On a final note, I'd like to wish you a joyous holiday season and, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the privilege of addressing the Assembly today. I look forward to the years ahead as we work together for the people who have put the faith in us. Mr. Speaker, I support the Throne Speech. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park, I'd just like to remind members again. And I realize for newcomers to the Legislative Assembly it's a little hard to get used to not using an individual's first name, but if you could just keep that in mind and remember that we refer to members by their constituency. And I thank members for taking note of that. I recognize the member from Coronation Park.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much. I want to congratulate the member for Saskatchewan Rivers on her maiden speech here and before that, the member for Saskatoon Sutherland. This is an exciting time for us as we hear new members on both sides of the legislature presenting their first speeches in this great Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by congratulating literally all members, old and new, on your and our elections, if I can put it that way. I say our because I'm including myself. It really is an honour to be in this great Chamber representing our constituents. No matter whether we're invited to serve on the government side or on the opposition side, we are all serving the great province of Saskatchewan, and it is a challenge for us to do it in the best way we can. And I'm confident that literally every one of the 58 members in the Chamber today is going to

try to our utmost to serve our constituents and our province. And again I congratulate all members for your elections.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Trew: — My second words, Mr. Speaker, are words of congratulations to you, sir, on your election as Speaker. Here you are, having conducted a couple of question periods now, and it just looks like you've been in the Chair for weeks or months rather than just a few short days. I'm looking forward to your continued speakership and good work coming out of you.

I want to congratulate the new Premier, the member for Swift Current, as well. And I want to wish all members of the government well as you go about trying to fulfill your election promises. I sincerely hope that you can, and I wish you well as you try and fill those promises.

I promise you something different than, well if you try and serve some different agenda. And that's, simply put, the job of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. So we just must remind ourselves to serve the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:00]

I want to thank the good folks of Regina Coronation Park. It's a constituency, Mr. Speaker, that's full of hopes and aspirations and dreams. It's a constituency that places a great value on family, on friends, certainly on young people.

In my constituency there are three high schools. Then in addition to that, we have a Christian school and we have a Muslim school — all in my constituency, all doing just phenomenally important work, all of them full of students that are just a delight to behold, a delight to be around, and students that provide much room for optimism for Saskatchewan's future. And I am optimistic about our future.

I want to thank my wife in particular, Lorna, and my family for their support. The executive of my constituency organization, I want to particularly take a moment to thank, and I'm sure that all members would feel the same way about their organizations back in their respective constituencies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, here we are in the great Throne Speech debate. But I want to start by saying, where are we today? I think by recognizing where we are, then we can measure when we're moving forward or in some other direction.

Today we've got more people working in Saskatchewan than at any time in Saskatchewan's history — 506,000 people. We have a higher participation rate in the workforce than at any time in Saskatchewan's history. We've got more of a budget surplus today than at any time in Saskatchewan's history. Reputedly there's something like \$2 billion extra in terms of cash laying around. We've got an economy that is hotter than a \$2 pistol — just never had an economy as hot as it is today.

Our record when we were in government includes 14 balanced surplus budgets, 14 in a row. It includes \$1.2 billion in debt writedown in the period from 2004 to 2007. It includes having the lowest-cost utility bundle for four years now, proven, and it includes having tax reduction every single budget for more than

a decade. There's been some form of tax reduction for people, every single one of them.

So from today, Mr. Speaker, we look forward. And my constituents in Regina Coronation Park are quite hopeful, quite optimistic. Why? Well we've just come through an election campaign. The government has promised 800 new nurses to be hired — 800 new nurses. They're optimistic about that and they told me so on the doorstep through the election. Why are they optimistic? Well of course there's initially there's the jobs. Everyone wants to have a job. And if you happen to be trained in health care, you want to work in health care. That's point one.

But what my constituents were most concerned about was the wait-list to get health care procedures. And I know members on both sides of the House heard that over and over. I can tell you that in my constituency, thankfully, they trusted our plan. But they're optimistic, optimistic. And if you can hire, when you hire 800 more nurses, the wait-list is going to be drastically reduced. And we look forward to that.

My constituents, well they were looking forward to a \$15 prescription fee for everybody starting July 1 next year. That's not to be. Instead the \$15 prescription cap for seniors will continue. And I say for seniors with the caveat that this is seniors of modest or low income, and if you have too high an income you're not included under this. So that's the way that is going to work.

My constituents are optimistic, Mr. Speaker. I noted that as I was making my way around this most recent election, there was a marked change from the previous election when I was going around. And it had to do with two things. One is there were some sections, some neighbourhoods that had clearly just really improved. The housing stock was much improved. The, if I can describe it, the vehicle stock was much improved on those streets. You could tell there was more affluence, not everywhere, but enough places that I had no problem noticing it. And I was very enthused about that, to see that turnaround in such a short period of time.

The other thing that I noticed was there was very, very, very few people brought up crime as a problem this election. And four years ago crime was probably the number one issue that was raised with me in certainly in much of my constituency. I credit that with the efforts that we've made in the Regina police and the department of now Social Services — Community Resources — and Education, that we made around vehicle thefts. And we've driven, in Regina, vehicle thefts down to less than half of what it was four years ago. And I think my constituents are feeling pretty optimistic about that.

My constituents, though, are looking forward to 125 more police officers being hired across Saskatchewan and expect that that will continue the downward trend in crime.

My constituents are optimistic because, as I've mentioned before, we enjoy the lowest-cost utility bundle in Canada. And the optimists in my constituency are listening, or listened, and believed that when the Saskatchewan Party said, we're not going to sell the Crowns, they were believing that.

Now I wonder. There's some realists, there's some realists that heard something different — realists who heard things like . . . I've got a few quotes here. One quote, “. . . there's too much state-owned enterprise in the province of Saskatchewan.” That was said in this very Chamber in November 2005. I wonder who said that.

Or who said, and I quote: “STC” . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. We'll tell you in a minute. The second quote:

STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] is in that group, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we have said quite clearly that we also would like to get the taxpayers out of that money-losing proposition.

This was said in *Hansard* in this very same Chamber. Now who am I quoting? Well I've heard that the hon. member for Northeast was the person. I can assure you, no it wasn't. For members opposite, it was the now Premier, your leader, who said that in this Chamber when he was sitting on this side of the House.

Why would we take much consolation in that? Why would we believe, why would my constituents believe, Mr. Speaker, that the agenda definitely precludes the sale of Crown corporations when in fact the Premier has said what I've just quoted? How do we square that circle? And it's on the record in *Hansard*, right here. Absolutely it is here.

Who said, and I quote, “It's [speaking of SecurTek] the government competing with the private sector . . . and does it send the right . . . [message]?” Well the same person said that in the *Leader-Post*, Mr. Speaker. That was the Premier, and that was quoted out of the *Leader-Post*.

Well the now Premier has said all of the above. Small wonder we're nervous about our Crown corporations.

Who is it, Mr. Speaker, that said, when speaking about the \$100 million in rebates to SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], people who dealt with SGI, who is it that said, quote, “I'm just saying that's something we wouldn't have done”? Well I'll end the suspense. It's the very Minister Responsible for the Crown Corporations, that very same minister saying things like that.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's many reasons for unease — many, many reasons. We fear losing the lowest-cost utility bundles. We fear, in Regina, losing the head office jobs of our Crown corporations. We fear losing many jobs right across Saskatchewan on the Crown corporations. So we'll be watching with a great deal of interest to see how members opposite do that.

And I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, my constituents are not interested in seeing the Crowns die of a thousand cuts. They're not interested in seeing SecurTek hived off and then the government of the day claiming, oh, but SaskTel is still there. We're not interested in any of that death by a thousand cuts, Mr. Speaker. We want our Crown corporations to continue as viable entities. We're proud of our Crown corporations. We're proud of our Crowns that are providing the lowest-cost utility bundle in all of Canada. We're proud of the jobs that they're

providing. We're proud of the economic leadership that our Crown corporations have provided and can continue to provide for our great province.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to close by . . . Well before I close I want to just point out briefly, I want to briefly touch on essential services, briefly touch on essential services which was covered off in question period today. And I want to point out that governments may try to withdraw the right to strike. They may try to withhold that. The danger is, working people need to have the ability to negotiate in an equal way with employers, as equals. It can't all be simply my way or the highway.

And I know many people, many people will say that my way or the highway is reasonable. After all, the boss is writing the cheque. But some of these very same people, Mr. Speaker, wind up not being able to run an ongoing operation. Why? Because the best have left and what they're left with is people that are left, if I can describe it that way. The best have left. Instead of having the best negotiate, instead of having the best work with you and negotiate, they've left.

So I don't know how essential services legislation is going to add one of the 100 new doctors that's been promised. I don't know how it's going to add one of the 800 new nurses that the new government has promised. I don't know how essential services will do that.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close because my . . . a general agreement on the amount of time that we would take. I look forward to rising many, many times in this legislature. It is always an honour to try and share some ideas and some thoughts with my constituents through *Hansard* and through the television, but it's also an honour to talk about some of the ideological agreements that we have with the government and the ideological differences. I look forward to much good coming out of this legislature in the coming years, Mr. Speaker.

With that I want to simply close by saying I will be supporting the amendment and I will not be supporting the main motion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to take part in this debate today and to support the Speech from the Throne. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is about security, opportunity, and quality of life. It's about accountability. It's about being proud to live in Saskatchewan.

Indeed our province is bursting with opportunity. The tourism sector alone generates more than \$1.5 billion annually and is responsible for employing over 55,000 people. We can do more, and by doubling tourism funding to promote added marketing activities and make important capital investments in our tourism facilities, Mr. Speaker, we will do more. We will provide capital investment in ecological, paleontological, museum, and heritage facilities; provide improved and consistent signage promoting tourist attractions on Saskatchewan highways; enhance strategic partnerships with

urban and regional tourism organizations in the province; support First Nations tourism initiatives; work with the federal government to facilitate the development of ecological and heritage attractions; increase northern and nature-based tourism; provide greater support for event hosting; and develop partnerships with other Western provinces to promote joint tourism activities.

[15:15]

We have a strong cultural heritage that tourists from around the world can't resist. Our province is bursting with opportunity, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan parks host more than 2.5 million visits annually and are responsible for employing more than 800 people, not to mention the thousands employed by businesses in the parks or otherwise bolstered by park-based tourism. We can do more. And, Mr. Speaker, by delivering on our government's commitment to improve Saskatchewan parks, we will deliver.

We will create an additional 1,000 electrified campsites in provincial parks and eliminate the campfire fee, improve park programming infrastructure, hire more summer students and increase security, triple provincial funding to Saskatchewan's regional parks, and work with communities and stakeholders to establish new provincial parks in Saskatchewan including a new wilderness park to accommodate extreme camping. These new parks will be established after full consultation with First Nations and stakeholder groups. These are things that will help ensure that the legacy of our provincial parks will live on for the people of Saskatchewan and for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is a place where we take pride in supporting healthy, active families. I for one know first-hand, as a former police officer, that children who are involved in positive activities early on in life and given the opportunities are less likely to have problems later on in life, hopefully avoiding problems like drug addiction and alcohol abuse.

This is why the implementation of the yearly 150 per child, age 6 to 14, active families benefit is so very important. This benefit will significantly help families with the costs of cultural, artistic, and sporting activities. Through strong partnerships we will secure Saskatchewan's future as a healthy, active province in the new West and across Canada. We will continue to be stewards for physical activity, sport, and recreation to ensure our children and families are healthy and active.

Leadership is an action, not a position, and as you can see, Mr. Speaker, we're ready to get moving.

There's no doubt that my first term in office will be exciting, to say the least. I have much to learn, and it is an honour and a privilege to serve in the House. Mr. Speaker, I have the great honour to serve southeast Regina and also a large and growing population east of Regina's limits. I'm speaking of Emerald Park, White City, Pilot Butte, and the RM [rural municipality] of Edenwold.

Mr. Speaker, White City and Emerald Park represent what is right in Saskatchewan. This community is growing by leaps and bounds. White City alone issued 100 new building permits in 2007, Mr. Speaker, and if I'm not mistaken, that's as many as the city of Moose Jaw. The new subdivisions in White City

include 350 lots, most of which are sold or sold out, and the town expects to issue another 150 more building permits next year. Once all the new homes are built in the present new subdivisions, the town of White City's population will double, Mr. Speaker, and more new subdivisions are on the drawing board.

The demographics of this new growth include a large percentage of young families. White City's school is bursting at the seams with no talk of school closures, but rather expansion of the school, Mr. Speaker. In fact it is not beyond the realm of possibility that this area may become Saskatchewan's newest city in the next few years.

And what is fuelling this growth? Good, high-quality services, lower taxes, bigger lots at less cost, high-quality schools, and an attitude on the part of council and its residents. The development, business, growth, and security are welcome in this community, Mr. Speaker — the very things Premier Brad Wall intends to deliver for the entire province.

Pilot Butte is growing. The RM of Edenwold is also growing. In fact the population of the rural part of my constituency is growing, buoyed by the recent optimism which started in spring '06 with the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election win and grew over the summer of 2007, this optimism generated by the possibility of a change in the legislature, that when occurred, prosperity, growth, security throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that the good people of Regina southeast, White City, Emerald Park, Pilot Butte, and the RM of Edenwold voted for positive change on November 7 and I am truly honoured that they provided me with the opportunity to help make that positive change.

I wish to spend a few minutes here, Mr. Speaker, just thanking the people that helped me during my election campaign. My mom and dad, Jerry and Beryl Tell, worked actively to assist us in securing a Saskatchewan Party government. For almost two years my campaign team worked tirelessly — Regina Wascana Plains constituency members headed by the president, Sean Quinlan; Brad Hunter, my campaign manager; along with 287 volunteers. I truly wish to thank all of them for their dedication and commitment to helping electing a Sask Party government. I also wish to thank my husband, Bob, and my two children, Regan and Cameron.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech is about growth, it's about accountability, and it's about being proud to live in Saskatchewan. It is for these reasons that I am in support of the Speech to the Throne. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn.

Mr. Duncan: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today in the Assembly to speak in favour of the Throne Speech. But before I begin I want to join with the other members and offer my congratulations to you on your selection as Speaker of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I think you'll recall that during the ceremony that

installed you in that position, the Premier had a little bit of fun at your expense and noted that when you were first elected to this Chamber, he was in university. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to bother to mention how old I was when you were first elected, but I think at that time, when you were first elected, you were dealing with legislation and I was probably dealing with flash cards. So congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and I think the level of esteem by which members hold you is evident by the fact that you were uncontested for this race. So congratulations.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — I also, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Deputy Speaker, the member from Arm River-Watrous, on his new position in this Assembly.

And I want to offer my congratulations to all members of this Assembly on both sides of the House and particularly the new members. Having taken my place in this Chamber a little over a year ago for the first time, I have to say that I'm enjoying being around a lot of rookies and am sure reliving my excitement when I first took this Chamber through them. So I want to offer my congratulations.

I also want to congratulate the Premier of the province, the Deputy Premier, and the members of the cabinet. Mr. Speaker, when I look around this side of the House I'm extremely confident with the team that we have in the Saskatchewan Party government, and I feel that way about the Premier and about the cabinet that he has selected. And so I want to offer my congratulations to them.

I do want to be a voice in support for this Throne Speech delivered by the government. But I first need to thank the people who helped get me to this point, Mr. Speaker. First, the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy, who have now twice given me the great honour of representing them in this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, these are exciting times for the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy. Much of the boom that we are experience is related to the production of oil and all the spinoffs that relate to that industry. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, it's very humbling for me to note that on a day when I'm on my feet in the Assembly of the legislature of Saskatchewan, that my father's doing what he's doing on most days, and that's hauling oil in the southeast corner of this province. And it's through hard work of my parents that I've been given the great opportunities that have been afforded to me, and I appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, just in the last couple of days there's been a lot of media attention played about the increased potential of the oil industry of the southeast of the corner. In fact there's a new oil play, Mr. Speaker, that . . . industry experts and government officials are estimating that there's a new oil find that contains approximately . . . anywhere between 25 and 100 billion barrels of oil, Mr. Speaker.

A couple of major companies that are in our area are Crescent Point — and an official was quoted in the newspaper on Monday as saying that this new oil play “. . . is the hottest play in [all of] Western Canada” — and, Mr. Speaker, Petrobank. A gentleman with Petrobank, Gregg Smith, he went even further

than that saying that this discovery “. . . is the hottest oil play in [all of] North America,” Mr. Speaker.

And so that is really causing a boom in our community and it's pretty evident in Weyburn and surrounding areas when the you see the record housing starts, the new condos, and commercial construction. And, Mr. Speaker, best of all is the flood of new people that we have coming to our community — in particular the young families that have moved to Weyburn and area that are raising their families in Weyburn and that are active in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I feel pretty privileged to live in Weyburn. We're known as the opportunity city, but we are facing some of the same challenges that members, especially members opposite, have spoke about in the last couple of days — specifically housing prices. I know that when we purchased our house on 6th Street in Weyburn, today we could probably put it on the market for about twice what we paid for it. So it really shows how dramatically the markets have increased in our area.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you have a record like the previous administration where, over seven years, 35,000 people have left the province, that sort of thing will happen. Where over those seven years where people have left the province, it really does a lot to our housing prices. It doesn't do much to them in terms of moving them forward. So when we have a boom that's going on, this is when we get these wild, wild swings in prices.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is why we need a government that is committed to a growth agenda to ensure that our province, with so much potential and the resources that the world craves, remains competitive. Mr. Speaker, this is something that the opposition party obviously didn't understand in government. And by listening to some of their speeches over the last couple of days, they clearly still do not understand it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when you're in the Weyburn-Big Muddy constituency and you're beginning in Weyburn on the east side of the constituency, as you move west throughout the constituency I can tell you . . . And I've had the chance to travel since the election to a number of communities in the constituency. And there's renewed optimism in large part because the people in the rural part of my constituency . . . And I think this is true for all of rural Saskatchewan, considering that pretty much all the representation is on this side of the House. But the people of rural Saskatchewan finally, they believe that they finally have a government that will work with them, Mr. Speaker, and not against them. And I think that that's going to be important for our party to know.

Mr. Speaker, in fact I had a couple of gentlemen that called up after the new government was sworn in, the cabinet was sworn in. And they were reading some of the comments made by members of the opposition party including the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Ag critic, who said that it needs to be a high priority of our new Saskatchewan Party government that we address issues such as the difficulties for cattle and hog producers, Mr. Speaker. And I'll tell you what was relayed back to me by these constituents. They really couldn't believe that after that, in particular that member who'd been a member of the government for 16 years, Mr. Speaker . . . And the people that phoned me up, they couldn't believe it because what had

that government done for rural Saskatchewan over those 16 years? Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that government wouldn't even give producers and ranchers of the southern part of this province — many of my constituents — they wouldn't even give them the time of day when they came to this Assembly last year in search of some assistance for the drought. Mr. Speaker, constituents who felt no support in their farming operations from the previous government were pretty upset when they heard members of that opposition party all of a sudden have a renewed interest in agriculture and in rural issues after 16 years.

Mr. Speaker, the group opposite, now they want to criticize our plan that we have — this new government's plan — for addressing closures of rural schools in rural Saskatchewan which in many ways, Mr. Speaker, relate directly back to the lack of support that people in rural Saskatchewan received from this government over 16 years. They want to criticize our plan and that's well within their right as the opposition party in this province. But what did they offer when they were in government to rural schools? Absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's come to the point where even the Leader of the Opposition, he takes exception with some of the language in our Throne Speech regarding our commitment to increase the number of health care professionals in Saskatchewan. But what did they offer in government, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely nothing.

An Hon. Member: — Nothing.

Mr. Duncan: — That's right. That's right. Absolutely nothing. In fact it was worse than that. They gave us the longest waiting lists. They gave us the worst retention rates of nurses and health care professionals, Mr. Speaker. In fact their own Health minister at the time said they don't set goals on the number of doctors and . . . or the number of nurses that they want because you can't really set goals because you might not reach your goals. That's what the people of this province got from that former government, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, there is a wave of optimism that is sweeping across this province and in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. It started on November 7. It's picked up momentum after the Grey Cup and I'm confident that it will continue with the stewardship of this Premier and this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in continuing to offer my thanks . . . and I have so many people who helped out on our campaign. And considering, Mr. Speaker, that our campaign, we did this a year and a half ago and we put a lot of work in and not just during the election month, but leading up to the election. So I was very pleased to see that so many people would come back and, after putting in so many long hours, that they'd want to do it all over again a year and a half later.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think that they didn't just work that hard just to help me get elected, but they were working to help bring positive change to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They saw that the Saskatchewan Party was going to bring positive change and they wanted Weyburn-Big Muddy to be a

part of that. And so I want to thank everybody on my campaign team. There's not enough time to name all the members, but especially my campaign manager Marilyn Charlton, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, during this campaign we relied even more on our supporters than probably normally, because at a time when we were in the thick of the campaign — in fact it was in the first two weeks of the campaign, and a campaign that turned out to be a tremendous victory for not only Weyburn-Big Muddy and our team but our party and our province — at a time when we were going through a campaign that was going to lead to a win, Mr. Speaker, my wife Amanda and I, we lost two very special people, people that were important to us. During the campaign, at the beginning of the campaign, we lost . . . in a span of two weeks we said goodbye to both my grandmother, Doreen Tracey, and Amanda's grandfather, Hugh Alexander. And I just want to briefly for a moment say a few things about those two people.

Mr. Speaker, I was very fortunate to grow up in a small town, Halbrite, Saskatchewan and actually my grandparents lived there also. And so for the first 18 years of my life, I got to grow up no more than three blocks away from my grandparents. And my grandmother and I, our birthdays were mere days apart from each other so we celebrated birthdays together, often shared a birthday cake. And it was, obviously, Mr. Speaker, it was quite a difficult period of time for us and she left us far too soon.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to mention a couple of words about Hugh Alexander, my wife's grandfather. I think Hugh was probably quite well-known to some of the members opposite. Hugh was well-known for his affiliation with the CCF-NDP [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party] going back to the days of Tommy Douglas. In fact, he and Tommy were quite close friends.

Hugh was a pillar of our community in Weyburn, very closely tied with his church, the Free Methodist Church and with the co-operative system. In fact, Mr. Speaker, my wife and I, we have a co-op membership in Weyburn and our co-op number is somewhere in the 20-thousands, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, Amanda's grandpa Hugh, who lived into his early 90s, was co-op member number six, Mr. Speaker. And so it goes to show you how closely tied he was to the community. And we'll certainly miss both our grandparents, especially during this Christmas season, Mr. Speaker. And we certainly owe a lot to them for helping us get to this point.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you that during the election when we were . . . it was a difficult time and we were dealing with some grief. And I'll admit to all members of this House and anybody that's watching that, early in the campaign, there was days that it was difficult to get up and campaign. Certainly, Amanda and I didn't always feel up to it.

But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, it was the strength of our family and the strength of the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy that encouraged us to continue with the campaign. Because, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you . . . I know that full well there was people in our constituency, the people that I've had the pleasure of representing over the last year and a half, who felt abandoned by their government, by the NDP government. There were

many people in Weyburn-Big Muddy that believed that, contrary to the words of that former government, that they were being left behind when the government said that nobody was going to be left behind. There were people being left behind. They didn't know why they were being left behind. They didn't know what they had done to deserve it. And so I want to thank the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy not only for their support in this election but for their encouragement throughout the entire campaign.

And, Mr. Speaker, finally I want to publicly thank my wife, Amanda, for her ongoing support and for the sacrifices that she has made to allow . . . to enable me to be here and to truly fulfill a lifelong dream of serving in the Government of Saskatchewan. And so I thank her for her support.

Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat that I will be supporting the motion moved by the member from Estevan, my good friend from Estevan, seconded by my new friend, the member from Yorkton — and I'm glad to see him elected to this Chamber — and not only because, Mr. Speaker, I support this government and this Premier, but also because I believe this is the plan that the people of Weyburn-Big Muddy supported in the election.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, while the other parties were spreading fear and smear, and doom and gloom — and we've heard some of that already today in this Assembly — the Saskatchewan Party was carrying a message of growth and opportunity, of security and compassion. These are the values, Mr. Speaker, that I think that we share with the people of Saskatchewan and are the values espoused in this Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech because over 61 per cent of my constituents supported these values and supported me in this election.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech outlines this government's vision for building on the economic growth that we are experience. The Throne Speech outlines stronger balanced budget legislation that will require balanced budgets every year. Mr. Speaker, our government will provide a four-year financial plan each year.

Mr. Speaker, this is in direct contrast to the previous NDP administration who didn't include a four-year plan in last year's budget. And I remember when that budget came out, Mr. Speaker, and we were asking the question, why didn't they project into the future? Why aren't they going to show us the numbers going forward into the future?

I remember members in their budget reply, members of this party asking that very question. My colleague from Silver Springs, he asked: where is the plan for sustainability? Well, Mr. Speaker, just days after the new government was sworn, it became apparent why they didn't forecast. They had put a plan in place to spend far more than the government could afford, and our new government will have some decisions to make to clean up their mess, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech also carries on with the commitment that I'm very supportive of, that was made during

the campaign, and that's tuition rebates for post-secondary students who stay in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech outlines the most aggressive youth retention plan in all of Canada. Mr. Speaker, the previous NDP administration had an abysmal record of youth and population retention. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it's one of the reasons why the people of this province lost confidence in that party, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, our commitment, laid out in this Throne Speech which I'm supporting, that over the life of this term of government, we'll increase the number of health care professionals. We'll provide real tax relief, Mr. Speaker, for the families and individuals . . . to hire more police officers. In fact we'll even fulfill the commitment that they couldn't fulfill in eight years when they thought it would take four. They didn't fill it in eight years, so we're going to clean up that mess, Mr. Speaker, and hire more police officers on top of it. We'll add more addiction treatment beds, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to growing our population and our economy — not for the sake of just growth, but to secure the future for all our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, this Throne Speech also lays out something that the Premier of the province, the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Swift Current laid out over three years ago — which apparently it took three years for the opposition party to read — *The Promise of Saskatchewan*. But this Throne Speech lays out a commitment to create a partnership called Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to replace, get the politics out of economic development, Mr. Speaker, which will eliminate the kind of 11th hour politically motivated NDP-Domtar deals that was more about getting votes than it was about jobs or growth.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Throne Speech laid out a vision that truly will secure the future of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this government has my support and I am confident that they will have the support of my constituents, because I know the Premier and this government and this cabinet is one of action.

The former government was long on talk, short on action. And they had 16 years, Mr. Speaker, and they failed on nearly every account, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's Ben Franklin that once said, and I think he said it best, "Well done is always better than well said," Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Throne Speech puts this government well on our way to hear well done by the people of Saskatchewan by the end of our first term. For all those reasons I will be supporting this Throne Speech. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to start by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your election. I know that you'll come to this office and perform your duties with both dignity and respect for all members of the Assembly.

I'd also like to congratulate the Deputy Speaker in his election. I know that he will also perform the duties to the best of his ability with both dignity and respect.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate the new government. I'd like to congratulate you on your election and congratulate you on performing very admirably over the first few days, Mr. Speaker. But you have raised expectations of the public beyond belief. You will have to live up to those expectations. And, Mr. Speaker, over the next few years people will have the opportunity to see if you live up to those expectations.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate all the members. Being elected to this Assembly is an honour that few ever have in their lifetime. It's a honour which we all must take very seriously. We have a responsibility to the people of Saskatchewan to deliver good government. And we have a responsibility to hold the government accountable so that they can deliver good government. And we intend to do that to our utmost ability.

But each and every one of us has a responsibility. We've been elected to represent the people of our province and we should be proud of that and we should do it with dignity and respect each and every day.

I'd like to thank my constituents for once again electing me to this Assembly. It's an honour to represent you in this great House. It's an honour to speak on your behalf. And I promise you that I will continue to represent you to the best of my ability.

Mr. Speaker, we have a new government who brought forward a Throne Speech that talks a great deal about the future. But I want to start by saying, Mr. Speaker, in the opening of their Throne Speech they talk about keeping your word.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen in the first few days of the new administration several things that bring keeping your word into question. I'm going to start, Mr. Speaker, by talking about . . . In the early days, the early days, Mr. Speaker, we heard from the Finance critic how dire the financial situation was in the province of Saskatchewan. We heard a warning about just how bad the situation was in this province financially.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how do you square that? How do you square that with 16 consecutive credit rating upgrades? How do you square that with more than one and a half billion dollars in available cash? How do you square that, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, they talk about \$4 billion in potential deficit. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're looking at every conceivable, every conceivable bad set of circumstances coming together at a single time to come up with those numbers, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, they need to be credible. If they want to talk about keeping their word, Mr. Speaker, they need to do that. Just short days after, Mr. Speaker, just short days after, Mr. Speaker, we had the member from Prince Albert Carlton talking about the need to immediately start negotiating to open the mill. We saw the member from Prince Albert Carlton during the election running ads saying a vote for him was a vote to open the mill. Just days after — and just days after, Mr. Speaker — we see the member responsible for

forestry in the new government quash the deal that would see Domtar reopen the mill in Prince Albert.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, they say one thing . . . Mr. Speaker, they say one thing and they're doing another. And they're saying one thing and they're doing another. Mr. Speaker, we heard in the Throne Speech that, "my government believes actions speak louder than words." We heard that from the new government, that actions would speak louder than words. Well they said they would open the mill, Mr. Speaker, and then they kill the deal to open the mill. They say that they'll, that they'll not introduce essential service legislation and then they tell us they will, Mr. Speaker. People will judge them on their actions. But, Mr. Speaker, they will judge them on whether or not they keep their word. Mr. Speaker, as we look to the future, as we look to the future, we will see whether or not this administration will live up to the promises they've made.

In their election platform they promised 800 new nursing positions — 800 new nurses. Mr. Speaker, we see in the Throne Speech that that 800 has now become a goal. And mere days after the election, Mr. Speaker, when it was talked about in the media about the nurses that were being hired in the Philippines coming to work in the city of Regina — the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region sent a team of administrators and nurses to the Philippines to hire new nurses, Mr. Speaker — we heard the new government take credit for that. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you those nurses were hired prior to November 7. I know that for a fact because my wife was one of those nursing managers that went and hired those 100 nurses in the Philippines.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Yates: — And, Mr. Speaker, they're taking credit for things they didn't do. Yes, they will be the government when those nurses actually start working. Yes, they will. Those nurses will start in early January. They will be the administration when those nurses actually start working in Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, they're taking credit for things they didn't do. They're complaining about things that aren't real and, Mr. Speaker, they need to understand that being in government is far more difficult than being in opposition. They will have a period of time in which people will let them, people will let them say one thing and do another but that will come to catch up with them.

And, Mr. Speaker, people's expectations are extremely high. You went through this election promising many, many things. Now it's our responsibility as opposition to ensure that you live up to those promises and to those expectations. We are going to be like watchdogs and watchdogs do three things. They watch and see what you do. If you don't do it, they bark to tell you you're doing wrong. And if eventually you still continue not to do it, they bite and let you know that you've done wrong. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the role that the opposition has to play. We've become the watchdogs, those that are here, to ensure that there's accountability for what you've promised.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we all hope, we all hope that things in the province improve as they have over the last number of years. We have seen continued . . . [inaudible] . . . over the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, there was a call-in show the day after the election talking about what happened in this election, and 30 individuals from across the province talked about this election. The first individual who called in was a farmer from rural Saskatchewan, and he said the reality of this election was this: that the day after the last election there was the determination by the people of Saskatchewan the government would change. It wasn't necessarily because the government was doing a bad job because it could be said very clearly that Saskatchewan is probably in its best financial position it's ever been. He also said it's not particularly because the people of Saskatchewan are enamoured with the prospects of a Sask Party government. In fact they're quite nervous about what might become out of this Sask Party government.

But the reality was, Mr. Speaker, that caller after caller said the same thing — that this change was inevitable. It wasn't about bad government. It wasn't about the good prospects for the future necessarily, but a decision had been made to change the government. Now you have to live up to those expectations, and we expect you to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear about safer communities, and we all agree there should be safer communities. We hear a promise of 120 new police officers, and we like the prospect of 120 more police officers to add to the 251 that we put in place over the last number of years — 251 new police officers, Mr. Speaker.

We want to see, we want to see improvements in the issue of poverty in the province as you say you're going to do. You're going to work to reduce poverty in the province. We all want to see that. But we expect you to live up to those commitments. We expect you to live up to what you say you will do, and we're going to work very hard to hold you accountable to those commitments.

Mr. Speaker, we heard prior to the election that schools in rural Saskatchewan would be dealt with differently than they were under this administration and promises that rural schools wouldn't close. Rural schools would not close. Just short days after the election, Mr. Speaker, we heard that rural schools will continue to close. The reality is, the reality is when they were in opposition they would say one thing. When they're in government, the reality is they have to deal with the real facts. You have to deal with the facts, and the real facts are that you have to make tough decisions at times, and you have to make tough choices at times. And you cannot be all things, you cannot be all things to all people. You have to make those tough decisions.

Mr. Speaker, we have the members opposite yelling from their seats at times, and that's fine. They need to understand that they're going to be held to a different standard being government than they were when they were in opposition, both by the media, by the public, and of course now by the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about the future and the future is giving . . . The people of Saskatchewan are giving the Saskatchewan Party a test drive. They're out there taking this new government out for a drive to see what it's like. If they do a good job, they may get re-elected. If they don't,

four years from now we'll have an election, and they'll be defeated. Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to have to be accountable — and that's what they'll have to do in the future — and to say they can be all things to all people, what they've been doing for the last number of years.

Mr. Speaker, when I read this Throne Speech it talks as if everything in the past was negative. Everything in the past was ineffective. It wasn't good enough.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about the number of taxation cuts that have made over the number of years to stimulate this economy, starting about six years ago when royalties were lowered. Taxes were lowered — both personal income taxes, then corporate taxes. Then the PST [provincial sales tax] was reduced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all these things helped stimulate the economy and create the environment that we're in today. The government, the previous government which I was proud to be part of, worked hard to build this economy. We worked hard to create the environment in which we can move forward in. And we hope for the sake of the people of Saskatchewan that you continue working hard like we did to build this economy.

You took over at a time with unprecedented wealth, where the population was growing, jobs were growing, and the province has never been doing better. That comes with great responsibility because the expectations of the people of Saskatchewan are that things continue to benefit them and that things continue to move forward in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have people saying, well it's all about \$90-a-barrel oil. No, it isn't. We have a diversified economy; \$90-a-barrel oil is only one element. Individual members over there don't understand that we have a very diversified economy in mining, natural gas, oil. But, Mr. Speaker, the number of people working in this province today and the additional revenue coming from income tax is a significant driver of the better position that the government finds themselves in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all talk about wanting a province where our children can do better, where their children can do better, and we have worked very hard over the last number of years to move the province to a position where this economy — now the hottest it's ever been in our province's history — can continue to thrive.

Now the members opposite say no thanks to the current government. They say no thanks to the current government. But, Mr. Speaker, they need to understand that those things don't happen by themselves. And, Mr. Speaker, they are going to learn, they are going to learn that you can't pick winners and losers in the economy. You can't say that you put money into the agriculture industry in our province, but you won't put money into forestry. You can't say that you'll put money into manufacturing and not put money into the forestry. Mr. Speaker, you can't make decisions on ideology. You have to make pragmatic decisions based on the business case in each individual circumstance.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite in cancelling the Domtar deal affected hundreds of families in the Prince Albert

community — individuals who were looking forward to the reopening of the mill. One family member or another who worked at that mill would have the opportunity to return to Prince Albert from where they had to move to to seek employment. They need to understand as a government that every single decision that they make affects others. And several hundred families in the Prince Albert area are affected by the decision not to reopen the mill.

We have a situation where we were moving towards reopening the mill. We had a commitment to open the mill. And they made that decision; they made the decision to tear up the memorandum of understanding on Domtar without consultations with the mayor, without consultations of the unions, of the employees, without the task force from Prince Albert, without meeting with the chamber of commerce, without meeting with the community at all, Mr. Speaker. They made that decision on pure ideology without understanding the impact.

The Speaker: — We're getting to a point of having too many debates at this time. And we would like to hear the member from Regina Dewdney, and I'll recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying earlier, Mr. Speaker, the government has to understand the decisions they make impact others.

And their decision to cancel the memorandum of understanding that would have seen the opening of the mill in Prince Albert affected some 700 families. And those families were looking forward to a Christmas with a little more optimism. They were looking towards the future of employment in the city of Prince Albert. They were looking to working in their communities. Many of those individuals had to move to Fort McMurray and others for interim employment because there wasn't employment in their areas, in the Prince Albert area. But, Mr. Speaker, their hopes were dashed. Their hopes were dashed on November 7 when this government was elected and shortly thereafter decided they wouldn't carry forward with reopening the mill in Prince Albert.

But during the election, the member from Prince Albert Carlton said a vote for him was a vote to open the mill. Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll be watching very closely to see if that mill reopens. And the people of this province will hold the government accountable if that mill doesn't open as the people of this province will hold the government accountable for other things. They'll hold them accountable for all their commitments.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's our job to ensure, as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, that they're held accountable for their commitments. They made many, many promises and, Mr. Speaker, they have to live up to it. Some of their promises they told people about. Some they didn't.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's pretty obvious. We didn't hear about essential services anywhere in their campaign nor did any of the people in the province of Saskatchewan. But short days after, we heard, we heard we're going to have essential service legislation in this province, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, this government is going to be held accountable by the people. It's our job to hold them accountable to their commitments, and we will work very diligently over the next number of years to the next election to ensure that there's accountability and ensure that they live up to their commitments. And, Mr. Speaker, with that, I'd like to indicate that I am supporting the amendment. I'm not supporting the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the Legislative Assembly today to speak in support of the Speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by taking this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment and well-fought, well-earned victory as Speaker. I know that it was a tremendous amount of campaigning and a lot of speeches to be made for that. But, Mr. Speaker, you are a gentleman of integrity, fairness, and I'm sure that you will handle the position with a great deal of competence and add a lot of professionalism and decorum to this Chamber.

[16:00]

I would also like to use this opportunity to thank the Deputy Speaker, the member from Arm River. His constituency is one that is right next to mine. And at one point we over . . . he had a portion of my constituency, so a number of my constituents were formerly his constituents. And I know from meeting with those people and speaking with them that they were well represented, and I know that that same type of representation will continue in his role as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by thanking the good citizens of Southeast for their confidence and my re-election. My margin of victory increased from just over 600 votes to well over 3,000 votes, and I want to thank the people of Saskatoon Southeast for their confidence and for getting out to vote and participating in the democratic process.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that I also thank some of my campaign workers. I would like to thank everybody that came out and worked, but I want to recognize a few of them by name. My campaign Chair for life, Lynne Agnew, who has served as my campaign Chair many times in the past, continues to do a yeoman's duty time after time. And I would also like to recognize the campaign Co-Chair, Shannon Hardy. It is the first time that she was involved in one of my campaigns, and she was able to provide a new role by providing sort of a family pack. We not only had Shannon; we also had her husband, her brother, two sisters-in-law, and a brother-in-law, and her son as well who came out and worked. These people, as well as Ujin and Pat Humenny, came out and they worked 16-hour days. They assembled lists. They phoned people. They recruited volunteers. They put up signs; drilled holes in the frozen ground on some days when the ground was too hard to put up signs. And it culminated on election day when we had over 300 scrutineers and other volunteers working.

On behalf of my wife, Sandy, and myself, we would like to thank everybody that participated in the election.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to comment briefly on my mother, who is 87 years old. In January of this year she had a fall and broke her C1 vertebrae. I want to thank the people that worked at MD Ambulance and the hospital workers at St. Paul's and City Hospital who were able to ensure that she had a relatively rapid and successful recovery. She has still not regained all of her mobility but she was able to come out and celebrate election night with us. *The StarPhoenix* carried a photograph of myself pinning a corsage on my mother. My mother actually received more letters of congratulations for having her picture in the paper than I received. So on behalf of my mother, I thank everybody as well.

I would like to also thank my constituency assistant, Rita Flaman Jarrett, who worked exceptionally hard for the last four years, was extremely competent, and did a very good job of looking after the citizens of Saskatoon Southeast. It's a pleasure to have her back. On a personal note, during the campaign her son was diagnosed with cancer. Today he is having his second chemotherapy treatment. And I would like all members to wish her and her family well as they go through what is going to be a very difficult time, and want to wish her son speedy recovery.

I would like as well, Mr. Speaker, to thank and recognize my wife, Sandy. She works at Robertson Stromberg Pedersen, which is the same law firm that the member for Saskatoon Meewasin used to work at before his election. During that period of her life she had to spend her evenings at home with me and her days at work with the member opposite. So she certainly had her challenges in that time. And I'm pleased to announce she is just down to one of those type of challenges.

During the election, Mr. Speaker, she worked exceptionally hard. She had her own team of volunteers and she would usually go into an area two or three days ahead of me, and then I would follow along and try and secure the votes and talk to people that she had met, and she would indicate which ones she thought were receptive.

A frequent comment was, yes, we're going to vote for you. We met your wife. She was young, attractive and pleasant. She's not at all like you, but because of her we're going to vote for you. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to quote Karlheinz Schreiber, but he did say, "I was born ugly, not stupid." And so I didn't argue with those people. I just went on my way and thanked them for their support.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and thank the other candidates for their commitment and participating in the democratic process. In my constituency the NDP was represented by a former teacher, Jane Wollenberg. And unbeknownst to her at the time when she made the commitment to run, the election date fell on her parents' 55th wedding anniversary. Her parents live in Ontario. They came out here and they spent their 55th wedding anniversary scrutineering in two different polling stations. And I'm sorry I wasn't willing to give them an anniversary gift of allowing their daughter to win the election, but I would like to wish them well on their 55th wedding anniversary.

I would like to also recognize the Liberal candidate, Mark Lemstra, who spent a lot of time writing policy for the Liberal Party and he actually came and had a meeting with me and was, I think, a very bright, hard-working person. I would like to encourage him to stay active in politics.

The first candidate that came to see me, Mr. Speaker, was Mike Fornssler who was the Green Party candidate. He contacted me early on, indicating that he was going to be running. He paid me a courtesy visit. He is a university student and a very interesting gentleman to talk to, a lot of interesting ideas and hope that he too stays active in politics.

I would like to make note of some the significant changes, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency during the last four years. The constituency has grown very substantially. I have new communities of Stonebridge, Stonegate, Willows, and a significant expansion in the south Briarwood neighbourhood. I want to welcome all of those constituents to my constituency and thank them for participating, in getting out and voting. I'm pleased to see that our province is growing and was gratified that those people came out, and I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that we won each and every one of those new polls that were there.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to sort of comment on an old schoolyard joke that was floating around when I was growing up. You would ask somebody to spell post three times, and they would say, p-o-s-t, p-o-s-t. And then you would ask them what they were going to do when they would get to a green light, and they would usually say, stop — because of the letter recognition. And there's an adult version of that joke, and it's: what happens if you say fear three times? How are you going to vote? And the answer is usually NDP. But this time, Mr. Speaker, it was an interesting schoolyard joke, but the people said, I think I heard that when I was in grade 5 and I'm not going to be tricked again.

So this was an election, an election about the future of this province. It was the public's opportunity to say that we want growth and we want opportunity. We aren't afraid to use the province's resources. We want to overcome fear. We want to overcome the mentality that we can't grow, that if we keep it all at home, there'll be more here for the rest of us.

Those days of that kind of fear and that kind of fearmongering are past us. This time, in this election, the NDP tried to use Enterprise Saskatchewan as its fear tactic. And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party had the Enterprise Saskatchewan document on its website since 2004.

And I don't know whether it took the NDP three years to be able to read it or to understand it or to realize, oh, we should try and use this in the run-up to the election. In any event they made their best efforts to use Enterprise Saskatchewan as the fear tactic in this election. And it failed, and failed miserably. Their best efforts to demonize the plan that's going to give our province the tools to grow and to prosper was the very thing that they choose to demonize.

And, Mr. Speaker, what will happen in the next election is people will remember the successes of Enterprise Saskatchewan. And they will look back at the NDP, and they

will say, aren't you the party that was opposed to Enterprise Saskatchewan? Aren't you the party that was doing the fearmongering?

Mr. Speaker, during this session you will see legislation introduced that will make Enterprise Saskatchewan the model for economic growth. The opposition leader talks about the mysterious board that's going to be on Enterprise Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Speaker, even in opposition that particular member cannot refrain from fearmongering. I would like to ask that member to just wait and see when the legislation is introduced and see the people that are going to be participating. I'm also going to be asking that member and the members of his caucus for their support on that initiative.

During the time that the NDP were in opposition, they regularly called on the Saskatchewan Party to support a budget initiative, to support a particular plan or particular agenda. Well this time we're going to be asking the NDP for their support, on their vote when we introduce the legislation on Enterprise Saskatchewan. And it will be an opportunity for them to support what is going to be an initiative that is very good and going to be very successful for this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to give them some other opportunities to support some very good Sask Party legislation. One of those pieces of legislation is going to be The Trade Union Act amendments.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP has very deep roots within the trade union movement. They hold themselves out as being democratic. As a matter of fact, democratic is one of the words in their name. And I'm confident that the New Democratic Party will want to support democracy by being willing to vote for and support secret ballots on union certification, informed communication, supervised balloting — things that are basic to democratic principles anywhere in the free world. And I would like to ask those members opposite for their support when we introduce those changes to The Trade Union Act.

And if they're not willing to support them, I would ask them to go out and explain that to their memberships and members of the trade union movement so that they know and they understand why that they as individuals do not have rights within The Trade Union Act.

I'm also going to be asking them and inviting them to support the essential services legislation, a piece of legislation that exists virtually in every other province in Canada and virtually every other state in North America. It's something that's necessary for our province, and I'm confident that the NDP will want to ensure that we don't have labour interruptions in our hospitals and elsewhere in our province that affect the safety and security of our citizens.

I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP chose to raise this in question period and as a topic for debate in the House today. Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that those individuals over there, the men and ladies on that side of the House, the women and men that are there, would want to have stood up and said, those are good pieces of legislation; I want to talk to my members in my constituency about them and I want to vote in favour of those things because, Mr. Speaker, those are things

that are very good for this province.

Mr. Speaker, our commitments in the Throne Speech are guided by the following values: growth and opportunity, security and compassion, and keeping our word. Saskatchewan citizens have a right to feel safe in their homes and communities with their families. This means ensuring that there are programs in place to protect the public and to reduce criminal activity. The Throne Speech outlines some important measures our new government will undertake, but that's just the beginning of the work to be done.

The Government of Saskatchewan supports the federal government's efforts to implement tougher sentences for serious crimes, crimes that involve the use of a firearm, and for repeat dangerous offenders. Saskatchewan supports effective and immediate changes to strengthen the dangerous offender provisions of the Criminal Code. We are especially pleased to see the current 12-month limit for a recognizance order for high-risk offenders doubled to two years. We've also committed to toughening penalties for repeat drunk drivers. We support the provisions in new federal legislation to deter and detect those who would drive while impaired by alcohol and drugs.

These changes to federal law will be complemented by my directive today to Crown prosecutors to seek the forfeiture of vehicles from those convicted of three or more drunk driving offences under the Criminal Code — a promise made and a promise kept, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan is committed to providing the tools necessary to allow assets used to commit crimes and proceeds of crime to be seized and to be forfeited. Seizure of assets used to commit crimes and proceeds of crime disrupt organized crime and gang activity. We will further thwart gang activities by working with other provinces to develop a Western Canadian gang member database and by cracking down on drug and gang activity in provincial correctional centres.

Our new government is committed to ensuring that fines are collected. And while we examine options to improve the province's ability to collect fines, we will continue to ensure that there are serious consequences for people who do not pay fines. It is not merely a matter of revenue for the province, Mr. Speaker. It is a matter of having respect for the law and ensuring that there is appropriate public deterrence.

[16:15]

People who do not pay traffic fines, including Criminal Code driving offences, will not be able to get their licences renewed. People whose fines are sent to a collection agent will see their credit rating affected in a downward manner. People who do not respond to demand letters and collection agents could see their wages or bank accounts garnisheed, personal property seized, or face a hearing to determine if they should be incarcerated. The Ministry of Justice will be conducting a pilot project to withhold income tax refunds and GST [goods and services tax] rebates for individuals with outstanding fines early in the new

year.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to improving services to victims of crime in our province. Increased revenues generated through an increase in the fine surcharge will benefit victims of crime and close existing gaps in services to the central part of the province and some areas in northern Saskatchewan. The victim impact surcharge is the primary source of funding for programs and services for victims of crime. The current rates have been in place since 2004. We wish to see an increase in those rates. Improvements in our ability to collect fines will also increase revenues to the Victims Fund.

We want to ensure that restitution orders are enforced and victims receive payment of those monies. We are currently examining options to improve the province's ability to monitor payments and to collect on those orders.

Mr. Speaker, over the next four years we will provide free home security devices and home safety audits to low-income seniors and to seniors who have been victims of break-ins or home invasions.

We are a government that will keep its promises and those promises include a promise to add 120 new police officers over the next four years and to develop a long-term policing strategy. No one approach, Mr. Speaker, can accomplish everything to improve community safety. Ministries throughout government will work hard with communities, families, individuals, and others to accomplish this goal.

Mr. Speaker, I will not only be supporting the Speech from the Throne and the motion to support that, I will be supporting with pride and with confidence that we'll help the citizens of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise this day to express my appreciation for the anticipated co-operation, co-operative atmosphere among the members on both sides of this House. I say that it is in appreciation for the new and promising future that this Throne Speech is introducing. And I'm confident that as we move forward for the betterment of all the citizens of Saskatchewan that there will be an awakening in the opposition's seats knowing full well that this province, with the wisdom and foresight of the new government, will conceive an understanding and an attitude of why didn't we think of that.

Mr. Speaker, this is my first attempt in the field of politics. And successfully being elected by the good people of Moose Jaw North to represent them and to sit in these, your chambers, and assist in the forward direction of this magnificent province, I'm overwhelmed by the foresight and the energy of these ladies and gentlemen who are now my colleagues as we embark on a new and exciting future.

Although I've been in this building on numerous occasions in the past and I've had the pleasure of, on occasion, of being

seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I cannot fully describe the feeling of anticipation and excitement when on November 9 I walked up those front steps and through the doors of this magnificent structure as an elected official. Mr. Speaker, I stood there in awesome wonder for a gentle moment to take in the ambience and feel the confidence of the people of my constituency and what they have entrusted in me.

I've many thanks to the people of Moose Jaw North for bestowing on me this opportunity and for those who worked so diligently to make my dream come true, both for me and for many people who willingly gave their time and their talent and their energy to have Moose Jaw North represented on the government side of this new government. This is truly an accomplishment and an opportunity.

There are hundreds of volunteers in my home constituency who could see the new direction and future of this province. I want to take a few minutes to thank many of those volunteers who helped in my campaign and my election just past. I want to thank those people who put their trust in me, Mr. Speaker; people who stated, I know you, Mr. Michelson. I voted NDP all my life, but I know you and I trust you. Or a gentleman that told me that, I've never voted in my 41 years but, Warren, I know you and I want you to represent me at the legislature.

There's a story of a mother who came to me and said, I couldn't get my kids to sleep that night because they had to know, is Mr. Michelson winning? And those kind of stories really warm the heart. I want to express my thanks to Agnes, a very dear lady who wrote to me after the election and actually replayed some of those actions that went on the election night as we went to the victory hall. My wife, Debbie, and I walked into the hall. Our children were there. There was some cheering, handshaking. They introduced me and I said a few words. Mr. Speaker, I was there. I lived it. It was, it was that simple. But when Agnes wrote to me and replayed it, it meant so much more like I hadn't even been there. This is what Agnes wrote:

Dear Warren, I was so touched and blessed when you came into the hall holding hands and then your children met you and embraced you with so much love and a beautiful bouquet of flowers. They're so proud of you. I wept when I saw the genuine love and respect you have for each other. You're truly winners in more ways than one and it is a testimony and model for how families should be.

There was something that I missed and I really appreciated and thanked Agnes for replaying that for me on that election night. I want to express my deepest appreciation for all these people and to my family. I want to acknowledge my mother-in-law, Mary Sinkewicz, who for the first time in her 96 years was so pleased and proud to be seated in your chambers, Mr. Speaker, during the swearing-in ceremonies last Tuesday.

I want to thank my wife, Debbie, who supported me right from the idea of running for the nomination. Debbie was not only supportive but many times took the lead role during the campaign and attended functions in the community and called on hundreds of homes to speak of the promising potential of this province and to ask for the hope in a new and exciting future for all of us and for our children and our grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, hope and an exciting future — that's what this Throne Speech is about.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Michelson: — I want to thank my son, Paul, who earned his journeyman's ticket in electrical at the SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] Palliser Campus in Moose Jaw. He now works for one of the largest electrical businesses in Saskatchewan and at this time there's no need to mention Humboldt Electric, so I won't. Yes, Mr. Speaker, a journeyman electrician who stayed in the province.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Michelson: — Paul was there to support me on the nomination night last January. He was there during the campaign and came down from Saskatoon on election night even if it took after 11 o'clock to understand who really won the election with such a slim vote. And he helped, was there when we launched a new career for me as their representative in Moose Jaw North. And by the way, also was there when we launched a new career for Mr. Hagel, who I now recognize for his 21 years of service in the legislature.

I want to thank my two daughters, Krista and Kimberly, and their children, Taylor and Jacob, who came out when they could to support the efforts in any way they could during the campaign.

As a matter of fact, I'm not the first in the family to go into the political arena. My daughter Krista was elected just about two years ago on the Holy Trinity school board. It is also interesting to note that her four-year-old son, Taylor, who saw grandpa and grandma going out door knocking night after night — Taylor was an inquiring little fellow — begged to go door knocking with grandpa and grandma. So on one holiday Monday we let him fulfill his dreams and let him come with us and deliver some of the brochures in the neighbourhood mailboxes.

I want to mention my youngest son, Brent. Brent is now in his fourth year of education in the University of Regina, and he took every opportunity to assist me during the campaign right through the summer in the hottest days and on the weekends during his fall semester. It is interesting to note that when Brent couldn't be home to help, his belief in the potential of this province was so focussed he assisted three other candidates right here in Regina, two of whom are seated in your House, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Michelson: — I can tell you more about Brent. Brent is now in his early 20s. He, like many other young people in this province, has an open vision for this province. These new voting citizens are not short-sighted about events of 20 years ago. They're not willing to accept the scare tactics and the fearmongering and the negative cries of deception that were displayed during the election campaign.

These young citizens, Mr. Speaker, are looking for a bright new beginning. They're looking for the future filled with hope and

prosperity, a place where they can call home because it is home, that they can grow and they can live and they can raise their families in secure neighbourhoods with opportunities to enjoy living at its fullest.

We saw with optimism these young people through my constituency. I recall two young students attending SIAST Palliser Campus who were so excited about their very first time being able to vote. They're excited about the future of this province. They're excited with the pride of placing their X for a brand new Saskatchewan, and they couldn't wait for their voices to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that same pride and assurance as I speak today to you, to this Throne Speech by a government that has been given the authority by the people to present a program of progress for this province. The details of this document, the Speech from the Throne, will lead this province into its rightful place as leaders for the rest of Canada — in fact, much of the world. For who can deny the resources that God has provided for us? And we now have come of age to understand these benefits for the people of our province. And what a glorious opportunity we have.

Saskatchewan has just about half of the arable land, 47 per cent of the arable farm land in Canada. What an opportunity. What advantages we have over every other province and most nations for food production and processing. Saskatchewan has provided some of the world's leading technology in farm operations.

Our farm diversity over the past decades has shown the ingenuity of the Saskatchewan producers both in grain production and in agricultural manufacturing sector — manufacturers like Brandt and Honey Bee, Schulte, Degelman, Rite Way, Doepker, Ram, Leon, Morris Industries, and there are dozens more of those entrepreneurial individuals of which we can be so proud of.

For much of our first century, farming had been the very backbone of the Saskatchewan economy. Even with its ups and downs, farming has and will have a vital impact on the prosperity of this province.

It was the farming lifestyle that I was born into in a little town of Lipton, Saskatchewan. Both my grandparents migrated to that area more than 100 years ago and, like all immigrants, they became familiar with dozens of people like themselves who were new to this glorious land but came from different countries and different backgrounds. My grandmother, Rosa Fry, like many of them, came to this country but she came as a teenage girl, and not with her parents, but rather with her mother's brother, her uncle.

Grandmother Rosa worked and lived in the district all of her life. She grew up. She got married and raised a family of her own, but never had the opportunity to return to her native Switzerland or to ever see her parents again.

They plowed the fields. They grew the crops and, through countless hardships of drought and disease and depression, carved a life for their children while developing communities with a co-operative spirit of support and assistance.

[16:30]

My father was one of those children. After returning from service in the World War II, he bought a piece of land where many said no one could survive. He and my mother made a home from an abandoned log house which once served as a halfway house for travel between Fort Qu'Appelle and Touchwood on the Touchwood Trail. Hence this is where the name Touchwood originates in the constituency of Last Mountain-Touchwood.

A post office had been set up near there called Headlands. Indeed the remnants of this old log shack that served as the post office still can be seen on my father's farm, 15 miles north of Lipton, where my nephew still farms today.

We were a family of eight children in a humble three-bedroom abode. We walked to school for the first four years of my education and then in the early '60s were bused to town, which was an hour each way. The years were hard. I recall as a young child seeing the entire crop wiped out and destroyed by a five-minute hailstorm, yet the home always felt secure.

The memories of those young years were strong as my parents were providing their children the opportunities that they did not have. And if they could see us now, each with our own talent and abilities to carve a place in society, providing service and support to others, as they lived and raised their own families providing with a work ethic and faith installed in them as we grew up.

It's unfortunate only four of my eight brothers and sisters remain in the province, as opportunities presented themselves in other parts of Canada. Opportunities here in Saskatchewan were never made possible even with the abundant wealth potential of this province. That, Mr. Speaker, is changing and will continue to change.

As the people of this province can see from the direction of the Throne Speech, there will be overwhelming opportunities for Saskatchewan. There will be more opportunities than people to fill them. I can see there will be mass exoduses from other jurisdictions to return to Saskatchewan where the promise of a safe, secure family future is foreseen. I speak with confidence as we develop more of the potential of this great province. Although farming was considered the wealth of Saskatchewan, the overwhelming potential of prosperity is becoming more evident as we look into the future.

Half of our province is covered with forestry. The prospect to future develop and to expand the forest industry I'm confident will be part of this province's glorious future. And, Mr. Speaker, we won't do it on the backs of the taxpayers but by entrepreneurs and visionaries who see the great potential in the forest industry in Saskatchewan.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Michelson: — As we look into the future, we see the further development of our natural resources. We see the expansion of the oil, the natural gas industry, and new exciting opportunities to develop a clean power source through research and development of uranium. The world's largest potash

deposits will future enhance the well-being of Saskatchewan for the benefit of the people.

Our universities and technical schools will increase the knowledge base to future develop and improve the opportunities in Saskatchewan with increased education funding.

Mr. Speaker, the tourist sector is poised for even greater attractions in our province with parks, lakes, recreation facilities, and historical sites and venues.

If this is the province that's home to medicare, you wouldn't know it by the state of our health care — the long waiting lists, the shortage of doctors and nurses, and temporary rural hospital closures. In fact in my city, the Moose Jaw Union Hospital has medical facilities dating back to 1954. And the best, the best that the former government could do in a feeble attempt to make amends near the end of the election campaign was to hand-stuff black and white photocopied little memorandums — or you might say a memorandum of understanding — that they shoved in their election brochures that said that if they were re-elected they would start doing something about it. It was more of a disgrace than it was a promise, Mr. Speaker.

But thanks to the citizens of Moose Jaw North that they did not buy into this deception. Now we can stand to move on and hire more nurses, creating more training seats, and more residency positions for our doctors. And we have a prescription drug program that makes sense.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party government will clean up the mess.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, it's also refreshing to know that business can now feel welcome in this province with less restrictions and fairer labour legislation. The barriers to investment were very evident in a meeting of some 20 business people last Friday that the hon. member for Thunder Creek and I had the pleasure of attending. It all begins with good business opportunities and good economic policies, Mr. Speaker. We cannot have good social programs without good economic policies. Creating a good business atmosphere leads to more business, more jobs, more families, stronger communities, greater benefits for all by working together.

Mr. Speaker, this is what Saskatchewan can be. Saskatchewan can and will be the envy of the rest of North America with our resources, our people strengths, and our vision for a secure future. Make no mistake — the Speech from the Throne is the beginning of a better Saskatchewan in securing the future. Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of the Speech from the Throne.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start off by congratulating you on your election as Speaker and on the election also of the Deputy Speaker. I know from the years that

I've spent in this place that you've watched very carefully the very good Speakers who have preceded you and that we will be well served in the coming years as you provide a fair hand in the debate that we have in this place.

I also want to congratulate all the members in this House, the three new members that we have on our side of the House, and the many new members that are on the other side of the House. There are many times that you will wonder why and how and what you're doing in this place, but ultimately you have been given a great opportunity to be part of the leadership of this province. And that role of leadership happens whether you're in the government side or you're in the opposition side.

We in this particular election are in a situation where a strong group of men and women have been given the task of being the opposition, and we will be working very carefully and diligently in that role. And you can expect that we will provide good ideas, good advice. We'll give warnings to ministers that we're . . . of various things that are happening. It may be public, or it may be in conversations.

And I would have to say that I would thank the members opposite who did that in the 12 years that I served as a minister. There were many times that we were able to solve problems for individual Saskatchewan people because we worked together. So I know that there's a big role that we have there that many people don't always understand.

But there's also a very public role that we have to hold the government accountable, and we're going to be doing that as well. And that will be set out in very many different ways, and I think that you will all have to be on your toes in the government side as we work together over here. And in the same way, we're looking forward with a bit of anticipation, a bit of fear in some ways, of what kinds of things that you will set forth in your agenda.

I'm speaking for the motion that provides an amendment to this budget speech and against the budget speech because I don't think it quite . . . The budget speech itself doesn't capture where we are at this point. But I'll get to that in a second.

I want to say thank you to all of the constituents of Regina Lakeview for the trust that they've placed in me again to serve them. I also want to thank the members of my family, my wife and my daughters, my parents, my friends who have stuck with me in this interesting and sometimes difficult task. I also want to say a special thank you to the staff who worked with me for all the years in my offices, in the minister's office and in the constituency office. I was very well served by very many capable people, and I want to make a special point of thanking them.

Another group of people who I want to thank for the good work they've done so far — and I look forward to seeing the good work that they will bring in the coming years — is the civil service of Saskatchewan. The people of this province are very well served by a professional civil service, and I strongly urge the members opposite to be extremely careful in how you end up making the kinds of changes that I know you will make as you move forward. We have many, many years of experience that can be lost if things are not done correctly.

So I strongly urge all of the ministers, the Premier, and everybody else to think once, twice, and then again about some of the kinds of things that you will do because I know from the many years of experience that I've had, that the skills, the knowledge, the background that the civil servants have provided to the Blakeney government, the Devine government, the Romanow government, the Calvert government, and now the Wall government — and I understand your comment about using that name — but in that context I think those . . . many of the same people have provided the advice all through those years. And I urge you to be very careful in what you do. And I thank all of those people who worked closely with me and with all of my colleagues when we were in government.

Unfortunately this budget speech is a sign to me, and it has a bit of a sense of uneasiness about it. And I say this because people are apprehensive about change at the best of times, but unfortunately there are some things that aren't in here which should be in here. There's some things which have been announced which have come out of the blue, and my colleagues have done a good job of talking about those. But in the province and talking to people from other parts, everybody is quite uneasy because they don't know what this government is going to produce, what it's going to do.

Now last week I was thinking, okay we'll come forward to this week, and we'll see a confident presentation of what the new government's going to do. Unfortunately my assessment is that that confidence isn't there and that there's something not quite certain about what's happening.

Now as you all know, I love Saskatchewan poetry and I will use it, read it at any time that I can. And I found a poem by my favourite Saskatchewan poet, Glen Sorestad — and I have to say that — who was our first poet laureate. It's called "When the World Disappears," and we'll all recognize this one because it fits with what we're dealing with on a relatively regular basis right now.

When the World Disappears

Driving through a flat-out prairie
blizzard is a classic struggle between
terror and faith. Between Paynton and
the Battlefords the world disappears —
horizon, buildings, trees, traffic,
the road itself, all gone. Snow,
blasted by a fierce south-easter,
obliterates equally land and sky.

On this two-way stretch of highway
we drive into the snow cloud.
As vehicles behind and in front
vanish from my sight, so too have I
from them, my hands iron vises
clinging to the steering wheel,
clinging to frail threads of reason,
clinging to little more than blind hope
as the white-out erodes confidence
and panic probes below
the thin skin of logic.

We hurtle through nothingness,

my silent prayer willing that whatever
lies on the other side of this void,
whatever other drivers are steering
the margins of their own misery,
their paths do not intersect mine.
We are, all of us, blind pilgrims
groping for some distant shrine
lost from our view, alive only
in the minds that will them.

[16:45]

Now this poem, we all in this room and, I think, in this province have lived through a situation like this — whether we're a passenger or a driver — in some of our winter storms. We all have the goal of coming through this kind of a storm and surviving and getting out from the other side.

But my sense today and even more so after I heard that Throne Speech on Monday is that we're sitting there with, as the quote goes here:

. . . my hands iron vises
clinging to the steering wheel,
clinging to frail threads of reason,
clinging to little more than blind hope . . .

And, Mr. Speaker, that is not a good feeling. And my concern, my prayer for what happens in our province is that there will be some better sense of where we're going than what we've got so far.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have many, many things that we've done very well, and some of them have been done over a number of decades. We're building on the kind of work that has been done before us. And I think that one of the signs of a recognition and of a maturity of a government is that it will step forward and say, we're confident in where we're going and what we're going to do. I don't feel that yet. I don't feel it in this Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, when the responses that come to questions, whether they're answered here or out in the press or at some other event that go back and try to rewrite history or blame people before them, that's not the sign of a confident government. That's a sign of things that people don't have a clear idea of where they're going or what they're going to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, when you listened to the kinds of comments that come forward over the last couple of days, the concern rises. And so, Mr. Speaker, I fervently believe that there is some capacity to listen carefully to the good advice that you will get from the civil servants and others who are part of this province. And it's important that you do that. But frankly our province needs a confidence, a confident government, a confident leader that is not going to mess up the things that have happened to this point.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're all watching very carefully the various strong parts of our economy. You can read the business pages locally in Toronto, New York, London. And this is a rare time that we as Saskatchewan people have, where the price of wheat is coming up and holding, other agriculture products are going

up. The policies around the use of corn in the United States for ethanol have made a huge change in the value of fertilizer of all kinds, but especially potash, and that's made a very major difference in the value of that particular asset that we have.

We all know about what's happened with oil and natural gas. We, I think, are all very proud of our Saskatchewan engineers and oil people who have used their ingenuity to figure out how to get this hard-to-obtain oil that's in southeastern Saskatchewan, the hard-to-obtain oil that's up in northwestern Saskatchewan, the oil sands, all the heavy oil on the west side of the province.

The educations that have been provided to our people through our universities and through other Canadian and worldwide universities — all of that skill is coming to bear which is providing a really good solid economic base for what's happening in this province.

But when so many things are happening in a positive way in a situation where our economy has done well at various points, but we've always ended up with one or two parts that aren't pulling their full weight. And so, Mr. Speaker, my wish for the government, my wish for all of us here in Saskatchewan is that we will not make hasty decisions that are based on some of the ideological positions that we see in this Throne Speech and in some of the other actions, but that we actually listen to the practical advice of people, that we actually spend some time consulting.

I'm quite surprised that the Premier and the Deputy Premier have referred to the election as the consultation on every topic that comes up. I agree that the election is a time when there is a measuring or a decision about who is going to provide the leadership. But if that leadership does not take its role in the way it should, which is to make sure that the people of the province are with them as they move forward, then we're in trouble.

And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I'm uneasy. Many of the people I'm talking to are uneasy about this Throne Speech. They're uneasy about the leadership that's been shown so far. And my hope for all of us is that some of this shakiness will disappear because it's not good for me or my family or my children or all of us in this province or, for that matter, in Western Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we're driving through this blizzard with our hands gripped with some kind of blind hope and that's all we've got, then we need to understand that slogans or other things like that are not the point. The point is to work with the whole community — work with and understand and listen to those people who actually know of the various information that's available — and then proceed with consultation, with support. And if we can do that, we can have some good government in Saskatchewan over the next few years.

We're going to have some other opportunities for the New Democrats to be leaders in this province, and we will continue to work in this place, in this building, as the leaders for the province.

But if the public gets the impression that decisions are made

without consulting them, without talking to them, without listening to what they say, without listening to the many, many professionals who are part of the civil service of Saskatchewan, then I think we're all in for a sad time.

Now personally, I wish all of the members of the government the best as they move forward. We will do our role in keeping track of what you're doing, advising you of things that we think need to be fixed, and making very public those things where you don't seem to be listening to the kinds of consultations that we have and that we hear.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we're in for some quite interesting times. I'm sad to be able just to stand here and say I'm quite uneasy, but I think I do reflect a very large part of the population of this province. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The member for Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:55.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on House Services

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Taylor | 39 |
|--------------|----|

MOTIONS

Revision to the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Gantefer | 39 |
|----------------|----|

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Draude | 40 |
|--------------|----|

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Belanger | 40 |
|----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Bjornerud | 40 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Iwanchuk | 40 |
|----------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Morgan | 40 |
|--------------|----|

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Battlefords Blend Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Taylor | 41 |
|--------------|----|

Tribute to First Nations Leader

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Harrison | 41 |
|----------------|----|

North Park Wilson School

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Quennell | 41 |
|----------------|----|

New Processing Facility in Arborfield

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Bradshaw | 41 |
|----------------|----|

Saskatchewan Order of Merit Recipients

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Atkinson | 42 |
|----------------|----|

Investment in Canola Crushing Plant Benefits Saskatchewan Economy

| | |
|------------------|----|
| Ottenbreit | 42 |
|------------------|----|

First Persephone Performance in New Theatre Building

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Forbes | 42 |
|--------------|----|

ORAL QUESTIONS

Essential Services Legislation

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Iwanchuk | 43 |
|----------------|----|

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Krawetz | 43 |
|---------------|----|

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Wotherspoon | 44 |
|-------------------|----|

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Yates | 45 |
|-------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Norris | 45 |
|--------------|----|

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Junor | 45 |
|-------------|----|

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Brotten | 46 |
|---------------|----|

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Atkinson | 46 |
|----------------|----|

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tougher Treatment of Repeat Drunk Drivers

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Morgan | 47 |
|--------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Nilson | 48 |
|--------------|----|

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Schriemer | 48 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Wilson | 50 |
|--------------|----|

| | |
|------------|----|
| Trew | 52 |
|------------|----|

| | |
|------------|----|
| Tell | 54 |
|------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Duncan | 55 |
|--------------|----|

| | |
|-------------|----|
| Yates | 58 |
|-------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Morgan | 61 |
|--------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Michelson | 63 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Nilson | 66 |
|--------------|----|

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier

Hon. Bob BJORNERUD
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for the Information
Technology Office

Hon. June Draude
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs

Hon. Wayne Elhard
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Provincial Secretary

Hon. Rod Gantfoer
Minister of Finance

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Nancy Heppner
Minister of Environment

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Municipal Affairs
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice
Attorney General

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
Minister Responsible for Immigration
Minister Responsible for the Workers'
Compensation Board

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Enterprise and Innovation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Capital City Commission