



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

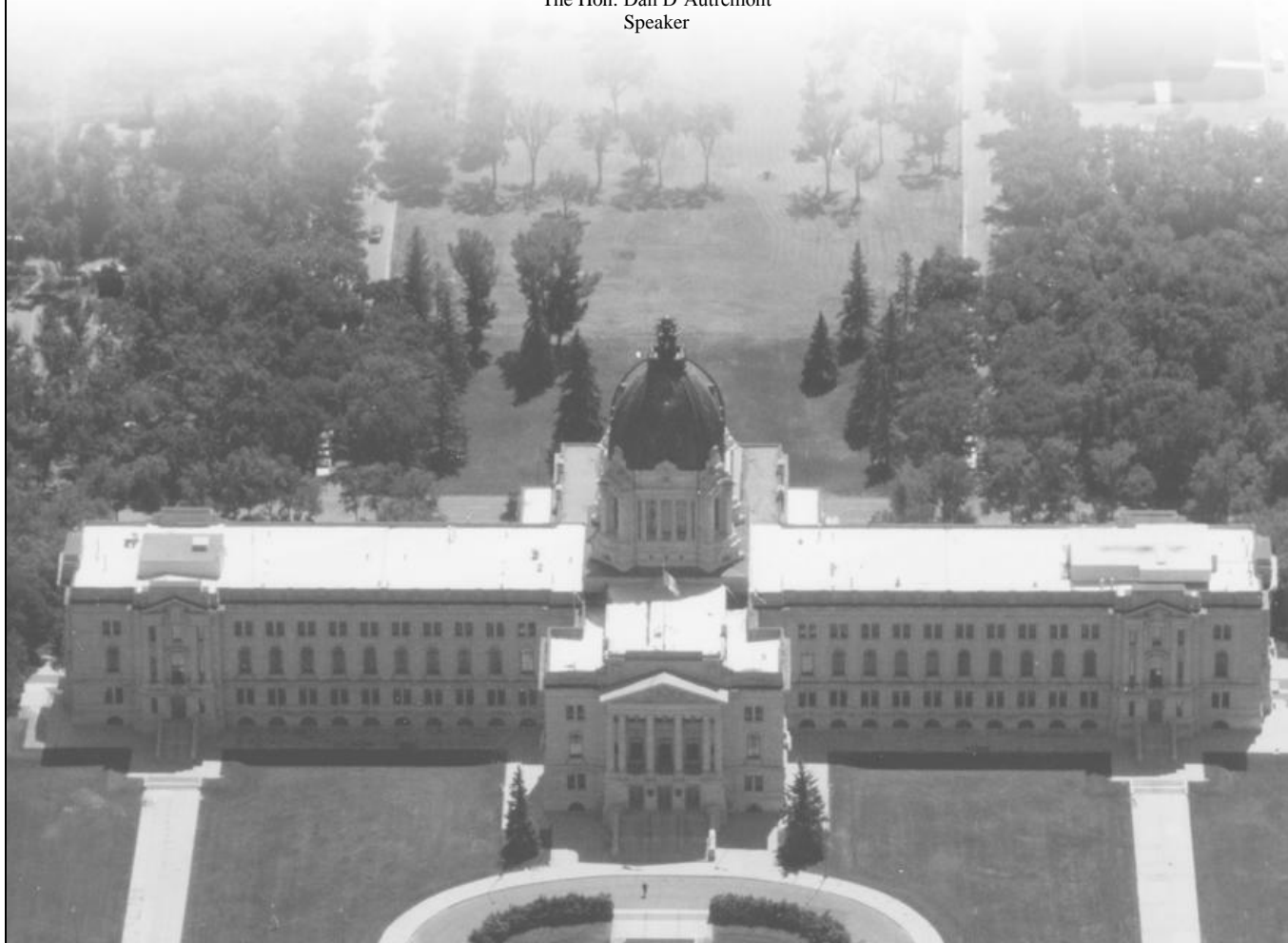
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: — It now being 7 o'clock, debate will continue on the reply to the Throne Speech, concurrently both on the main motion and the amendment. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

SPECIAL ORDER

ADJOURNED DEBATES

ADDRESS IN REPLY

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the address in reply which was moved by Mr. Makowsky, seconded by Mr. Merriman, and the proposed amendment to the main motion moved by Mr. Wotherspoon.]

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to wade into the debate on the Throne Speech. And prior to supper I had the opportunity to thank all the many important people in my life, and I think it's important to get down to the Throne Speech now.

I want to start by pointing out a quote actually from *The StarPhoenix* editorial board. They said about this current government, "... what's frustratingly weak is its vision for Saskatchewan." So I usually like to think that actions speak louder than words, so I am going to talk a little bit, I'm going to talk a little bit about the action or the lack thereof action, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with respect to the traffic safety . . . I'd like to start actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with something that took up a great deal of time basically from adjournment last spring until August. So it was a big part of my life this summer, and that was the opportunity to sit on the all-party Traffic Safety Committee, which was actually a really great opportunity. I appreciated the chance to take part in something that was a little less partisan actually. You put your partisanship aside and the goal is to come up with the best possible policy. And it was a really wonderful opportunity.

I was heartened to see this mentioned in the Throne Speech actually. What was quoted in the Throne Speech is:

Sadly, our province has seen an increase in the number of traffic fatalities.

Many of those accidents involved alcohol.

During the session, my government will act on the recommendations of the Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on Traffic Safety, with a particular focus on tougher penalties for drinking and driving.

So the mandate of the Traffic Safety Committee was to reduce fatalities. And it wasn't specific to alcohol-related fatalities, but alcohol-related fatalities did dominate a large part of our work. As I said, it was a really great experience to hear from people

who had lived experience in, well, with impaired driving: working with people who had been convicted of impaired driving, policy experts who've been in the field for 30 years, just people generally concerned about the deaths on the road. Last year we had almost 200 people who lost their lives on our roads, our highways last year in Saskatchewan.

The interesting thing, there was consensus on most issues. And there was some pretty heated behind-closed-doors conversations that happened on the committee, but I think generally we had consensus on almost every issue. But my colleague from Cumberland and I chose to put forward a minority opinion because we felt that there was a key piece of evidence or the government members chose to ignore some key evidence that we think has been shown to save lives, and that made absolutely no sense to us since the goal of this committee was to make recommendations to save Saskatchewan people's lives.

So according to SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], between 2000 and 2013, impaired driving was responsible for 41 per cent of the traffic fatalities and 12 per cent of the injuries in Saskatchewan. It is not acceptable, and this is completely preventable. We talk about the high number of fatalities but, as I said a couple of weeks ago when I had the opportunity to respond to the report, these are people. These are not statistics; these are people whose deaths have left huge holes in the hearts of those who they've left behind, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Saskatchewan has an absolutely abysmal track record when it comes to impaired driving fatalities. We have the highest number of impairment-related crash deaths among all the provinces and have for quite some time. In fact when death rates have been going down in Canada over the past decade by almost 17 per cent, they've gone up in this province by almost 23 per cent. So clearly here in Saskatchewan we're doing things . . . We don't have it right, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We don't have the right mix of policies and education to ensure our roads are as safe as they can be. And there are things that we can do as members of this legislature. And like I said, I was glad to hear the Throne Speech was committing to doing something about it, but I'm hopeful that the government members will take the minority opinion very seriously because the people of Saskatchewan are counting on us to help keep them safe. And that was the mandate of the committee.

I know that the Chair of the committee had talked about baby steps or some incrementalism, and now is not the time for incrementalism. We are so far behind what other provinces are doing, and on the way we've dealt with impaired driving, in death rate increases. So undoubtedly if the government implemented all the recommendations as is and ignored the minority report, I think that we could probably save some lives. I think there's some good things in the report, but I think we would be missing a key opportunity to take some . . . well they're not even bold steps. They're steps that other provinces have already taken.

Two conservative governments in Alberta and BC [British Columbia] have in fact implemented stiffer penalties. In BC, measures in both the administrative or warning range and the criminal range, they've put in place. So the administrative range

is that warning range between, it's .05 and .08 in BC; so that's not criminal yet, and over .08 is criminal. So they put in multiple measures, but one of the key things was vehicle impoundments for those people in the warning ranges as well as those over .08. So there was a three-day vehicle impoundment on the first-time offence for those in the warning range.

In two years they saw a reduction in their death rate by 50 per cent — in two years. I actually had someone who ended up presenting to the committee who I'd had a conversation with. He's worked in traffic safety for 30 years. He says he's never seen a policy in his 30 years in traffic safety that had such a dramatic impact. Alberta did the same and implemented vehicle impoundments on first-time offenders in that warning range as well, again that .05 to .08. And their early results last year: fatal crashes where alcohol was involved dropped by 46 per cent between July and December 2012, compared to the five-year average for the same months. So it holds some promise.

So why does it work? Well impoundments are . . . It's much harder to hide an impoundment from your spouse or your parent than it is to hide a three-day suspension, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It does in fact impact your work and family life. And that is the whole point. The goal is to change behaviours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this is a measure that has been proven to change behaviours.

So the government members did choose to focus on licence suspensions for first-time offenders in the warning range. So we did hear and read submitted testimony on licence suspensions. And there's two problems with them, and not that they don't work, but they work in conjunction with other things.

The two problems with the license suspensions, we heard that as many as 70 per cent of suspended drivers violate their suspension. So you might get suspended on Friday night, have your licence taken away for three days, but you're still willing to take that risk to drive without your licence and have very little fear of getting caught. And there was also another piece of literature that was submitted to our committee that illustrates that those who do get short-term suspensions in the warning range are within the next two years more likely to get a driving while impaired, eight times more likely than you and I, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are considered high-risk drivers.

So wouldn't you rather nip this behaviour in the bud, before someone becomes a .08 driver, to help people understand that you shouldn't be drinking and driving? I actually need to point out the irony in the report, that according to MADD [Mothers Against Drunk Driving] Canada, there is one drink difference in a three-hour period if you are a 200-pound man. So if you drink five drinks in a three-hour period and you are a 200-pound man, that will put you at .06, still in the administrative range. If you happen to be that same man who has six drinks, you're at .08. So a one-drink difference. And what this committee has recommended, a one-drink difference for a first-time offender in that warning range, you just get a licence suspension, but a first-time offence at .08 you would get a 30-day vehicle impoundment. So the committee recommended, for the .08 drivers, a 30-day vehicle impoundment for someone who hits .08 and no impoundment on first offence for the warning range.

So a one-drink difference, and we're willing to take a car away

for 30 days. I think that it would be prudent to want to prevent that behaviour before it even happens. And wouldn't you rather have a three-day impoundment, lose your car — I don't think any of us would want that anyway and I hope that that isn't the case for any of us — but wouldn't you prefer to have a three-day impoundment rather than a 30-day impoundment where you even possibly even kill or severely injure someone?

So I do hope that the government will seriously consider the minority opinion, and I'm looking forward to hearing what the government decides to do on the recommendations from the Traffic Safety Committee. It was, as I said, a great committee. And I think we all worked very well. It was a learning process for sure, and I think one of the highlights of my experience in this legislature thus far. So I think that I . . . I have a bit of a cold here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think it's important that we talk here a little bit about education. I come from a family of teachers. I happen to hear all about teachers' experiences at the family dinner table. I have a brother who is a teacher, a sister-in-law who is a teacher, a nephew who is a teacher, many friends who are teachers, and a great number of constituents who are teachers as well. So I have no shortage of conversations with educators and their thoughts of the last few years here in Saskatchewan.

What I've heard and seen — and I'm a parent who has children in elementary and in high school in Saskatoon — so some of the things that I've heard from educators and seen with my own eyes are crowded classrooms. For example, 32 children in a grade 1 class. Thirty-two children in a grade 1 class. And it's not just because of a lack of space; it's often because of a lack of resources. So 32 kids are in that class, not simply because there isn't any more room in the building, but because the resources are not necessarily there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's a kindergarten that I'm aware of that has 26 children in one class, 25 children in another. I have a five-year-old, and I know how it's like to wrangle that five-year-old in the morning out the door. So I can't even imagine what a class of 26 five-year-olds, 26 Ophelias looks like, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can you imagine all those little kids, brand new to school, and teachers not having the resources that they need to ensure that those kids are getting what they need?

The ill-conceived notion of standardized testing. Both the Education minister and the Premier in this House, both today and last week, can't say no to standardized testing. A straight-up question, yes or no: have you shelved that? Have you not paused it? Have you put it . . . Have you scrapped it? Neither the Minister for Education nor the Premier could say no, that standardized testing is not off the table. I mean their answers clearly indicate that in fact we will possibly see a rebranding of standardized testing once the consultations are finished, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know the teachers and the families that I talked to, they want those resources in the classroom. The \$6 million budgeted this year for standardized testing could make a huge difference in the classrooms, I know the classrooms in my constituency with cuts to educational assistants, or the students that I know, English as an additional language students.

I happen to represent a community that has schools that have 30 different countries represented, many different languages spoken. I have children in the schools in Saskatoon Riversdale who were born and spent the first several years of their lives, their little young lives, in refugee camps. These are kids who don't speak incredible English and have some cultural challenges and shocks. I was talking to a teacher last week. So Halloween should be a great, fun experience for our kids, but I was talking to a teacher last week. Some of these poor little kids who are brand new to Canada, Halloween scared the dickens out of them. They didn't know what to make of the costumes. It was not a positive experience.

So you've got cultural difficulties. You've got language difficulties. And this is where we have to, if you want newcomers to come to Saskatchewan, which we do — we were all ultimately newcomers to this province at one time or another — you want to make sure that the resources are there so they can adjust and so they can grow and so they can eventually thrive here and really make Saskatchewan home.

So English as an additional language, those resources are just not available. I talked to one teacher at the end of last year who had six . . . She had 31 children in her grade 1 class — 31 children in her grade 1 class — she had six English as an additional language students in a more affluent school in Saskatoon, and those kids were receiving 10 minutes of EAL [English as an additional language] a week. Not a day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a week.

[19:15]

So those are resources that are sorely lacking here. That's what teachers are telling me they want. Educational assistants. They want the resources for English as an additional language. They want capped classroom sizes. They want to be respected. Actually that's the biggest thing that teachers have shared with me, one of the overarching things. It's not so much about respect. It's about recognizing that teachers and school boards actually know a great deal about this sector.

And we heard lots of *mea culpas* at the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] council from the Premier. Lots of *mea culpas*, we're going to do things better. But these answers that we've had this last week in question period around standardized testing does not illustrate a government who is really sorry and really is going to do what they need to do to connect with teachers.

I know that the Premier likes to say the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. And actually I've heard two members of his party, the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow and Regina Walsh Acres, use that same quote in their response to the Throne Speech. Well that's . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Exactly. That is what teachers are worried about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So how is it that teachers and school boards, and families, for that matter, are able to trust that this government is going to engage in real and meaningful consultation? They've plowed ahead on so many decisions without any input from those who know schools best — educators and boards. They've done curriculum changes, standardized testing, changes to the school

day, changes to the school year. But the Premier talks about hearing that it was too much change too fast. That is not what I'm hearing. It was a matter of change without talking to folks who know the sector well.

Frankly, despite the Premier's words, this government has a lot of ground to make up in the education sector to illustrate that his government really is willing to listen. So again, the Premier's response today to questions about standardized testing don't increase that trust factor.

So I think one thing that we also have to talk about when we talk about education are P3s [public-private partnership]. I am a parent of school-age children and I know many people whose children are learning in spaces that are less than ideal. I am very well aware of that. And there is no doubt that this government needs to invest in building schools, but P3s can pose a serious problem. In Alberta we have three vastly different opposition parties opposed to the P3 school builds there. It has nothing to do with ideology. It's about common sense. We've heard about lack of community space because in these builds that hasn't been factored in. We've heard about the inability to add portables.

I want to talk about a case at Elizabeth Finch school in Edmonton, a K to 9 [kindergarten to grade 9] school that as of last year had 740 students enrolled. And the school had a maximum capacity of 850 students, but even with these 742 students the school was already over capacity. They had to give up enrichment classrooms such as the art lab and the wood shop classroom, as well as some small auxiliary rooms off the library, into core subject classrooms. So this school was constructed over a P3 arrangement, and as such they have some restrictions for adding additions to the structure. In this particular case they are restricted to adding two portables to the school, and those portables cannot house more than one classroom each, leaving the school with a capacity to expand by only two classrooms. So I'm glad that the minister has said that they've learned from Alberta, but I don't know if they have entirely.

Today in question period we also talked about P3s, and the minister used the number 98 million, that they had a \$98 million savings building the first 18 schools built under the P3 model rather than the conventional procurement process. But I think it's important to point out that the auditor . . . So the Auditor General pointed out that that was in fact the savings. But it's important to note the auditor said that the government had not retained the documents it used to estimate maintenance process of the contract, nor had it validated its estimate of cost overrun risk if it built and operated the school itself. In fact the Alberta auditor's staff are currently looking at whether or not two subsequent P3 school contracts offered value for money to taxpayers. And this report will be out publicly in February.

So I think that the jury is still out on these particular P3s, and that's why we're calling for an upfront costing. Let's see how much these schools are going to cost. I know the member from Warman actually today said, "Parents don't care how it gets built." And in part, I've actually heard from parents who do care. I've heard from teachers who care. But okay, let's give her the benefit of the doubt. Parents want their kids in good classrooms. She may be right today but they sure as heck will

care about how those schools get built when you have to make decisions because these schools cost us more money in the end. If they cost us more money in the end, the short-term or long-term costs, the reality is there's not a magic money tree and if these end up costing us more money, that means there are fewer things. There are fewer things that you can do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So families and parents will care when that means that there are fewer things that the government can offer — fewer programs, fewer resources because they've sunk their money into P3s that turned out to be too costly.

So I don't know what the government's difficulty is with being clear and transparent and having an independent outside source do an upfront evaluation of this. I think we would all appreciate that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, families and parents included.

I'd also like to talk a little bit about child care, which falls under education. But again in my role as a parent, as a mother — as I've said before, that's the lens through which I see much of what I do in this Assembly — I was hoping for more in child care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know the one thing that the government did say, it actually talked about its budget announcement of 500 more spaces, looking at past budget commitment. I know we've all heard the stories this summer and they're not unusual, the stories about people having to rely on unlicensed care because there are not enough licensed spots available.

And we hear about . . . You know, as a parent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the hardest things to do is to . . . I have no idea why they would be heckling right now, Mr. Speaker. It's whenever I talk about being a parent, I feel somewhat diminished in my role as a mother and that is who I am in this place, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have been heckled every time I talk about who I am. I feel incredibly diminished.

So in my capacity or in my role both in this House and as a parent, I have the opportunity to talk to a lot of parents. I am in the throes of parenting a five-year-old and a 15-year-old. The 15-year-old does not need child care anymore but the five-year-old does on occasion. I have the occasion to talk to many parents. There is nothing worse than dropping your child off in care when you have to go either to work or to school, and you don't feel good about the care. It's hard enough when you do feel good about the care. I come here, and my kids are in the best possible care — family members who I love and trust — and it still is heart-wrenching to drop your kids off in care that you really trust. There is nothing worse than dropping your kids off in a tenuous situation, but you have no choice because you have to earn a living, pay your bills or go to school, or risk being thrown out of your, being thrown out of your . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They're asking what the alternative is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The alternative is to figure out what the need is and meet it.

It was quite interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In September 2013, in September 2013 the former minister of Education had this to say: "We are going to go forward with assessment. You cannot improve what you don't measure, and we intend to measure." So that's specific to standardized testing.

I would say you can't, you can't improve what you can't measure. And I had the opportunity in estimates last spring, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, to ask the minister: so how have you come up with this number of 500 spaces this year or these 2,000 spaces over four years? How did you come up with that number? And you know, he couldn't give me an answer. He actually said, well we're being aggressive. And I said, well how do you know you're being aggressive if you don't know what the demand is? And he said to me that "At the present time, we don't have a way of doing that exactly."

There are other jurisdictions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who do know how to calculate demand. Manitoba actually about two years ago implemented an online child care registry, both to help parents to simplify the access process so you're not putting your name on 20 different lists, but the other piece of that is they did it so they would be able to measure demand and meet demand, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Prince Edward Island has an online child care registry. I haven't talked to Prince Edward Island, but I suspect they probably get the very same data that Manitoba does.

So there are ways to measure. And so we can do that with standardized testing — this government can — but they can't do it for child care. So I find it quite laughable that you can talk about being aggressive, and you have no idea what the actual need is.

In 2009, '10, '11, and '12, there were approximately 60,000 live births here in Saskatchewan, and we have less than 13,000 spaces. I know in the Throne Speech, the government quoted a number of spaces it's planning on building, but the bottom line is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I asked questions at the end of 2013 in estimates . . . So I asked about the . . . At the end of '12-13, operational spaces were 12,772. So we have a long way to go. Sixty thousand live births in four years. That's not accounting for these births in this year and not accounting for children who were over four years old who still need care. So the reality is, this government can talk a good game about child care, but they are not meeting the demands of the people of Saskatchewan. Child care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is about making sure, is about making sure that children have good care. It's about education.

It's about making sure children have good care, but it is also about economic development, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have approximately 70 per cent of women with children under five in the paid labour force — 70 per cent of women in the paid labour force who have children under five. That's a lot of child care spaces or a lot of need that is not being covered, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The bottom line is, this government can talk a good game but they are not meeting the demand of Saskatchewan people.

And with labour force shortages, we need to have as many people feel confident and comfortable about their child care, about their child care set-up as possible, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I said, there is nothing worse than leaving your children when you have to leave your children in less than comfortable care situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also had the opportunity in recent months to become the new Health care critic. So it's been a steep learning curve, obviously. There are a great number of . . . It's a big file. It's a big file, and there's much to learn. But I do have some thoughts

that I'd like to share on the Throne Speech on health care, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So one of the things that was highlighted is the mental health review which, from my family's own experience, I lost a nephew this summer at the age of 23 to . . . He was bipolar and was not served well by the system, despite having incredible parents who are great advocates. My sister-in-law works in the Saskatoon Health Region. She knows how to advocate. My brother is a pretty fine advocate himself, and they were not able to get my nephew what they needed.

I can tell you all, from my family's own experience, all kinds of things that are wrong with this system. I can tell you about admitting. I can tell you about . . . I can tell you about taking someone who is delusional into the emergency room at RUH [Royal University Hospital] and having to spend five hours in the emergency room to get admitted to Dubé where there's bright lights, lots of sounds, lots of stimulation — not what someone who is going through a psychotic episode needs.

I can tell you about legislation that makes it very hard to have an adult child put under trusteeship or guardianship. I can tell you about the shortage of psychiatrists and not having the ability . . . a boy who, a brilliant, beautiful, amazing child, who had a bright future in front of him, who had no cognitive therapy in five years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, simply medication. I can tell you about a boy who, had he not had the loving parents that he had, like many people who have mental health issues would have been on the street.

My brother and his wife, Greg and Lori, had Jordan continue to live with them, and it wasn't easy. It's not easy living with someone who is very ill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And there are many people not dissimilar from Jordan who end up on the streets. So I'm very grateful for the mental health review.

And the interesting thing that happened to me this summer, after Jordan died . . . My family is very public about it. My brother and his wife are determined that Jordan should be . . . there should be many lessons learned by my family's very difficult lesson. They're very public and open about this. And so my sister-in-law had written a really beautiful tribute to my nephew in the paper and was very clear that it was a family member. We were all mentioned in it. I had people coming out of the woodwork telling me stories about the mental health care system here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is not a rare experience that people have. One in five people are touched by mental health issues, and we have huge issues that we need to address. So I am very grateful for the mental health review. I am.

[19:30]

And I was at . . . I did have some concerns. I was at the launch of the online consultation process a couple of weeks ago. And I have to confess I had some reservations about the online consultation process, but Dr. Fern Stockdale Winder had put some of those to rest. Actually I'm optimistic, a big believer in consultation. That's one of the things, I think, that I've gotten up and talked a great deal about. I really believe in real and meaningful consultation. So she did put to rest or ease some of my concerns that the review would keep some people out, and I will trust that the government is doing all it can to hear from

some people who are a little bit more vulnerable, who might not normally feed into something like this.

So we will continue watching this. But the one thing, the fact of the matter is I'm hearing from people that we shouldn't just wait until the review is finished. I know that sounds counterintuitive here, but the government has had decision items before it. We know some of the things that we could do now which are life-saving. I am telling you from personal experience that some of these things we could do now could save someone's life, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it is I think a huge shame to wait for investment. So we have a report, a consultation process; the report will be done next summer. That's two budgets that we have to wait for, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think some of the things that we could think about is investing in Housing First. Housing First is ensuring that we keep a roof over people's heads where they can deal with their mental health and addictions once they have a roof over their head. We've got provinces like Alberta who have committed to it, cities like Calgary. We've got Saskatoon on board. We've got a whole host of people who are in support of Housing First, and we don't have a government who's committed to doing this yet.

We look at overcrowded emergency rooms and we talk . . . we hear about the government wanting to hot-spot, keeping people with mental health and addictions out of emergency rooms, which is great. But the services aren't there yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So how can you keep people out of the emergency rooms if the services are not there yet? So we do know that there are things that the government could invest in today that would make a difference in people's lives. I'm looking at a paper here called *Charting a New Course for Mental Health's Most Vulnerable: A Provincial Approach to Replace Saskatchewan Hospital and Address Complex Needs Care*. And it is a paper by the Ministry of Health and the Prairie North Regional Health Authority. And they “. . . partnered to develop a provincial project that addresses the lack of adequate mental health facilities and community resources for persons with severe psychiatric illness and/or persons considered to have high complex needs.”

Some of those things involve residential options like intensive residential support beds, which are “living arrangements that would provide duplex or small group home-type residences for clients and would provide 24-hour support.” Step-down beds are not dissimilar. They're not, they're “apartment-style accommodations or small group homes for clients” that still provide that daily support.

And that's what's needed. I think about my nephew Jordan who did have that support because he had parents who were willing to put up with an awful lot. He was not an easy person to live with. He was a wonderful boy but the sickness completely robbed him of who he was, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So there are things that we could be investing in now and I think that that's something that the government should look at. And I was disappointed. I know at the online consultation process kickoff, I talked to a mother who had been invited to the . . . She had been invited to attend that particular event. And she was so disappointed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She thought the

government was going to announce some kind of support or services and was so incredibly disappointed. So I'm hearing from people that we can't wait for two budget cycles. We need to do something now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I need to talk about what's happening here in Saskatchewan with respect to seniors' care, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There have been raised very serious concerns of understaffing in long-term care by people like Carrie Klassen last spring in the legislature, and others that prompted a seniors' care review. But it took a freedom of information request to dislodge that report from the government, and months after it had already been finished.

So what did that report identify? It identified continent people being left to soil themselves, people being woken up far earlier in the morning than you or I would want to wake up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people not getting fed for hours. We've heard stories about families using all their vacation time and having to hire private care for their mother here in the hospital because she was not even getting the basics. We've heard Saskatchewan nurses sound the alarm about short-staffing. We've heard from a former nurse who found herself a patient in a dirty room in a hospital and had to have her family clean it.

The underlying theme of both the report, the long-term care report, and some of these stories is a lack of staff, a staff shortage. And to top that off, about well a week ago we heard the government removed minimum care standards two years ago for long-term care. Instead of trying to raise the bar for care, they've taken the bar completely away, completely removed that bar.

And of course I know the minister said, well this is about personalized or individualized care, and of course it needs to be. Care needs to be tailored to individuals. But this is about the bare minimum of what someone should get. Would this government advocate getting rid of the minimum wage because Tim Hortons happens to be paying 12.50 an hour? No. This is about minimum, the bare minimum, where the floor is, Mr. Speaker, and everything else over that should be tailored to people's needs.

We heard the CEO [chief executive officer] of the province's largest health region say that the \$2 million urgent action fund is a drop in the bucket and will do nothing to alleviate the real issue around the lack of staffing. I've heard from people in the Saskatoon Health Region who are very welcoming of the money that the minister has said will be spent in home care. But these people have told me it will do nothing to alleviate all those level 4 patients who are currently residing in acute care beds. Those people are not going home, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As sad as that is, they need long-term care beds.

We've got the Saskatoon Health Region at the same point was talking about this \$10 million. She also, Maura Davies also mentioned infrastructure is part of the problem. The RUH, the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon currently has netting on it to keep it from crumbling down on people. The same hospital had to power down the entire electrical system, I think on about October 9th from what I've been told, in order to change a switch in October.

We heard today about the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region

possibly joining others in transferring seniors up to 150 kilometres away from their homes to be able to provide them with a bed. The minister said this is just keeping up with other health regions, but just because everybody else is doing it doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. Interestingly enough, though, Alberta Health Services — the government likes to look to Alberta for direction sometimes — this summer the Alberta Health Services withdrew a policy which would force continuing care residents to take the first available bed within 100 kilometres of their home, meaning couples were separated. A quote from the Health minister, Fred Horne:

We want our seniors to age alongside the ones they love. Decisions about continuing care placement must start with supporting seniors as close to home as possible, and doing all we can to keep couples together.

That was from a *Calgary Sun* article this summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the bottom line is these folks opposite happen to be the government. This government talks about spending more money on health care than has ever been spent, which is true. But they also have more money than a government in the history of this province has ever had. But seniors' care is still a mess. They're spending more money and things are not getting better, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The people of Saskatchewan expect and deserve better. They deserve a strong vision for Saskatchewan. This government did not deliver with the Throne Speech. So I will be supporting the amendment and will not be supporting the main motion. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

[Applause]

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much, and thank you to my colleagues. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate with respect to the Throne Speech that was delivered here just a short time ago by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Prior to me getting into my remarks, Mr. Speaker, around the meat of the Throne Speech and some of the other issues surrounding that particular document, I just want to, as many of my colleagues have already done, I want to thank some people that are important in me being here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to thank first of all, obviously, the people of Regina Northeast. You know, for two years prior to the election in 2011 I had the opportunity to go out and visit with these constituents at their doorstep. We door knocked for some two years prior to the actual election and got an opportunity to meet an awful lot of them many times at their doorstep and discuss the issues of concerns to them at that particular time. And we had the opportunity to go out again this summer, Mr. Speaker, two years into it, because interestingly enough, one of the things that was said to me when I was out door knocking and got elected was, that seat had been held by members opposite for some 26 years. The NDP [New Democratic Party] held that

seat for some 26 years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, prior to the election in November of 2011.

And what was said to me quite often is, we don't want you just coming around here during election time. We've had that far too often now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Why don't you come and visit us during the non-election times? Next year, the year after, three years into it, but just don't come around here every four years looking for our vote and we don't see you any other time. So I made a promise to a number of them that brought that issue up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would be back and visit with them every single year when I possibly could, at their doorstep besides community events, and go and chat with them in their living rooms about issues of concern to them.

We had that opportunity in June of this year and again later in August over the summertime, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to go out and do some door knocking. I had some help and some wonderful volunteers came out with me but I got the opportunity to speak to an awful lot of people who were out doing yardwork or barbecuing or whatever the case may be on our beautiful summer evenings. And I haven't been a politician for very long, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I do know this, that if issues of concern are on their minds and you're at their doorstep, they let you know about it. They talk to you about it. They raise those concerns with you in the privacy of their homes, making sure that you as their representative can bring that back to the government caucus.

I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I had a number of concerns raised to me, primarily about fixing the streets in front of their houses, primarily about fixing their sidewalks in front of their houses, primarily about getting the city to come over and cut down a tree that they thought was blocking something that they thought was a danger to their house or something of that nature, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I had very few issues raised with me of a provincial nature. And so I use that as a bit of a barometer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see what the mood is like out there with respect to the people in my particular constituency. And I can tell you that we had an awful lot of good conversations and some laughs, and really enjoyed the opportunity. And it takes you away, with all due respect to this wonderful institution we're in here today, it takes you away from what I call dome-itis and gets you outside to speak to the real people to find out what's on their minds out there and not what we're so worried about in this Chamber on a day-to-day basis, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I want to thank the people of Regina Northeast for again allowing me the privilege of representing them and serving in this Legislative Assembly on the government side, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to thank some people in my ministerial office, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Just over a year ago I had the privilege of being asked by the Premier to serve in Executive Council and the cabinet, and I was honoured by that request. And it's been a steep learning curve for me and learning just the cabinet process and how all the decision-making process takes place and what has to go into items that you take on behalf of your ministry into the cabinet room and how all that works, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I've had lots of advice and assistance from my colleagues both in cabinet and in caucus, and I really appreciate that.

I obviously want to thank the Premier for giving me that opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so with that, I want to thank my ministerial staff: Jason, Bob, Kirsten, Michelle, and our newest member is a young lady named Morgan who just joined us here recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to thank the ministry officials that I get the opportunity to work with. I think I have been well-served by ministry officials in the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, the ministry that I'm responsible for, and the Provincial Capital Commission. I had a change in deputy earlier this summer where Ms. Wynne Young, a long-time serving civil servant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has moved over to the Johnson-Shoyama school of business and is teaching young people there as well as doing some research, and was replaced by Lin Gallagher, another long-time professional civil servant, as the new deputy minister in Parks, Culture and Sport. And I've been very ably served by, and our government, by both of those deputies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I just wanted to thank them as well as all of the ministry officials.

I want to thank a gentleman in my constituency offices. Many of us talk about our constituency assistants. And I have a retired civil servant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as my constituency assistant, Mr. Ron Naidu, who has just been a godsend for me. He works long hours and he takes care of a lot of the casework in my constituency office. I'm fortunate enough to share a constituency office with the member for Regina Dewdney and the member for Regina Douglas Park, and they, with their CAs [constituency assistant] there as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, share in some of the casework and share in some of the problem solving and working together. And as well we're able to find some efficiencies for the taxpayer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by sharing that particular office.

[19:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm also very appreciative of the political supporters around me. I am blessed by a constituency association president and members of the executive that serve not only me but our constituency very, very well, and I am very proud of the work that they have done. I can say that two weeks ago this evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had our largest event ever in my particular constituency with respect to having some folks out and raising some money and talking about what the Throne Speech and what the government's agenda for this fall was going to be. And I really appreciate that kind of support that I am getting, along with my colleagues in the city of Regina, with respect to the support we're having in the city of Regina with 8 of 11 MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] now here in the Queen City, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about what the Throne Speech is about. And it's interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Throne Speech title is "Meeting the Challenges of Growth." And it follows on the heels of a year before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Premier outlined our plan for growth, vision 2020, in a speech he gave to the chamber of commerce in Saskatoon almost a year to the day prior to this Throne Speech being brought down.

Now as I look at the priorities of this government, I think it speaks volumes about where this government's priorities are

when you just look at the different categories within the actual document, Mr. Deputy Speaker, called “Meeting the Challenges of Growth.” It is health care, education, post-secondary education, highways, investing in infrastructure, housing, competitiveness, international engagement, resource sector expansions, innovation, agriculture, fiscal responsibility, safe communities, parks and culture, social services, accountable government, and the environment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are the headings that are contained in the actual meat of the Throne Speech that the members opposite claim has no vision, has no plan for what this government wants to do with respect to taking the province forward, Mr. Speaker.

I would challenge the members opposite to bring out their list of where their priorities would be in a similar type of document if in fact they disagree with what we outlined in this particular Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because what we talked about a year ago was the plan for growth, the Saskatchewan plan for growth: vision 2020 and beyond. And the Premier has talked at length and, as members of this government have talked at length about, we don’t want to achieve growth just for growth’s sake. The purpose of growth is to provide a better quality of life for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think if I look at my own Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, if you look across my Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, every single aspect of that ministry speaks exactly to quality of life here in the province of Saskatchewan.

When I look at what we’re doing with respect to meeting the challenges of this growth and investing in things across my ministry, I talk about the parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have 35 provincial parks in this province now. There was 34. Last summer, as the result of a campaign promise that this government made back in 2007, this party made back in 2007 to create additional provincial parks, we opened up the Great Blue Heron Provincial Park in August of this past summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, up in the Emma-Anglin Lake areas north of Prince Albert. It’s our 35th provincial park, maintaining a campaign promise again that was offered up in 2007.

When I look at the record numbers, the record numbers of visitations to our provincial parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last three years in each successive year, we have had record visitations to our provincial parks. Our government made a commitment of investing at least thirteen and a half million dollars on an annual basis in capital infrastructure into our provincial parks. We’ve kept that promise, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and as a result I think it lends credence to the old adage that if you build it, they will come. And we saw this past year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some 3.7 million visitations to our provincial parks across the province.

The number two destination for tourists who are coming from outside the borders of Saskatchewan into our province — whether it be from other provinces or from United States or indeed Europe — when they come into Saskatchewan the number two destination, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are our provincial parks.

I look at the investment we made in our regional parks, in our regional parks. And I just had the delegation in from the Regional Parks Association just a couple of days ago, last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who came in and talked about what

they’d like to see in this coming budget in 2014-15. Well we had a great conversation about the investment this government’s made to date in regional parks.

It was yet another issue, another thing in rural Saskatchewan the members opposite walked away from back when they were in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know they walked away from agriculture. We know they walked away from health care when they closed 51 rural hospitals. They also walked away from investing in regional parks, and regional parks provide a great service to people who want to do some camping, for tourism opportunities for the different areas of the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These are regional parks formed by municipalities, obviously in rural Saskatchewan. They get together, they have these regional parks that form some basis of revenue for them. It also forms some basis of recreation for them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the members opposite walked away from investing in our regional parks, and we’ve turned that corner on that one.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it’s interesting with the increase in population in our province, it is not at all unusual if you were to go out to a provincial park like Pike Lake on a Sunday afternoon, just outside Saskatoon in the picnic area, the day use picnic area, you might hear 10 different languages if you walk through that day use picnic area on a Sunday afternoon in the summertime, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of the different nationalities that have come to our province from obviously outside the country, who are now living and residing here in the province of Saskatchewan, raising their families, starting up new businesses, working in different sectors of our economy. And they’re going out and enjoying the beauty of our provincial parks and really, really adding to our multiculturalism, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I look at arts and culture in our province, I look at the different things that we’ve invested in in arts and culture, and arts and culture speaks directly to quality of life here again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It speaks directly to people enjoying themselves in various festivals, whether it’s large festivals like the Craven Country Jamboree or the Junos that we had here earlier this year in Moose Jaw and Regina or small community festivals either during the summertime or the wintertime in the local hockey rink or the local hall.

I look at the different museums across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I look at programs like artsVest. I look at programs like Main Street, Saskatchewan. I look at things like what the government has done with respect to funding from the lotteries program into things like Sask Sport, SaskCulture, and the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I look at by this government’s actions, by reducing the lottery license fee in 2007 on a five-year agreement, it has resulted in some nine million additional dollars going into those organizations, those globals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who then distribute those funds out to these various organizations to add to our quality of life in the province here of Saskatchewan.

And then I look at things like the sport activities in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I look at the different activities that Sask Sport supports in this province. I look at things like, albeit they may be small, the community rink affordability

grant — some \$2,500 out to community rinks whether they're curling surfaces or hockey rink, figure skating surfaces out in rural Saskatchewan across the entire province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I look at things like the active families benefit that this government has put in place that supports families with a \$150 refundable tax credit if they're involved in cultural or sport activities to get kids out of the house, get kids away from the computer screen, and get them out doing and engaging in activities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. These are the kinds of things that I think our government is very proud of with respect to quality of life here in the province of Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when I look at the Speech from the Throne, as I talked about, it falls on the heels a year later after the plan for growth was announced. And the members opposite called it the Premier's booklet. They scoff at it. They say there's no meat to it, that there's no goals set in it. It's just a booklet that is really a road map that we're never going to follow, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this road map, I've gone through it again. And every member of our caucus has a copy of this, obviously. And when we're in cabinet and we're looking at decision making, we look to see if it meets with our growth plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's something that we can look at to help guide us in our decision-making process with respect to, does it meet our growth plan? And the Throne Speech puts more meat to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In our plan for growth, there was six core growth activities that the Premier announced over a year ago. Within those six core growth activities, there are 20 key goals outlined, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now we can debate this in this Legislative Assembly as to whether those are achievable goals or not, whether the opposition thinks that that's something that we ought to be pursuing or not pursuing, whether the opposition thinks that we ought to be doing it faster or slower.

And I look at some of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 1.2 million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020. One point two million people living in Saskatchewan by 2020. The opposition scoffs at that kind of goal. I look at things like \$2.5 billion invested in infrastructure over the next three years. I look at things like cutting the provincial debt in half from its 2000 level by 2017. I look at things like reducing surgical wait times to no more than three months by 2014, and things like eliminating wait times in emergency rooms by 2017. These are some of the 20 goals outlined in this plan for growth.

And then we go to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it continues with that theme. And Her Honour read the Speech from the Throne here and outlined exactly in those different categories how we're going to continue to meet the challenges of growth.

And so I thought, because I've heard from members opposite on a number of occasions, that this ought to be a place of exchanging ideas. This ought to be a place where we can debate our ideas versus their ideas. This ought to be a place where the government lays out its plan. And the opposition, every single day in question period they get up and oppose, but the

opposition's job is also to propose, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I thought, well I'll go on their website and have a look at what their plan is. I'll go on their website and have a look at what the member from Athabasca's referred to as a smart growth plan. I couldn't find anything on their website, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So in the absence of that, I went back and took a look at a document that they produced in 2011, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's called *A Rooted and Growing Vision*. The final report of the NDP policy review task force, March . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the members are chirping away over there, Mr. Deputy. I can send a copy over if they haven't got a copy in their desk, if they've forgotten what it's all about. This was the document that formed the basis of their campaign platform in 2011, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now the Leader of the Opposition was the Chair of this task force. The member for Saskatoon Massey Place was the Chair of this task force. His signature is right here; it says the Chair, policy review task force. And then he gets up and he says, well this document had nothing to do with their campaign platform. He had nothing to do with their campaign platform, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I took a look at the message from the Chair, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, to the membership, the NDP membership, and here's what it says: "It is the hope of the Policy Review Task Force that this report will assist the Provincial Executive, the Election Planning Committee, and the New Democratic Caucus in the lead-up to the 2011 election and beyond."

It couldn't be more clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This formed the basis of their 2011 election platform. Every single one of their members over there campaigned on this document. They went door to door with their campaign platform and campaigned on it. Now they run away from it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You can't find any of them over there who will even suggest they've even attended a meeting that formed this document, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that helped form their election platform. The Chair, whose name is right here, now the Leader of the Opposition, said he had nothing to do with it, nothing to do with it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Well if they are running away from this document, they won't stand up and defend their election platform in 2011, they stand in this House every single day and denigrate what the plan is that the government put forward not only through our growth plan but through the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought, well now a new Leader of the Opposition, there must be a new document on their website. So I went there.

An Hon. Member: — What happened?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Nothing. Absolutely nothing. What we have there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is their smart growth plan. And here's what the member from Athabasca said during his response to the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker: "And what we're not, what we're not going to do, what we're not going to do is start taking economic advice from the economic midgets across the way . . ." that being the government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I started thinking to myself, well isn't that interesting. They're not going to take any advice — and people could

decide for themselves whether they think that language is kind of offensive or not — but they're not going to take any advice from the economic midgets across the way when we have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, when we have manufacturing sales that are the envy of the nation with respect to where we're at on record manufacturing shipments, when we've now exceeded the province of British Columbia on exports, when our unemployment is one of the lowest in Canada and our employment rate is one of the highest, when we have some of the most buoyant economic times in the history of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And nobody on this side of the House is taking credit for that. I know the member from Athabasca continues to say, well the government takes credit for that. So then I started thinking to myself, well what if it was going the other way? What if out-migration was exceeding in-migration? What if manufacturing shipments were declining? What if agriculture production was declining, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Who do you suppose they would be pointing the finger at with respect to whose fault that is for all of those different things happening? They can't have it both ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So then he goes on to say, the member from Athabasca who had the opportunity — he's chirping away from his seat now, Mr. Deputy Speaker — he had the opportunity to engage in this debate, and he wouldn't stand up and tell the people of this province what their smart growth plan. Here's what he said:

And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP have an exciting plan that's going to continue building over time. It's going to be called smart growth. And at smart growth we will build a brave new Saskatchewan.

A brave new Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Prophetic words. Prophetic words. So I would just say to the members opposite, if you aspire to be the government again some day, if the Leader of the Opposition aspires to be in that chair down there some day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you not only can . . . Not only is your job to oppose, but your job is to propose.

When I go out and talk to constituents like I did this summer and we talk about our growth plan and we talk about what the province is trying to accomplish, quite often I hear back from this, well what is the NDP's plan? What are they going to do? What are they proposing? And I have to look at them straight in the eye and say, I have no idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We continue to hear this thing about this smart growth plan, but we've yet to see any meat on the bones with respect to the smart growth plan.

And when I hear them over there talking about the smart growth plan, they all look at each other like, do you know what he's talking about? Do you know what he's talking about? Anybody on this side of the House know what he's talking about? Because every time the Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader or the member from Athabasca talks about this smart growth plan, we can see all the other caucus members look at each other going, I have no idea what they're talking about. They can't even find it on their own website, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[20:00]

So with respect to that, I would just offer a little bit of advice to them, that if you truly want this Chamber to be a place of exchanging ideas and debating ideas, you have to come forward with some ideas. You have to tell the people of this province what it is that you stand for and what it is you plan to do with respect to the province and where you're going to take it as we put in vision 2020, to the year 2020. Let's just talk about that if they don't want to talk about anything else, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And because of those reasons, because of those reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be supporting the Throne Speech and I will not be supporting the amendment as put forward by the opposition. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed an honour to be able to speak to the Speech from the Throne that was delivered on this opening of the third session of the twenty-seventh legislature. Before I do that, I would like to recognize some very important people in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to recognize my office staff. Cheryl Hume is my constituency assistant and Maureen Paron is our casual assistant. These people are dedicated and very sincere in their everyday duties. They keep the office very organized and, more importantly, they keep me organized. I would like to thank all my colleagues and their staff that offered their condolences to Cheryl on the sudden passing of her husband, Shaun Hume, in July.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank my wife, Valerie, for her support in keeping the home front intact. Without her commitment, I would not be able to do this job. She's not only my wife but truly my best friend.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a little time to talk about three major events in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency this year. First I'd like to congratulate the RM [rural municipality] of Hillsdale on their 100th anniversary. Reeve Glenn Goodfellow and his council along with administrator Janet Black hosted a supper and annual meeting to celebrate 100 years as a municipality.

Mr. Speaker, the second municipality to celebrate their 100th anniversary was the RM of Mervin. Reeve Tom Brown and his council along with administrator Ryan Domotor hosted a supper event that was attended by close to 300 people. It was well attended by past reeves and councillors.

The third event, Mr. Speaker, was the 100th anniversary of the RM of Paynton. Reeve Kevin Garrett and his council along with administrator Jade Johnson hosted a full day of events and an evening supper with Brad Johnner and sons as entertainment. Approximately 350 people attended. At the evening events I presented three Diamond Jubilee Medals to reeve Kevin Garrett, past reeve Don Ferguson, and long-time councillor Lloyd Holmes.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention the village of Edam,

along with the RM of Turtle River, Glencoe developers and several local residents of Edam on their coming together to build a 24-unit assisted living project. This project will allow seniors to stay in their community and to be with family and friends. A strong diverse economy fuelled by a positive attitude was what made this project happen, Mr. Speaker.

The success of the constituency would not be possible without strong rural municipalities and co-operation between communities. And when I say that, Mr. Speaker, what I'm really talking about is the people — friendly, hard-working, and dedicated. Our constituents epitomize the calibre and character that Saskatchewan is known for. In fact our communities are a fine example of our provincial motto: "from many peoples, strength."

Mr. Speaker, when the Premier outlined the provincial plan for growth last fall, he envisioned a province with one of the highest standards of living in the world. It's a plan that reflects a new spirit of collaboration between communities and a new way of thinking that Saskatchewan is the best place to invest, to work, and raise a family. It is a plan that reflects the ingenuity of the people of this province and the commitment of those who lead the growth and development of our communities. Our government remains committed to its communities.

Mr. Speaker, as mentioned in the Speech from the Throne was the announcement of the first collaborative emergency system in Maidstone in the Cut Knife-Turtleford constituency. This great accomplishment is a collaborative effort by many partners, the health region, the Ministry of Health, community stakeholders, health care providers, regulatory bodies, and STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society], to name a few.

Our government recognizes that timely and consistent access to primary health care and emergency services is very important. This is why this first collaborative emergency system is an important milestone for our province. Maidstone now has around-the-clock care. The Maidstone Health Complex is a designated collaborative emergency centre or CEC, open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It uses a team of health providers to deliver around-the-clock, timely care.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan CECs are based on the Nova Scotia model. Nova Scotia has introduced CECs in seven communities since July 2011. CECs have been well received by patients, communities, and providers in Nova Scotia. They have resulted in a 92 per cent emergency department decrease in disruptions at the CEC sites.

Mr. Speaker, a primary health care team, including physicians and nurse practitioners, is available during the day. Overnight from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m., a registered nurse and paramedic can provide urgent care assessment in consultation with a physician. Physicians working with the STARS, the Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society organization, provide overnight consultation by telephone, an extension of the vital air medical health services STARS brought to Saskatchewan in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, if you arrive at the CEC with serious or life-threatening injuries, you will be transported by ambulance to the closest, most appropriate medical facility. If your condition is less serious, you may be treated and released with

advice on self-care. In some cases a follow-up appointment may be recommended at the clinic the next day or you may be stabilized and sent to a hospital. A collaborative emergency centre responds to the community's unique health care needs with the right health provider available when people need them.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health has worked closely with the health regions, providers, and interested communities to determine future potential sites. Additional CECs will be opening in the province in the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to improving access to health services and providing quality health care for Saskatchewan people. We'll continue to support initiatives that provide better care, better value, better health to our province's growing population.

Mr. Speaker, as the Throne Speech indicated, our government will focus on meeting the challenges of growth. Saskatchewan continues to grow — 1.1 million people, more jobs, more economic activity. Growth creates many new opportunities and it also creates many new challenges. Our government is working hard to meet those challenges and ensure that all Saskatchewan people share in the benefits of a growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention just a few initiatives in the Throne Speech. A new program to enable some seniors with complex issues to receive house calls from physicians, nurse practitioners, and other health care providers. New collaborative emergency centres like I just mentioned. New anti-bullying measures. Nine new joint-use schools to be built using an innovative P3 bundling approach. Improvement to the Internet access and speed in all schools throughout SaskTel's CommunityNet program. New measures to improve traffic safety and reduce fatalities with particular focus on tougher penalties for drinking and driving. One thousand new training seats, including 300 new apprenticeship seats and 700 new adult basic education seats. A new manufacturing centre of excellence. A new Western Canadian livestock price insurance program for cattle and hog producers. A comprehensive public consultation on the province's disability strategy. These are just a few of the actions our government will be taking to address the challenges of growth.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier has said that growth creates many challenges. But, Mr. Speaker, those challenges are sure preferable to the challenges of decline that Saskatchewan was facing just a few years ago.

Mr. Speaker, just a quote from Wayne Mantyka: "This Throne Speech maintains the government's focus on a growth plan as the province pushes forward with expanding the economy and dealing with the issue that growth brings." And that was from Wayne Mantyka, CTV Regina, October 23rd, 2013.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition had this to say: "To me, this Throne Speech is disappointing; it's looking backwards." Mr. Speaker, I'm going to try and explain what backwards and progressive mean with a few ministry examples of Saskatchewan then and now.

Mr. Speaker, under health care, between 2001 to 2006, the

NDP's last full five years in office, the province lost 1,160 total health care workers, 455 RNs [registered nurse] and RPNs [registered psychiatric nurse], 173 physicians, 155 pharmacists, and 95 physiotherapists. This is the same NDP that refused to set targets.

Under the Saskatchewan Party now since 2007, there are 300 more doctors practising in Saskatchewan. There are 1,000 more nurses working in Saskatchewan. Twenty per cent more nurses call Saskatchewan home. Our province has seen a 25 per cent increase in specialists, a 27 per cent increase in pediatricians, and 11 per cent more family practitioners working in Saskatchewan over the last six years.

Mr. Speaker, under long-term care, the NDP closed 1,200 long-term care beds and closed 16 long-term care facilities and 52 rural hospitals. "Ten years ago, it was not at all unusual for residents to be left in bed for the day at the Wascana Rehab Centre when we were short-staffed. As part of the cultural shift journey, this is no longer happens" — Regina Qu'Appelle Health Authority official in an email to the Minister of Health. Under a Saskatchewan Party, we're building 13 new long-term care facilities, replacing three aging facilities that had 198 beds in Swift Current with a new 225-bed facility. Our government have updated over 600 long-term care beds in communities across the province.

Mr. Speaker, under education, the NDP decline, between 1997 and 2007 the number of students in Saskatchewan decreased by 16 per cent. In their last six years of government, there was a 9.2 per cent decrease in enrolment. Statistics Canada reports that between 1997 and 2007, the student population in Saskatchewan plunged from 194,000 to less than 164,000. In the NDP's last 10 years, we lost almost 30,000 students. The NDP left a \$1.2 billion infrastructure deficit in our schools. And, Mr. Speaker, under the Saskatchewan Party, in our first six years of government, enrolment has increased 5.8 per cent. Our government has committed to building nine new joint-use schools in our province's fastest growing communities. Our government has invested over 600 million since we formed government, a 264 per cent increase. This has gone into 43 major school capital projects, 20 brand new schools and 23 major renovations and additions, over 900 school repair and renovation projects. Over 65 per cent of schools have seen upgrades since 2007. Our government will continue to invest in education.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to talk a little bit or just give you a few quotes on previous NDP MLAs. These quotes aren't from Churchill or Kennedy. These are from these people. The first one would be, "The Saskatchewan Party plan to increase our population by 100,000 in 10 years is more wishful thinking than statistically attainable." This was by NDP MLA Doreen Hamilton in the *Whitewood Herald*, February 11, 2003.

Another one by Harry Van Mulligen:

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

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

NDP MLA Harry Van Mulligen, *Hansard*, March 24th, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, there's another good one. U of S [University of Saskatchewan] economist Eric Howe:

... didn't believe the Sask Party's plan would provide the promised population growth of 100,000 people in 10 years. From his perspective, the province has hovered around a million people for 70 years and that well may be the natural population level.

That was from CBC Saskatchewan Votes. The feature was "Economic policy, the historic hot button issue" October 31, 2003.

Another one from Eric Cline.

Of course he says that he wants to increase the population of the province by 100,000 ... Well who would disagree with that? That's fine. But the question is: do you have a plan to achieve it, Mr. Speaker? And I say they do not have a plan and ... or at least they do not have a plan that makes any sense.

Eric Cline, March 25th, 2003, *Hansard*.

[20:15]

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but I'll do one more. This is a good one.

We've heard this, we've heard this so-called plan. It's a plan that says all you've got to do is cut all the taxes — cut the taxes particularly for the corporate folks — cut all the taxes, you know, you sell off some of the Crowns, and I tell you what, you get rid of labour legislation that protects workers, and somehow this is magically going to turn into 100,000 people. Well we know what the experts have said about it.

Lorne Calvert, March 27th, *Hansard*, 2003.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party's record is that Saskatchewan's population is now over 1.1 million people. Our government has set some ambitious targets in our growth plan, such as 1.2 million people living in the province by 2020. Our government is prepared to meet the challenges that come with such unprecedented growth.

Mr. Speaker, I think if Webster's dictionary was to print a new edition right now, today, under the definition of the word backward, you would see the letters NDP. And for the first time there would be a picture of the current opposition leader and other members opposite. And under the word progressive, Mr. Speaker, you would see the words Saskatchewan Party and a picture of this Premier and all my government colleagues on this side.

Mr. Speaker, once again I say to the members opposite, listen to learn, not to respond. Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting the motion and voting against the amendment. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As ever, I'm glad and proud to rise in my place on behalf of the good people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre who have been very good to me, very supportive over these years through a number of different elections, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and whose support in me I don't take lightly, for which I'm very thankful, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when you're sent to the legislature by people from a constituency, you're sent there to try and give voice to the hopes and dreams and the concerns of the people in a given constituency. You're there to try and work progressively, positively, productively on trying to make sure that their issues are being advanced.

You're also there to hold, if you've been tasked with the opposition, Mr. Speaker, to hold the government of the day to account. And if they should be doing things that are of benefit to the people that you represent, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it behooves you well to say, when that is the case, to say thank you, to offer up positive remarks if good things have been done. And it's also part of your job, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to call things out when your people are being given short shrift by the government of the day.

And that's a job that I take very seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a job that, like I say, I feel very privileged and proud to be entrusted with it by the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre through one by-election through 2003 to 2007 and through 2011, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That trust has been placed in me, and it's something that again I'm very humbled by, and it's something that I take very seriously.

And it's in that spirit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'll be making my remarks tonight. In terms of this Throne Speech, in terms of the way that this Throne Speech either joins or is disjointed with the record of the government opposite, the way that it either resonates or offers up some disconnect in terms of the gap between rhetoric and deed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is what I'll be attempting to offer up tonight in terms of offering some thoughts on the Throne Speech and the amendment that has been put forward by the opposition.

I want to say thank you to my family, first among my particular thanks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As the member from Silver Springs was ending off his comments today, he talked about his mom passing on, and I had the privilege of meeting his mom at different times here through the years at the legislature.

And I too lost my mother this summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She had 82 years. She had a good, good, long span of years. She had a lot of joy and a lot of sadness in her life, but she gave so much. And I am so very thankful for all that she gave to me and to my brothers and to my sister and to the many people that she met along the path of life.

And I think in particular of my father, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of people that are no small political influence on me, no small personal influence on me in terms of the way I try to live my life and the things that I try to live up to. And mom and dad were such a great team, and I know that my dad misses mom pretty terribly. And after 52 years of marriage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'd expect nothing less. But I also know, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, that they'll meet again and that their love surpasses these hard horizons that come in our life and that their legacy certainly outstrips any measure of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I'm so thankful to be their son.

And also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say a special word of thanks to Theresa, my partner. You know these things, they're pretty tough on families, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think I know that in a few different ways maybe better than most, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I'm very fortunate to have the love and the support of Theresa, and it makes me a better person. And like I say, I'm very thankful for it and of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm thankful for the people that I work with. I work with a individual that I've known since I was in kindergarten with her brother, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just celebrated my 41st birthday, so you can only imagine how many years ago that was. But I work with Colleen Smith, and there's an individual that grew up in North Central Regina and works very hard on behalf of the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre, works very hard on behalf of people that come from all different walks of life and many different kind of circumstances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and puts up with me into the bargain. And again for that I'm also very thankful, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As I turn my attention squarely to the Throne Speech that is under consideration in this debate before us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm reminded of an earlier pledge or promise that was put forward by the members opposite in the 2007 campaign. In the 2007 campaign the members opposite . . . You know, and there's been some change in the cast of characters over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but they ran on a platform that said, ready for growth, that pledged to be ready for growth. They framed up the NDP as being old and tired, and they were very successful in getting that message across to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I guess the thing that I want to say about the sort of setting out some of the historical markers in terms of how I've listened to various of the speeches that have come forward through this debate and various of the points that have been made in this debate, when Roy Romanow and the New Democratic Party took over in 1991 in another election from members opposite that served in various capacities in that regime, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the first budget that the NDP had to bring in, they had to spend more on servicing the debt than on the entire Ministry of Education. They had to spend the first years of that regime making some terrible decisions because the finances dictated the course of action that had to be taken.

And I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one thing that I want to put on the record tonight is that when this, when the government that I was part of in 2007 was defeated by members opposite, by a Premier that was promising to be ready for growth, what I take some encouragement from, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the fact that instead of leaving the smoking hulk of an economy for members to try and sort their way through and to make any number of terrible decisions in relation to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, instead of having a situation where you were spending more on servicing the debt than on the entire Ministry of Education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was part of a government that left \$2 billion cash on hand for the members opposite to avail themselves of.

And in their more honest moments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the Premier and different leading lights in that government, that is acknowledged. The Premier himself is on record saying that they had inherited a fairly good hand. And that was early on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's interesting to see the slide that has occurred over the years to the point where we are on a Throne Speech debate today where the litany of all the terrible things that went on that is recited by various of the members opposite is kind of hard to believe. And it's kind of hard to square with the more public comments of the Premier in terms of the way that individual evinces humility and appreciation for good fortune and, you know, certainly brings a fair measure of planning to the table and brings a number of goals to the table. And that's fine and good.

But I guess it's a signal to the strength of the Premier's coattails that, in terms of some of the wild rhetoric that gets thrown around by members opposite in this debate, you know, when certain members . . . I hear the member from Regina South talking from his chair and, you know, between saying hello to his dogs and reciting the table of contents from the plan for growth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was a pretty interesting speech that he brought to the Chamber.

But in terms of individuals that have used words like disaster that they took over in 2007, or the different tough decisions that come with the lot of managing an economy and working in partnership with the people of Saskatchewan, it's pretty interesting the kind of disconnect that goes between the Premier evincing this positive, humble, thankful persona in terms of the public debate and what's passed for comment by some of the members opposite here.

And even the member from Cut Knife, who's given a fine speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and then, you know, sees fit to bring into the debate a number of comments from members opposite. And the comments — unless I'm mistaken, and I stand to be corrected — but the comments that he was bringing forward had to deal with another iteration of the Sask Party, one which was led by Elwin Hermanson. And Elwin Hermanson came to the 2003 election with a particular platform and a particular prescription for what he saw as the hopes and dreams and how to meet that in the province of Saskatchewan. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the goal of 100,000, I think that's about all that that iteration of the Sask Party holds in common with what they took to the people in 2007.

Shortly after the 2003 election, they couldn't get rid of Elwin Hermanson fast enough, and they took the pledge on a number of key items such as standing up for the Crowns. They were no longer in favour of privatization despite, you know, decades of public comment and record going before them. They got alongside for bringing in the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program, which was interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they also, you know, again they turned the page. They had a positive new leader and, you know, Elwin Hermanson was stricken from the records. It was an interesting historical experience, Mr. Speaker, to see how it's gone.

And I guess I don't say that to claim any perfection on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or any perfection in terms of how . . . different things that I've been part of. But I think our batting average was to the good. I think we did more good than

harm. And I think that the people of Saskatchewan in 2007 looked to a new crew and said, you know, 16 years was enough. You've left the shop in fairly good order. The economy is on an upturn. We were a have province for a couple of good years by then, Mr. Speaker. The population numbers were up, and they wanted to give another party a chance.

[20:30]

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, the one thing I remember in particular from that election is on election night when the now Premier was giving the speech in Swift Current — and obviously a very happy moment for the individuals in that party — and the way he was chanting his mantra of hope trumps fear; hope trumps fear. And again we've got some echo over there, Mr. Speaker, but hope trumps fear. Hope beats fear, trumps fear, you know. Pick your rendition, Mr. Speaker. And I guess the thing that's interesting in, you know, thinking back to that night, it was an interesting pass and it was an interesting I think moment in the history of the electoral history of the province.

And I think it's sort of interesting watching the way that the party opposite has gotten away from that spirit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the Premier's still there, and the Premier does a fine job of evincing a very positive, productive, humble way of talking about Saskatchewan, and he does it very well. He's a very gifted communicator, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But you place that alongside again the various speeches that we've heard through the debate here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the hope trumps fear starts to ring a bit hollow. And one thing I want to talk about in particular in that regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is we can look to *The StarPhoenix* who ran an editorial commenting on the Throne Speech stating, "Detailed speech offers no vision." That's October 24th, *The StarPhoenix*.

You can look at the way the different issues have been raised in the course of this debate, Mr. Speaker, in particular the one around long-term care homes and the seniors' care question in this province. And again October 26th, Murray Mandryk, you know, seasoned political commentator in this province states, "Care homes mess a Sask. Party problem."

You can look at the editorial a bit before the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, from Bruce Johnstone where he states, "Saskies' growth plan adrift." And one of the interesting things he says there, Mr. Speaker, he quotes Premier Wall from his speech to the Saskatchewan Forum in Regina in May 2012:

Wall admitted the province's "stunning turnaround" since 2007 was "driven by commodity prices, driven by factors outside the control of government and you will never hear our government say, 'Boy, because we got elected in '07, look at how everything's so much better economically.' We know that there are external factors at play here.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the broader sort of public message, the Premier is rightfully approaching this in the spirit of humility and trying to I think steward the resources that he has at his disposal, but he's not claiming parentage of this great fortune we have here in Saskatchewan.

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd invite you to cast your minds to the speeches that have gone before here and the kind

of puffing and bragging and boasting that has gone on and the kind of, you know, detachment from reality that passes from various of the members opposite when it comes to recounting the historical record in this province.

And again, Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, you know, the further they get away from hope beats fear, the closer they will get to another very interesting stage in their electoral lives. So on the one hand you'd say, you know, keep it up. But on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, you see them making decisions like coming in with Enterprise Saskatchewan, the cornerstone of Wall's 2004 economic plan. And again it's interesting, the member from Regina Northeast was offering up comment on, you know, where it's not just to oppose but it's to propose. And you know, it's very similar to a quote from Jack Layton, who's also been quoted in the proceedings here today, who liked to say it's not just enough to be about opposition, but you've got to be about proposition.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we see a measure brought forward by my colleague the member from Regina Rosemont today in terms of casting some sunshine on the P3 privatization of school plans that members opposite are entertaining. And we'll see, you know, we'll see if they're as good as their word. You know, that's a proposition. Now we'll see how it's received by the members opposite, and I'll be very interested to see if they recognize the merits of the legislation, or will they try to kill it out of hand because it comes from the other side of the aisle?

There have been times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when in terms of the asbestos registry for public buildings, Howard's law, we were very glad to see the government work together with the opposition to pass that legislation. Jimmy's law was another case where it wasn't just, you know . . . We were able to move beyond the divide of this Chamber and to see what was good for the people and to try and act on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are different times when we've been able to come together in this House and to speak with a common voice. And so when we're counselled by the member from Regina Northeast that it's not just enough to oppose but to propose, well, Mr. Speaker, we'll see how the proposition that came forward today fares.

I'll be very interested, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see how the debate goes on Wednesday when we consider the motion to . . . in favour of abolition of the Senate. I'll be very interested to see how that goes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And again, you know, I credit the Premier with taking on a position that is not where he started out, but looking over years at the facts and arriving at a position that is in favour of abolition of the Senate and bringing that institution to an end.

So you know, there are opportunities for both sides to work together in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, opportunities that give the lie to the sort of litany, that recitation that goes on for various of the speeches we've heard in this debate. And I guess that gives me some hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the phony baloney that passes for some of the speeches here, I know enough that that's not the whole of the equation. But you hear enough of it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's enough to try your hope. But you know, my mom and dad raised a hopeful, positive person, and we'll continue on in that as best we can.

But the Enterprise Saskatchewan piece, again this is an interesting one because this is part of what the member from Regina Northeast was promoting as, you know, them in opposition and the way that they came forward with alternatives that the government was going to be putting forward. And so it was interesting to see within the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, that flagship of the economic approach of the members opposite be chopped down to the ground.

And you know, the way that it had built upon the regional economic development authorities and the good work that had been going on throughout this province, the way that the enterprise regions had subsumed them. And in the North you heard about one enterprise region, and then there was going to be two enterprise regions. And I think — you know what? — at the end of the day it was going to be three enterprise regions, involved people from business, from labour, from, you know, all corners of the economy in this grand exercise that came to naught, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and arguably into the bargain has done some damage to the efforts that were chugging along quite nicely in the regional economic development authorities to begin with.

So again when it comes to the prescriptions from the members opposite for how we should conduct ourselves in the opposition, you know, it depends what day they're offering up the advice, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But there's enough change there that, you know, we'll keep our own counsel as regards bringing things forward, thank you very much.

I think of the film employment tax credit, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's one that nobody outside of the Sask Party cabal that runs the show over there really understands in terms of an economic measure that was positive for culture, was positive for the economy, was positive for telling the Saskatchewan story around this country of ours and the way that that was abjectly discarded. And the people are still leaving this province in the wake of that destructive decision, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know this because a number of them have been my constituents over the years. I've had the privilege to represent them. And I've heard from them throughout this series of decisions by the government opposite.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's hard to understand why they made that decision, because the numbers certainly don't add up. They came rushing in with Creative Saskatchewan like that was some kind of a replacement. And do you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Creative Saskatchewan can do some fine work in and of its own right, but it's not compensation, and it's not a replacement for the good work of the film employment tax credit. It should have worked, you know, ably alongside it. It could have worked. And we'll see how this plays out over time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll see how it plays out alongside the Arts Board and whether or not the tendency on the part of the members opposite is to try and cannibalize one for the other. We'll see how that works out.

In terms of the details in the speech, there are good things in the speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll be particularly interested to see how the thousand training spaces works out, how the 300 for apprenticeship and how the 700 for adult basic education works out, and again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how that works out alongside the wait-lists that are there. And the way that people

who want to get that basic sort of credential you need to move ahead in the economy, that adult basic education, we'll be very interested to see how that's made good.

And we'll be very interested to see how this government works with the federal government on the Canada jobs grant, and whether or not the Canada jobs grant is brought in and if that is going to be cannibalizing certain efforts that are successes in and of themselves that should be bolstered, not cannibalized, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll see how that works out. And I think of one program in particular that is doing tremendous work in the city of Regina that will be very much affected by how the government makes the decision around the Canada jobs grant, and the way that it connects the learners to job opportunities to help literally build our economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'll be very interested to see how that plays out.

I'll be very interested to see how the polytechnic announcement around advanced education plays out. We're watching with great interest and concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the situation as it plays out on certain of our campuses in this province, in the role that our universities are playing, the role that the scarcity of capital dollars is playing in terms of some of the decisions that have to be made, the fact that in terms of our universities, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and you don't have to take my word for it — but the fact that Statistics Canada rates Saskatchewan as having the second highest tuition in all of Canada, and what that means for accessibility and affordability, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And you know, you can hear about the Saskatchewan advantage grants and you can hear about the graduate retention tax credit. Again, Mr. Speaker, these are good measures, but if they're being eroded on the very front end of the equation by increases to tuition, then government needs to pay a lot closer attention to what's going on and how this either helps students, or is it more about having something that looks like help?

Mr. Speaker, I'll be very interested to see again how the polytechnic announcement works out with SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. I'll be interested to see how the different campuses throughout this province are able to either meet or continue to be challenged by growth, the way the different programs are oversubscribed and the wait-lists that are there in terms of valuable skills that we need to make our economy grow, and whether or not that is backed up by the actions of this government.

[20:45]

I'll be very interested to see what happens with the regional colleges in this province. And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of something that was good that happened in the Throne Speech, I was glad to see the announcement around Parkland, and I was glad to see the re-emphasis upon it in the Throne Speech. It's again a good investment in our regional college system.

There have been good things happen throughout the regional college system in general, but how are they going to fare in this budget to come, Mr. Deputy Speaker? These are the front lines of people doing the work to make sure that we've got the

skilled labour to make this economy grow. And if the regional colleges and if SIIT [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] and if our universities are going wanting in this equation, and if SIAST doesn't have the tools to, you know, equip the people to get the job done, then that's a problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So as good as some of the announcements were in the Throne Speech, I remain concerned about the way that this government is approaching the advanced education sector in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the education system in this province, we're working on what . . . How many Education ministers have we had now?

An Hon. Member: — At least four.

Mr. McCall: — Four. We're on our fourth, fourth Education minister in six years? Or is it five? And I don't know if the thinking is, you know, maybe fourth times the charm or something like that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I'll recall that last year in the Throne Speech debate, I stood in this place and I expressed my hope for the member from Regina Douglas Park and the job that that individual would do in education. And you know, it's not a year later and we've seen that individual replaced.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's such an incredible job to be done in terms of making sure that, you know, the classrooms are focused on students, to make sure that our teachers are respected, to make sure that they've got the tools to get the job done, to make sure that our education system is supported, not run off into some kind of privatization scheme.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we've seen over the past year the debacle with the portables. You know, they've bungled the bundles of portables, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So how are we supposed to look at, with any kind of confidence or, you know, free from fear about how they're going to bundle up school purchases and, you know, P3 school purchases into the bargain and do a good job there? We'll see how that works out, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But it's interesting. In question period today I had, you know, the petition that I've been raising for Sacred Heart raised as well — if you want a new gym for Sacred Heart, well then you'd better be in favour of P3s; you'd better be in favour of privatizing schools. And it's sort of funny, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because as it stands right now, the temporary gym at Sacred Heart is sort of a P3 in terms of they had to go in and buy the sanctuary and they're now sharing the space with other groups, including a church, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I guess how this works where, you know, you've got a school that is doing exactly what it should be doing, where they're making literacy gains, where the attendance is a going concern, where students are engaged, where the population has grown almost by half in the past four years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where 75 per cent of the students are First Nations and Métis students, where it's the largest school in North Central and serves as an anchor for our community in so many ways — how the government in the last budget wasn't falling all over themselves to help them out in this important work, I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I'm told that the Regina Catholic School Board met, I believe, five separate times with the minister or the minister's office to discuss the need for the gymnasium to be replaced at Sacred Heart. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's not like this was the first year where they've been having the conversation with the government. This has gone back to the early days of the Sask Party government where this conversation and this request has been coming forward.

And you know, so we remain hopeful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think that the teachers and the administrators and the students that are doing that important work at Sacred Heart Community School, this government should be getting their back, and that's not the case right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we'll see how the budget works out and, you know, it would surpass understanding why that gymnasium would not be replaced with a permanent, decent solution like any other school in the system.

And you know, Sacred Heart is kitty-corner from Scott Collegiate, where Scott Collegiate was no. 2 on the province-wide K to 12 capital list in the summer of 2007, in response in some ways to the planning dollars that had been put forward for what was then being championed out of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and the Regina Public School Board, the proposal for a North Central Shared Facility, at the heart of which would be a renewed Scott Collegiate, a revitalized Scott Collegiate. And I was very happy and went on record saying as such when that were mentioned in the first Sask Party budget in 2008 and then, you know, was repeated again in 2009, but no action.

And then we had 2010. And then we had 2011, and the minister of Education at the time, the member from Humboldt, came to Albert to make an announcement. And again it was a scaled-back announcement, and by that time the involvement of the health region was more of an open question, but we were glad to see the announcement and the furthering of the commitment in any event.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's the youngest neighbourhood in the city of Regina. It's got a tremendous job in front of it, and we've still to see a shovel in the ground for the North Central Shared Facility. We've seen the city put up their money. We've seen the Regina Public Library board put up their money with a plan to move Albert library — which has, I might add parenthetically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, celebrated its 100th anniversary this fall — as part of that partnership that still remains around the shared facility. That facility is needed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the waiting has gone on and on.

So in terms of the days to come, we'll be again watching very closely. We'll be seeing if, you know, the then minister of Education was as good as his word in 2008 and if the then Education minister was as good as her word in 2011. We'll be continuing to watch.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, how I've tried to conduct myself in these opposition benches is to, where credit is due, to extend that credit, and to see where problems are arising, to try and focus attention on those problems. And you know, I'll be very happy to extend credit where it is due on Scott Collegiate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But this summer it will be seven years since it

was no. 2 on the province-wide K to 12 capital list. And again, you know, maybe things have changed in that regard too. But once was the time that the province-wide K to 12 capital list meant something and was respected and was where the rubber hit the road in the partnership between school boards and the province. So we wait and hope to see how that works out, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In the meantime we've seen different sort of things in the neighbourhood around, for one example, the Pasqua Hospital where, you know, again in contrast to the goal announced as part of the growth plan of eliminating emergency room wait times where we've seen members opposite, you know, crow about that, at the Pasqua — which is, you know, such an important hospital, not just for the constituency I represent, not just for Regina but for southern Saskatchewan — we've seen the emergency room placed on emergency status, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of being able to muster the requisite complement of ER [emergency room] docs.

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, you point these things out and apparently, you know, the members opposite aren't interested in getting a report from I think the real world sometimes. I think they just want more people joining the hallelujah chorus over there. And I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's no small wonder, if that's the way that various of the members are conducting themselves in caucus as they would seem to be in their speeches here tonight, you know, it's no small wonder that we've got the problems we have in education, in health care, and, you know, pick your situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One other thing I want to say something about here tonight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the situation we have around working for safer neighbourhoods. And inner-city Regina has got, continues to have some challenges in terms of whether or not we've got the adequate complement of law enforcement being deployed, whether or not we've got the sort of focus from the decision makers around anti-gang work, around making sure that the safer communities and neighbourhoods investigators are being backed up, and whether or not, you know . . . Again in the city of Regina, we had a very successful inner-city community partnership between the federal, the provincial, and the municipal. And the kind of gains that were made in housing and in community safety and in community development, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the way that we've seen those gains in some cases not progressing like they should or in some cases being walked backwards.

And there's no more vivid reminder than over the past few days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of the tragedies that have taken place not far from where I live in the middle of North Central, where I know neighbours on that block and the kind of fear that that raises for them and the kind of questions it raises for them about, you know, how is this allowed to go on? And again, Mr. Speaker, I come back to, you know, there's a very old saying about you've got to be tough on crime, and you've got to be tough on the causes of crime.

And if you see crime evidencing like that, and the response from the government is saying, you know, we're going to bring the community hub to bear eventually in Regina or the community mobilization efforts, you know, great. Great. But

you had something that accomplished very similar objectives in the inner-city community partnership, and how that was let to slide, Mr. Speaker, I don't know. And how the different sort of work that is there around anti-gang strategies and exit strategies for the gangs that are preying on our young people, it's not where it needs to be, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I guess if we're going to bring people together, and if we're going to have a fighting chance through education and proper housing so that the gangs aren't this great attraction for young people, you don't hear about it in the Throne Speech the way that you should, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again there are some good things in the Throne Speech, you know, in terms of the income disability, in terms of some of the work on housing. Again, the way that various of these things have been announced again and again, some of them are having a real impact; some of them I know for a fact are not. And again, Mr. Speaker, you know, to hear the members opposite, you know, carry on with the hallelujah chorus, it sort of makes you wonder, you know, where the heck they're coming from in terms of what passes in their neighbourhoods.

The last thing I want to say, the last topic that I'd like to discuss, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is what I think is one of the big sort of problems that we have in this province, and that's the way that First Nations and non-First Nations people either get along or don't get along. And in recent days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen an advertising campaign from members opposite about resource revenue sharing and "no special deals" for First Nations on resource revenue sharing.

[21:00]

And I think one of the more incisive comments about that came in *The StarPhoenix* on October 7th, 2013 where the title of the editorial was, "Wall can use history lesson." And it talks about the work that has gone on — October the 7th being the 250th anniversary of the royal proclamation — about the different sort of work that has gone on, reference to some of the things that Ken Coates of the Johnson-Shoyama school is doing.

And when I see Ken Coates, I think about someone like Dr. Jim Miller who this very evening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is being awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. And Dr. Jim Miller is in many ways the scholar when it comes to newcomer-native relations in this province, and indeed holds the Canadian Research Council Chair in those studies. And I think about his book *Shingwauk's Vision* and its recounting in extensive and compelling detail what happened in Canada around the residential schools. I think about the work that he's done around better understanding, promoting the better understanding of treaties in this province and his work with *Bounty and Benevolence*. I think about his work around *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*.

And there's an individual who we would do well to listen to what he has to say as to how we'd get along better in this province between First Nations and non-First Nations. And you know, early on in the Sask Party's day they had a big conference on the duty to consult and accommodate when they were coming up with the policy that they ultimately announced as an interim policy, you know, the week before Christmas I think in 2009 or '10. But one of the speakers at that time at the

conference was Dr. Jim Miller. And you know, at the time I thought, well good. That's a voice that we should be listening to in this debate. Another person that spoke at length at that conference, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was Tom Molloy, you know, past chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan and an individual who's written a very interesting and compelling book about his own experience of being on the front line of negotiating modern treaties.

And I think about the way that both Dr. Jim Miller and Tom Malloy in the 2011 election said that resource revenue sharing is a valid question, and it deserves serious consideration, and it should be negotiated between the sides. And I think about the way that it was then used as a wedge issue by that party in that election and the way that it exploited division in this province, as opposed to seeking to bring us all together.

I've heard many times the Premier say that we are all treaty people. And that brings me back around to this, this editorial from *The StarPhoenix*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where it says, "Wall can use history lesson." And I want to finish off by quoting at greater length from the conclusion of that editorial:

Achieving what Quebec did on its side of the bay [James Bay, Mr. Deputy Speaker] requires not just strong leadership from aboriginal and provincial governments, but a broad-based understanding of the importance to all concerned of sharing revenues, honouring traditions, respecting the spirit of treaties and recognizing rights.

That can't be achieved when the governing party is running cynical political ads that warn of its political opponents wanting to sharing resource revenues with First Nations, as is the case in Saskatchewan.

Continuing the quote, Mr. Speaker:

Premier Brad Wall has much to be proud of when it comes to First Nations relations, not the least of which was accepting the treaty commissioner's recommendations to teach the treaties in Saskatchewan schools.

Perhaps he should sit in on a class. And then he should speak up to distance his government from this hateful ad campaign. Today would be a good day to do it in honour of Canada's history.

Mr. Speaker, that challenge stands. If we're going to have some kind of relationship to the cheer of hope beats fear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't think of something that's further away from that than how it is characterized here as a hateful ad campaign, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So have we come that far from hope beats fear? I think in some ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the record speaks for itself. But again, I'm a hopeful person. I hope that this can be listened to and acted upon, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But again if the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour, well we'll see how that works out. But that hateful ad campaigns should be run and such divisive games should be played with one of the most important issues of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think speaks for itself.

So in conclusion, I will not be supporting the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I will be supporting the amendment preferred by the official opposition. And with that I would move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:07.]

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